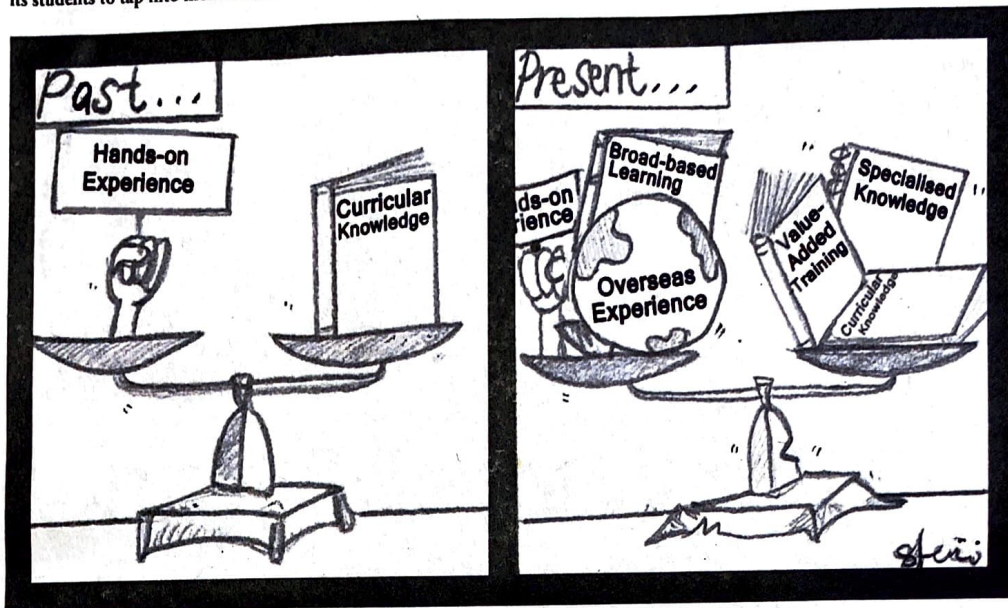


NP of the Future: A New Direction

Through broad-based learning and value-added training, Ngee Ann Polytechnic is moving towards the new economy by preparing its students to tap into niche areas. LIN SHILONG and KATE LIM HWEE LENG report.



NEW ERA OF LEARNING: Moving away from static learning, students are now given a holistic education to prepare for the workforce of the 21st century. (Illustration: Shaun Ho Kin Loon)

In helping students meet the needs of a 21st century service- and knowledge-based economy, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is moving away from the labour-intensive educational approach adopted previously.

NP wants to add value to its courses by giving more depth to subjects. It also aims to specialise in niche areas with specific rather than general demands, in addition to all-rounded broad-based learning.

Mr Chia Mia Chiang, 52, Principal of NP, commented that the addition of courses and modules which reflect the demands of the new economy "simply signals that [the] polytechnic is very responsive".

The School of Engineering (SoE) has already responded with the launch of its Product Design & Innovation (PDI) course this academic year, even though engineering enrolment rates have been decreasing.

While Mr Tan Hang Cheong, 51, NP's deputy principal, described this trend as "worrying", he explained that the flagging enrolment was largely due to public misconception about engineering jobs.

Dr Tan Ah Kat, 41, course manager of PDI, added, "[Engineering in Singapore has] moved up the value chain towards service and knowledge. The engineering market is still very vibrant."

At the moment, most engineering students study labour-intensive forms of engineering like Mechanical Engineering. PDI is the first diploma of its kind in Singapore to respond to the current need for engineers of a different calibre from those "20 years ago when it was labour intensive".

The course will address the needs of the new economy by producing "designers with engineering backgrounds", said Dr Tan.

New diplomas aside, NP has also

continuously sought to maintain its relevance to industry by regularly reviewing existing modules every year. Mr Chia explained, "We have to make sure that our courses [are] exciting and attractive."

Another new initiative NP is embarking on to help students move seamlessly into the workforce will be link-ups with foreign institutions. Mr Chia revealed that the school is embarking on plans to "bring [in] degree programmes to Singapore" to provide training for NP students in niche areas.

The plan is to invite foreign institutions to send experts here to offer degree courses within NP so that diploma graduates can move on to get a degree straight after.

Students will save on overseas travel and living expenses and may end up paying less school fees than those who do go overseas, and still end up with a foreign degree.

Commenting on the type of degrees coming in, Mr Chia cautioned, "These cannot be any other degree." He explained that the degrees must groom professionals in specific areas as demanded by Singapore's economy and society.

To ensure that there is a smooth transition between the diploma programmes and the degrees, Mr Chia revealed that the school will "adjust some of our [NP's] curriculum".

One school already planning to embrace foreign links is Early Childhood Education (ECH), which wants to offer specialist knowledge degrees in future.

A link-up with a foreign institution has not been fully discussed. However, through it, ECH is looking at moving into niche areas like Early Intervention, Special Needs Education and Play/Art/Speech Therapy, areas currently not specialised in-depth in the programme.

The Director of ECH, Dr Kath Walsh, who is in her 50s, said, "We do not want to duplicate what the universities are offering." At the same time, ECH wants to go further into childcare research to make the student's training more value-added.

A Child Study Centre, which will enhance professional training for staff and students, is in the pipeline and will be set up at block 52. This Centre is also a step towards simulating the best early childhood settings to boost the standard of childcare for preschoolers.

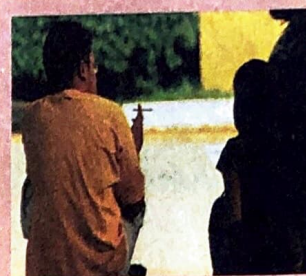
Studying aside, for students to be employable, Mr Chia stated that they should also possess good people skills and general knowledge. Students will be given more opportunities to go on overseas study trips and exchanges. Mr Chia revealed that "more money" will be "pumped in" for this, all in the name of broad-based learning.

This is in addition to NP's initial foray into broad-based learning through the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS). This year, the implementation of the second-year IS module, Innovation & Enterprise (I&E), gave students a chance to organise events and set up businesses.

At the same time, NP's physical landscape is also changing. Mr Chia told *Tribune* that infrastructural developments are planned, like the building of the student plaza in the current rugby field as well as a common study area and amphitheatre near block 23.

This is to give space to students to showcase their talents, run small businesses and hold events, so that they can gain valuable interpersonal and problem-solving skills.

All these efforts, Mr Chia said, was to "respond to the reality of the day", so that NP's graduates will continue to do well when they enter the workforce. ■



SMOKE-FREE BUS-STOP

Page 2



TRIP TO NEW YORK

Page 4



NP CAMPUS IN CHINA

Page 7



FEWER SPORTS IN IVP

Page 12

Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish



BY G.DINESH KUMAR
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Speaking at Stanford University's 114th Commencement ceremony this year, Chief Executive Officer of Apple Computer Steve Jobs told its graduates to "stay hungry, stay foolish".

The statement, stressing the importance of passion and belief in yourself whatever conventional wisdom says, is not one that resonates with the Singaporean psyche that emphasises uniformity and the status quo.

But truth be told, I think it's a great statement and makes perfect sense in a

world filled with people devoid of passion and intuition.

I've seen too many of my good friends living lives dreamt up by others, polishing the daily routine till it shines to perfection. Their dreams have been swept away into a closet, shut tight, never to be unearthed again.

That is my biggest fear – to have my dreams and ambitions whisked away by society and 'good' sense.

Choosing the polytechnic route was an unconventional decision for me. Coming from a brand name school, and a background that dictated the ever-popular Junior College path, my decision was frowned upon and dismissed as either stupid or naïve.

Ignoring the nay-sayers, I ploughed on, and on hindsight, "following my heart" has proved to be a fruitful decision for me.

For the first time in a god-forsaken number of years, I've finally enjoyed school (at the risk of sounding like a nerd).

That, I feel, has much to do with the way things are run here. As compared to both the secondary school and JC set-up, the polytechnic environment grants the average student a greater deal of freedom, which isn't

as bad as it might sound.

A freedom that has gone largely unrecognised... until now.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's recent National Day Rally Speech is an excellent example of this growing regard.

In his speech, he mentioned that polytechnics would be tying up with foreign universities to offer niche degree programmes to local students.

This has certainly lent greater credibility to a polytechnic education.

Not too long ago, going to a polytechnic was considered to be a route chosen by those who couldn't make it to a Junior College. How times have changed.

Looking back, I'm sure glad I made that leap, daring to listen to my inner voice. The decision has sure reaped me some handsome benefits while doing me some greater good.

Maybe, just maybe you might want to rely on your intuition and follow your heart, because it sure doesn't hurt to have a little faith in yourself.

It worked for Jobs, it worked for me, and I'm pretty sure that it might work for you.

"Stay hungry, stay foolish." ■

Tribune is a publication by third-year Mass Communication students of the Diploma in Mass Communication course in Ngee Ann Polytechnic

TRIBUNE
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

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Tribune, September 2005

A Call for Tighter Campus Security

BY BRENDA LEE SHU FEN
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A mass e-mail urging students to be mindful of security and safety issues within campus was sent to all Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students on 25 July, in an effort to tighten internal security.

The message was created by the Student Services Office (SS) via NP student e-mail and cautioned students not to "entertain unauthorised persons seeking information, sales or donations on campus".

The warning came in the light of the recent London bombings and a heightened awareness of security globally.

Valentino Lacson, 20, a final-year Film, Sound and Video (FSV) student, said, "It has never struck me that my school could be a target for terrorists... How [can we] prevent any attacks on our campus? The school is so big, everyone wears whatever they like. There are no guard checks at entrances [and] bags are everywhere."

SS Manager, Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, 36, pointed out the dual nature of the warning.

The first is a reminder for "students not to entertain strangers".

The second deals with "the aspect of heightened security globally".

He said, "We want our students to be more vigilant and not entertain such suspicious characters or items that may be found around campus in light of such times."

According to Mr Vickneshwaran, the school has already intensified its security efforts, adding that it had "closed-circuit cameras to monitor such activities".

He added, "Internally, we have our own procedures to handle this situation as well... [Our personnel go] around to check up on such people, [and we also have] cooperative



SHADY CHARACTER LURKING: An increasing number of strangers have been spotted in high traffic areas such as the Atrium. (Picture: Low Youjin)

efforts [with] the security guards."

Mr Vickneshwaran also advised students to play their part. "If you notice suspicious characters on campus, I think to get the fastest reaction, you should either call Student Services Office during office hours or alert the security guards."

"But if you do notice that there are suspicious characters lurking within areas with permitted access to students and staff only, you should alert your lecturers."

Informing the school and playing "detective" are two separate issues altogether.

Mr Vickneshwaran discourages students from trailing suspects.

He said, "I think as far as possible, because you are dealing with suspicious characters, you should just call the office immediately and observe from afar. The problem is if

[the person] is a terrorist or some deranged person, we do not want our students to get themselves in harm's way."

So far, there have not been any reported cases of suspicious and unidentifiable objects lying around school premises.

However, if the occasion should arise, students should report these immediately to the SS.

Suspicious objects and suspected terrorists aside, Mr Vickneshwaran was also concerned about strangers engaging in unauthorised transactions with students on campus.

He claimed there was an increase in such incidents "usually during graduation periods when insurance agents would come up and scout the campus for potential clients".

He also highlighted another problem associated with unauthorised persons on

campus, which he said has been happening for the last few years.

He said, "We also noticed people coming onto campus and approaching our students to ask for donations."

Donations and fundraisers are common activities within campus. Mr Vickneshwaran clarified that the warning was not issued to discourage any acts of generosity.

However, SS clarified that apart from the usual charities authorised to seek donations from students on campus, other charity-like activities from unauthorised persons are strictly forbidden.

The highest incidence of such contact centres around areas where students tend to gather, such as the Atrium and at school bus-stops.

While Mr Vickneshwaran said that students should play a part and alert the SS and their lecturers, students themselves are also not too tolerant of such advances.

19-year-old Uma Ramakrishnan, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) complained.

She said, "It's very distracting. They usually come and do their approaches in the Atrium, all within a confined space."

"It's not like you can run away as most of us are doing work. So it gets annoying when they stand there and give you a speech to buy whatever they are pitching."

Kelvin Phua, 19, a second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student praised the Student Services Office's efforts in trying to put across this message but he felt that efforts could be stepped up.

He said, "To prevent [these] kind of things from happening, the best thing is to really educate [students]; not only inform [them] about these incidents [but] ask them to boycott the salesmen." ■

1 Oct: NP Bus-Stop Goes Smoke-Free by Law

BY MEENAKSHI D/O SHUNMUGHAM
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Student smokers desperate for a nicotine fix will have one less smoking area when the nationwide smoking ban is extended to bus-stops, come 1 October.

Besides bus-stops, the smoking ban will also extend to bus interchanges, public pools and toilets, community clubs and open-air stadiums. Smoking on campus has been prohibited by law since 1994.

"As there are no official rules in NP that ban smoking at the bus-stop, student smokers often question the school's authority to ban smoking at the bus-stop," said Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, 36, Manager of the Student Services Office (SS).

However, he is confident this challenge will no longer exist when the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources' (MEWR) smoking ban is implemented.

Non-smokers are rejoicing.

Au Yuan Wei, 18, a final-year Accountancy (ACC) student, said, "I am glad that such a ban is in place. The smoke at the bus-stop really riled me as the smoke was really too much... when the bus-stop was crowded."

Sarah Lee Rongci, 18, a final-year Early Childhood Education (ECH) student, said, "Even when I expressed my displeasure to the smokers, they ignored me. Now, things will hopefully change for the better."

Campus supervisors and security guards will patrol the bus-stop, especially during peak hours and will caution smokers. Where students disobey the warnings, their



ONCE BITTEN, NOT SHY: Students continue to puff away at the bus-stop despite being told not to do so by the campus supervisors and security guards. (Picture: Low Youjin)

particulars will be recorded and submitted to SS for action against them.

First-time offenders get one chance before being turned in, through a warning letter, forwarded to their parents, and counselled.

Subsequent offences will be referred to the MEWR where a fine of \$200 will be imposed. Smokers who've been fined before will incur the maximum fine of \$1,000.

When Tribune surveyed 250 students on whether NP should take harsher action

against student smokers, beyond issuing a warning letter and counselling, 68 percent of respondents said "yes", while 28 percent said "no". Four percent declined to comment.

Still, instead of taking a "punitive approach", SS would like to help them quit the habit, acknowledging that it is tough for smokers to do so on their own.

Mr Vickneshwaran cited a World Health Organization (WHO) report stating that half of those who start smoking as teens "go on

to smoke for 15 to 20 years".

"They have to realise that as adults, they have a social responsibility to others when they smoke in public. Therefore, NP will definitely not designate a special area for smokers as the school discourages smoking [and is] gazetted as a non-smoking area. But we are willing to help students quit the habit through other measures," he added.

Some measures SS is considering include offering withdrawal, programmes such as Nicotine Replacement Treatment (NRT), which the Health Promotion Board (HPB) is offering, and providing counsellor-to-student counselling and peer-to-peer counselling.

Smoker Yvonne Goh Kai Xin, 17, a first-year Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE) student, said, "I don't think the ban will be very effective. Students will definitely find a way to get around it. The ban at the bus-stop might actually make students smoke more within the campus."

The penalty for smoking on campus is a fine of no more than \$500.

Another smoker, Felicia Chng Di Hui, 20, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student, said, "It's very unfair to us. We have basically no more place to smoke. The ban is rather dumb. Smoking is an individual's own choice. Why must the school and government restrict someone's personal habits?"

Mr Vickneshwaran sought the help of smokers' friends in tackling the smoking problem.

"I believe that the smokers are more receptive to their friends' advice than being advised by other students or counsellors." ■

Co-op: Shoplifters Beware

BY LIN SHILONG
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NO FREE STUFF: NP's Co-op gets serious about bringing down losses from shoplifting. (Picture: Lin Shilong)

To deter shoplifters, preventive measures will be put in during the \$200,000 renovation of Ngee Ann Polytechnic Consumer Co-operative Society's (NP Co-op) SuperMart during the semester break.

"According to previous estimates, NP Co-op suffered a sales loss of four to five percent due to theft. And this is considered by many to be quite high," said Ms Lily Wong, manager of NP Co-op, who is in her 50s.

Proposed anti-theft measures to the Co-op outlet at block 5 include closed-circuit cameras with recording functions and a larger monitor in the office of Senior Retail Executive Madam Margaret Chan, 51.

These will allow NP Co-op staff to focus more on their regular duties instead of having to spot would-be shoplifters.

"If our budget allows it, we will also install a scanner at the doorway," said Madam Chan. This Radio Frequency Identification scanner

is similar to those in shopping malls.

Payment counters will also be moved to a central position from both sides of the store so payment queues will be more orderly.

"We need a better queue system, where it is clear who had paid for their merchandise," said Mr Lim Yew Hor, 43, the store's general retail assistant. His duties include keeping a lookout for suspicious behaviour at the payment counters and the rest of the store through surveillance mirrors.

He felt incidences of theft often go undetected during peak lunch hours where heavy customer traffic makes it hard for staff to keep an eye out.

Shoplifting also tends to occur from 4pm to closing when the store is manned by only two staff members.

"I think it is very easy to steal when the store is crowded. People will not notice and cannot be bothered [to report suspicious behaviour]," said Paul Chan, 17, a first-year Mass Communication (MCM) student.

Ms Wong expects that when the new surveillance measures are in place, operating losses due to theft can be significantly reduced.

Although only one shoplifter has been caught in 2005, Mr Lim, who is also involved in inventory checks, is quite convinced that shoplifting in the Co-op occurred "almost every other day".

"They [the shoplifters] steal everything, from foodstuff to batteries. I would find old merchandise switched with new ones, opened sweet packets and items missing from their shelves," said Mr Lim. ■

NP Offers IR-Specific Electives

BY MEENAKSHI D/O SHUNMUGHAM
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When 35,000 jobs are created by the integrated resort industry in 2009, some Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students will be poised for them, having learnt resort management through a course in the School of Engineering (SoE) or the School of Business & Accountancy (BA).

NP is the first polytechnic in Singapore to offer such training.

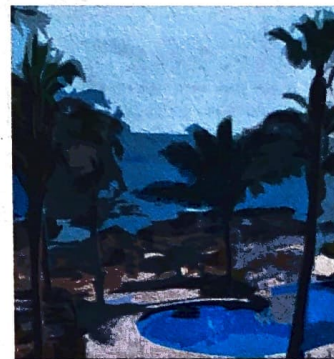
Changes to the curriculum in the Diploma in Facilities Management for Business (FMB), and the Diploma in Business Studies (BS) will start in the next academic year.

According to Mr Tan Hang Cheong, 51, deputy principal of NP, the NP diplomas will include Integrated Resorts-related (IR) elements as "IR is a promising industry".

He added, "Ngee Ann is happy to do its part in preparing the workforce for a world-class development like the Integrated Resorts. The new options made available for business and engineering students reflect NP's ability to respond quickly to market demands."

Some 40 to 100 FMB and 80 to 100 BS final-year students will become the pioneer cohorts to take this module next year.

Two new FMB modules – Healthcare & Business Park Facilities and Hotel & Recreation Facilities – will also be introduced to develop the specialised resort management skills students will need for the industry. This will help them to be skilled managers "who can meet the demands of the IR industry", an NP press release stated.



READY FOR IR: NP gears up to tap into the upcoming resort industry. (Digitally Modified: S.Meenakshi)

Director of SoE's Building & Environment Division (BE), Mrs Grace Quah-Oon Gek Neo, who declined to reveal her age, said, "The Diploma in FMB... caters to the increasing demand in the industry for well-trained facilities managers."

BA will update its BS course by adding a Resort Management (RM) elective to the five now offered.

According to Mr Philip Lau Tiong Lip, 43, deputy director of BA, "RM... will build on BA's industry experience in the areas of leisure, tourism and service management."

And if response to the new RM elective is good, Mr Lau said BA might just offer a full-fledged Diploma in Resort Management.

"If more than 50 percent of the students in the first intake [next year] respond eagerly to the RM elective, we might just go for it." ■

Big Apple Dreams



FRUITS OF LABOUR: Journalism students selling their goods in order to raise funds for their upcoming trip to New York. (Picture Courtesy of Adeline Cheng)

BY KUTHSIYYA PEER MOHAMED
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They drew queues to the Convention Centre basement by dangling discounted Ben & Jerry's ice cream, soup from restaurants such as Sizzler Singapore and Soup Central, and discount coupons from Carl's Junior.

The American-themed food fair and flea market on 18 August in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) was part of a chain of events that will lead some NP journalism students into getting their works published in various national publications from later this year.

It was organised to raise funds for 14 second-year and final-year Mass Communication (MCM) students embarking on a journalism study tour to New York in October.

While NP is subsidising a third of the cost of the trip, each student still needs to be prepared to pay about \$2,000.

"The students are in agreement that the funds raised will mostly benefit those who have greater financial difficulty," said Mr Robin Yee, 38, the MCM journalism lecturer who initiated the trip and secured the American food sponsors.

He explained that the trip is intended to expose these students to some of the best newsrooms in the world, from The New

York Times to the Conde Nast Publications stable of magazines, as well as broaden their horizons with visits to important institutions like the United Nations headquarters and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Besides learning from the visits, students will also be writing stories there for local newspapers such as Berita Harian and magazines like Lime, Telescope, Teenage, Female and Catalog. The payment for these stories will also be used to help defray costs.

Second-year students were given priority as Mr Yee plans to commercialise the editorial teams that now produce *Tribune*, hype and theurbanwire.com to fully occupy the students when the Industrial Training Programme (ITP) period goes from the current two months to a whole semester from the next academic year. The trip is meant to train this core group of students to lead in the new enterprise.

Some 10 second-year and four final-year students were selected from an initial 70 after an intense selection process.

They have been busy raising sponsorships and doing research for the written, online and video publication works that they are expected to create.

They will also attend special training sessions to better equip them for their work in New York. ■

Cheesy Business for BS Students

BY KATE LIM HWEE LENG
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The final-year project of four Business Studies (BS) students, a kiosk in the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Library selling nachos – tortilla chips served with melted cheese – has been pulling in good profits and might be expanding within campus and to other polytechnics.

Bocados Nachos is situated just outside Each-A-Cup in the Library's Lifestyle section on level two.

The four BS students running it are under the Experimental Training for Entrepreneurial Development (EXTEND) programme, an entrepreneurial specialisation programme in BS which started when the Entrepreneurship specialisation in BS came about a year ago.

The programme requires students to run their entrepreneurship effort in its entirety, as a real business, from scouting for a location to furnishing the space, to acquiring supplies and selling the product.

The team secured the location outside Each-A-Cup through a deal with its proprietor, Mr Peter Mun, where 10 percent of their daily profit would go to Each-A-Cup. In turn, they not only get shop space but also receive help from the Each-A-Cup employees in manning the stall when they have lessons or are not able to tend to the stall.

Business has been good so far and they make about \$100 profit daily which they split among themselves.

The business has only been up and running since 30 June but despite this relatively short period of time, Bocados Nachos already has its fair share of loyal customers.

Marilyn Lin Xiao Wei, 19, a final-year BS student and a frequent patron, explained, "The cheese is very unique, very different from the ones outside."

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, 53, director of the Estate Management Office (EM) even offered to give them shop space in the new Student Hub at block 18 where the Net Restaurant was previously located.

The team is still considering the offer but said that the library flagship will stay and will function as a base for further expansion in other locations.

Haddad bin Hashim, 19, who is in charge of publicity for the stall, explained that Bocados might expand the business to other polytechnics if it does well.

However, if franchising does not happen within the time they are in NP, they will

probably sell the kiosk to Each-A-Cup's proprietor Mr Mun.

He also revealed that their Business Planning lecturer, 35-year-old Mr Joseph Seet, had plans to let them run Bocados Nachos as part of their Industrial Attachment Programme (IAP).

Jason Guan Yong Seng, 19, was the one who conceptualised the business.

He told *Tribune* that the idea of selling nachos popped into his head about a year ago.

However, he had problems getting a location in school. His original plan was to set up shop in Canteen One but he was not given stall space. Then, he wanted to run the business separately from his studies but as he could not find business partners, he "just showed the idea".

He revisited the idea at the beginning of the semester and thought about running the business as a final-year project. Together with three business partners, Wang Yibin, 19, Chai Han Qing, 19 and Haddad, he proposed the business concept to his lecturers, who were keen on the idea.

Their lecturer, Mr Seet, explained that under the BS EXTEND programme, there are three different modules, Business Planning, Innovation and Product Development, and Family Business. Some 30 percent of the module grades of all three modules under the EXTEND programme will be allocated to the business the students propose and eventually run.

The teams involved in the business have to produce certain deliverables like the estimation of costs, the acquisition of partnerships with an organisation or a business (in Bocados' case, partnership with Each-A-Cup), and the estimation and forecast of sales.

For the team to run the business as an EXTEND project, they had to propose the idea to lecturers for all three modules.

Mr Seet complimented the business effort, "They have simply showed that they are able to face up to a challenge of initiating a real-life business and through the ups and downs, demonstrated a passion for the business."

He added, "They believe in what they are doing and that's the trait of [the] entrepreneurship spirit."

Jason shared that he gained practical experience running the stall even though it was tiring.

He said he enjoyed it and will probably continue with it in the next semester. ■

New Funds Template for Clubs and Societies

BY LEON SEOW CHERN MING
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By next semester, leaders of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) clubs and societies can save at least three days seeking funding for club activities with a new online template developed by the Finance Office.

Mrs Seow-Chng Cheng Nai, 35, deputy director of Finance, said the new template combines two important documents – one listing the budget required for these activities and the other, a Cash Advance Requisition (CAR) – into a single and convenient spreadsheet document.

Previously, student leaders had to submit the former and seek approval from the Student Development & Alumni Relations

Office (SDAR) before they can submit a CAR to ask for extra money. A cheque would only be issued by the Finance Office after both documents were approved.

Mrs Seow-Chng said that the new combined format saved students one trip to the Finance Office. And cheques can be issued immediately once the document is approved. Essentially, this shaves off time for working capital to be received, depending on the amounts requested.

Jason Jeremiah Shen Zhi Wen, 20, a final-year Information Technology (IT) student and the vice-president of the Floorball Club said that in the past, the club needed to go through "several levels of approval" to get funds for club activities and that meant the club "couldn't get money for a couple of

stuff" they needed for last year's Polympics.

Time is also saved because SDAR staff can now make amendments directly to the budget list, instead of waiting for students to do so, said deputy director of SDAR, Mr Alan Thng, who declined to reveal his age. He added that NP's reimbursement to students will also be "neater" as all the categories are listed in the new template.

Sum Zheng Jie, 17, a second-year student from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) and the treasurer of the Squash Club, said, "At first, we were not sure if we could get reimbursement because we were unsure of what (items) in the (budget) list could be subsidised." He added, "It took a lot of time, planning (the activities) because we needed to continuously ask our advisors

(for information). Now, everything is clearly stated, so it's more efficient."

Another purpose of the template is to enable students to complete the Income and Expenditure Statement (IES), which is a tool used to analyse expenditure, for their club or society.

Mrs Seow-Chng said, "The thing [the IES] is very complicated. Especially for 'non-accounting trained' student leaders because they need to know a lot of formulas... Students have a phobia of doing it!"

She explained that the new online template can automatically generate an IES with a special function.

Mr Thng said, "We don't want [students] to be tied down by 'red tape' and feel discouraged... by a lot of procedures." ■

Personalised Stamps for Ngee Ann Poly

BY TAN SOO WEN AMELIA
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is the only school in Singapore with its own customised stamps, due to a proposal by final-year students from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA).

The NP stamps are the brainchild of a group of final-year Business Studies (BS) students within BA who specialise in marketing. The project was part of the Realistic and Applied Learning (REAL) programme that BA offers every year.

The programme divides marketing students into business units of 15 to 20 students each.

Every unit is trained to market products or services of the company it is attached to.

Ms Tan Lai Wan, a BA marketing lecturer in her early 40s, said, "During the training, [Singapore Post] was telling us about MyStamp... that's where we had this idea of having the customised stamps."

MyStamp is a new Singapore Post product that allows people to personalise stamps.

Stamps traditionally tend to feature royalty, national flowers or national heritage-related pictures, but Ms Tan stated that "with MyStamp, additional photos are placed beside a national object".

Ms Tan added, "This is probably the first time in Singapore where you can actually put a photo of your face or your family or favourite pet [on] the stamp itself [and] use it to post [letters and postcards] to your friends or relatives in Singapore and overseas."

She added, "I was asking students: How about customised stamps for NP? The students were enthusiastic and said they would work on it... they came out with the designs and presented it to the management in NP for approval."

Ms Tan said the stamp designs went through "six or seven amendments".

The final product was completed and ready to be sold after students got approval from NP and Singapore Post in June. "[Singapore Post] worked very fast and were very supportive," Ms Tan added.

Final-year BS student, Sylvia Chng, 19, said, "It's a privilege for us because we're the first tertiary institution to have our own stamps... it's a very good thing."

"In this REAL programme you get to meet people and you really have to be thick-skinned enough and think of ways to market

your product."

The students will be selling the NP stamps at the next marketing road show in November, as well as other personalised stamps from SingPost's MyStamp range.

Ms Tan revealed, "We will be doing at least two road shows in Ngee Ann next semester, so students will have a chance to buy the NP stamps."

Ms Tan added, "We plan to set up internet marketing to market the stamps as well, so students can order through the internet."

Each NP stamp sheet has five stamps and is specially priced for students at \$8.50. Ms Tan said that "a stamp sheet from MyStamp

would normally cost about \$11 to \$12".

The students plan to create stamps for other schools too. Ms Tan said, "We plan to propose it to other schools like, say, Raffles Girls' School... so that they will have their [own] customised stamps as well."

"We are doing a survey to find out from various schools whether they think it's a good idea to have their own customised stamps, so if the survey results are okay, [and] once the marketing plan is approved by SingPost, we'll go out to sell them," she added. But before such plans bear fruition, Ms Tan hopes students will be proud of the newly created NP stamps. ■



FIRST OF ITS KIND: BA and Singapore Post collaborate to give students MyStamp, where they can personalise their stamps. (Picture: Courtesy of Singapore Post)

Contractors' Poor Workmanship led to Delays and Danger

BY LEON SEOW CHERN MING
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Delays, deviations and danger. These were complaints over construction and renovation work done by contractors, for the School of Film & Media Studies' (FMS) relocation of its studios and radio facilities, intended to make it more convenient for staff and students to move between classes.

According to FMS Production Studio Manager, Mr Marc Jonet, 42, the amount spent to build both the radio studios and renovate the ground level of block 52 was approximately \$1.14 million.

Work on facilities such as a sound stage, a props room and a Television Journalism studio on the first level of block 52 have been delayed by at least a month due to contractors modifying the original plans without authorisation from FMS.

This echoed delays in shifting the radio facilities earlier, which saw students working without proper studios for a month.

Unauthorised changes in the renovations resulted in a Television Journalism studio which could hardly be used for its purpose, in addition to doors of the wrong height being installed and important security measures being left out.

Mr Jonet said the contractors had built two walls and an additional door in the Television Journalism studio, without seeking approval,

to reduce the noise entering the studio, when two soundproof doors would have sufficed.

Mr Jonet added that one wall and the extra door have since been removed and the soundproof door added to the studio, contributing to the delay.

Unfortunately, the second wall cannot be removed because it is a supporting structure for the studio. Mr Jonet was concerned as the unauthorised walls cordoned off about a third of the entire studio and would have obstructed the mobility of three cameras to be placed in the room.

Another problem with the new studio was absent ports for wiring between the studio and the control room. This is needed so students can manipulate the footage from the cameras while filming.

Mr Jonet said, "We [the staff at FMS] told them [the contractors] to go to our current TV studios as a reference." He added that they appeared to have "no background in constructing a TV studio".

Despite prior specifications, the height of the doors was also wrong and would have hindered students shifting large props needed for filming. This was corrected by the Estate Management Office (EM) but this also contributed to the delay in the completion of the studio.

Mr Jonet was also dissatisfied with the video editing room. He said that despite prior specifications, the windows didn't have the necessary grilles to protect the "hundreds of

thousands of dollars" worth of equipment to be put in the room. The blinds meant to hide the equipment and create a more conducive working environment for students working on the editing stations were also missing.

These problems were solved after he submitted a request to EM, however, due to the delays, the project will only be completed between the middle to end of October.

Earlier in the semester, students had to do without the new radio studios for a month because these lacked proper sound-proofing. Mr Jonet said the condition was so bad students could "clearly hear the conversation held in the corridor" while working in the revamped studios.

Soundproof studios are essential for students to produce clear voice recordings and good sound sequences for assignments.

Eddy Lam, 21, a second-year Mass Communication (MCM) student said, "I want space, sound insulation, [a] professional outlook, privacy and exclusivity in our editing stations. All of which disappeared when we moved to block 53."

According to Mr Jonet, the contractors didn't know the studios "were supposed to be used for radio production" and so windows and doors had to be redone to reduce the amount of noise entering the studios.

He added, "It took several attempts to correct the problems, which caused a delay of more than a month."

However, he stressed the problem was

solved in mid-June.

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, 53, director of EM, said, "We recognise that there will always be workmanship problems... [But] we do our best, given the constraints, to meet our user's requirements." He added, "There is no extra cost involved... As long as the contractor does not comply with the specifications of the job description, we can ask the contractor to redo the work."

Mr Jonet said, "Although they tried to accommodate us as much as they could, the process [of building the facilities] was tedious and unproductive."

He attributed this to the "lack of proper supervision [by EM] when construction was taking place".

By this he meant that instead of EM supervisors checking construction projects and providing updates to users, he had to check the renovation progress himself.

Mr Mui said, "We always work very closely with our users."

However, Mr Jonet lamented that during the semester, the contractors didn't even cordon off their work area while removing the ceiling near the radio studios in block 52. As a result, a large part of the ceiling nearly fell on him when he went to investigate.

The problem was only solved when he contacted EM to supervise the situation. He said, "The users, are the ones who notice the problems [in construction for EM]... it should be the other way around." ■

NP Fronts Formula One Model Car Finals

BY BRENDA LEE SHU FEN
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) had exclusive rights to stage the finals of the F1 (Formula One) in Schools Ngee Ann Challenge 2005 on 27 July.

Held at the Convention Centre, NP's Mechanical Engineering (ME) division of the School of Engineering (SoE), who organised the competition, transformed the centre's largest auditorium into a mini race car arena.

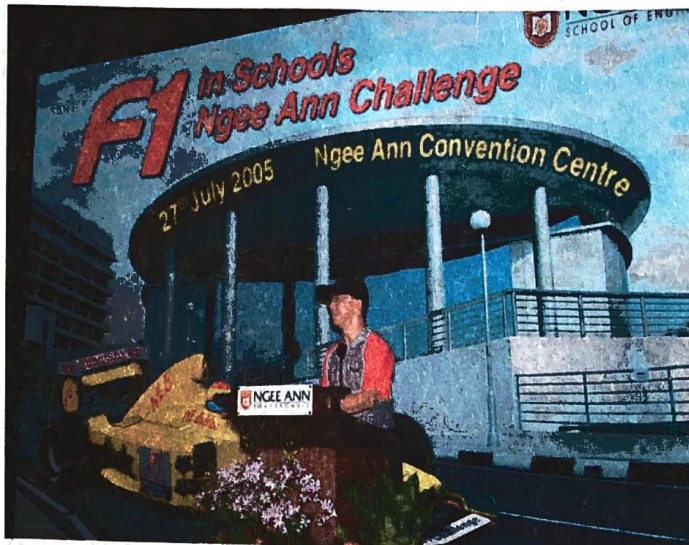
However, unlike real F1 motorsports cars, the event featured specially-engineered, carbon dioxide-activated F1 model cars.

Building an F1 model car uses the same engineering principles as building real full-sized F1 automobiles. For the competition, students had to create the fastest F1 model car based on relevant engineering principles such as aerodynamics or the law of wind resistance.

Mr Phillip Tan, 50, the event's manager and a lecturer in SoE, said, "Ngee Ann was privileged to have been approached by the founders of this event to be the authorised host... it was truly successful and very well received by the secondary schools."

The founders, Denford Pte Ltd, a manufacturer and producer of engineering software and computer equipment, gave NP the rights to host the Challenge as the two parties had previously worked together on a different project some 20 years ago. Mr Lek Pheow Hwa, 48, a senior NP lecturer at ME, explained that since then, there had been no further connections or contact with Denford. The relationship was renewed through a chance meeting between Denford and ME staff at a workshop recently.

Shortly after, a Memorandum of



NP GRAND PRIX: NP leads the effort to stir up interest for engineering in secondary schools by offering them a chance to build their own F1 model cars. (Picture: Courtesy of Poh Keng Tan-Tay)

Understanding (MOU) was signed, Ngee Ann Polytechnic was set to stage the first national F1 model car competition in schools.

Some 39 teams from 17 secondary schools took part in the challenge. Mr Lek said, "Altogether, 80 prototypes were made for all the teams, each team had about two cars in which, later on, they were to select one to race in the finals."

A 20-metre race track was specially ordered and custom-made for the challenge. But before teams were allowed to race their creations down the track, they had to undergo months of preparation and planning.

Participant Tan Wei Liang, 15, a secondary

three student from Tampines Secondary School said, "We had to come up with our own design and learn it on our own through this software called ProDesktop [Pro Engineering Desktop]. No one taught us, we learned it through the internet... it took months and it was tedious."

Each model took approximately three to four hours to manufacture. The models were then returned to the students for wheel assembly and body paintwork.

The efforts of Wei Liang and his team mates eventually paid off when their model car raced across the finishing line in 1.073 seconds.

As the track had only two lanes, teams

raced against each other two at a time. The individual race times of all cars were tabulated and the one which clocked the fastest had the greatest chance of winning.

Along with a runners-up position for best marketing strategy, the Tampines Secondary School team's accumulated points won them the championship. In addition to the challenge trophy, each team member also won a ticket to watch the real F1 Grand Prix race in Sepang, Malaysia next year.

Apart from applying engineering concepts to construct their models, the marketing skills of the students were tested as well. All teams were left on their own to source for sponsors for their team attire.

Teams had to come up with a marketing plan, which was also displayed during the competition. Henderson Secondary School won the prize for the best marketing strategy, due to the special attention given to booth decor, car displays and the successful garnering of sponsorships from Popular bookstore and Nikko, a toy manufacturer of radio-controlled cars.

Mr Kenneth Tan, 28, the teacher-in-charge of the winning team, said, "We tried to make our booth as mobile as possible, print out colourful fliers, and gotten sponsors... we also sent a lot of supporters to give out leaflets."

Proud of the effort put in from all the participating schools, Mr Foo See Meng, 52, director of the ME division, said, "I think, most importantly, the school kids are able to see how exciting engineering can be. It is more than just classrooms. It is a way of life."

He stressed, "[Engineering] is about designing, innovating and creating something that you can use. In this case, something you can race and have fun with. I think Ngee Ann has distinguished itself as a polytechnic with a first-class engineering curriculum." ■

BS Scores at Retail Reality Challenge

BY TAN SOO WEN AMELIA
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BEST RETAIL MINDS: BS students snatch top spot in the Retail Reality Challenge. (Picture: Courtesy of Jeremy Poh)

A team of final-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students may secure managerial jobs upon graduation, after becoming finalists in the "You're Hired" Retail Reality Challenge, Singapore's version of the reality programme The Apprentice.

Organised by the Cold Storage Group, the Retail Reality Challenge spanned two months across different stages. The challenge included a qualifying round where the best six teams were chosen. These were from the polytechnics, including NP, who defeated the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Singapore Management University (SMU).

The NP team, called The Unbitables and

consisting of four final-year Business Studies (BS) students – Jeremy Poh, 19; Lee Pei Juan, 19; Tan Shu Qin, 21 and Ng Xiao Yun, 20 – are the only team to represent NP.

The top three teams announced on 3 September will win job offers and cash prizes. "If we get into top three... we don't have to search for a job after we graduate," said Pei Juan.

The team competed against 77 other four-member teams during the first stage of the challenge, and had to sell 240 bottles of water and 120 packets of potato chips from Cold Storage's house brand, First Choice.

To stand out, The Unbitables created a theme where they dressed up as chefs and wore aprons with the bottles of water and potato chips attached to it. Shu Qin said, "We put a lot of effort on grabbing attention and our dressing [made them] aware of us."

The team had to keep to a 20-metre radius within a 7-Eleven store near the Tampines bus interchange and while they sold all the potato chips, the water proved difficult.

Jeremy said, "Selling the bottled water, which is the house brand [was tough], so we had to do a lot of hard selling."

Apart from product sales, the team was also assessed on their customer service and business proposal.

Of the two-month retail experience, Pei Juan said, "We've learnt to be more daring [and] to try new things." ■

Youths Stand United Against HIV/AIDS

BY JUSTIN DEIMEN
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In collaboration with World Vision Singapore, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) hosted the inaugural HIV/AIDS Youth Convention 2005 on 20 August at the Convention Centre.

The event was organised by a group of final-year Mass Communication (MCM) students with the assistance of the Health Promotion Board (HPB) and the Singapore Tourism Board. The theme, "Death By Casual Sex", aimed to raise awareness and educate Singapore's youth about the prevalence of the HIV/AIDS virus in the region.

According to Ms Soo Hsi En, Communications Manager for World Vision Singapore, who declined to reveal her age, "World Vision hopes... to expose youths to the reality of HIV and to create activists among the youth in Singapore to care about the issue and continue the fight against HIV."

Invitations to register for the convention through World Vision's website were sent to various tertiary institutions in an effort to reach out to as many students as possible.

Ms Soo also added that the convention, which was proposed by World Vision, was not only a pre-emptive measure against the rising problem of sexually transmitted disease (STDs) in youths in Singapore but



CAP ON AIDS: NP spearheads efforts in AIDS prevention through a youth convention. (Picture: Courtesy of Paris Zhuang)

was also organised to make sure younger Singaporeans cultivate a concern about the escalating global threat.

Said Ms Soo, "We stress on the importance of abstinence over using protection because we feel that it is the most effective way to curb the spread of HIV."

Tan Liling, 20, a final-year MCM student and event organiser, felt that the convention was anything but conventional. She said, "We felt that the convention would be more interesting [should] the discussion of HIV and AIDS be more open and honest."

The panelists who led the discussion on HIV included Senior Minister of State for Health, and Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Balaji Sadasivan, FMS lecturer Mr Danny Yeo and Ms Elim Chew, Managing Director of 77th Street, a youth-oriented retail franchise. ■

New Developments for Ngee Ann Alumni Clubhouse

BY MATTHIAS PHUA
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By Chinese New Year, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) graduates who are members of the Ngee Ann Alumni Clubhouse will be able to enjoy the full range of facilities, revealed Ms Jody Tan, 30, an executive of the clubhouse.

Current amenities, including Galileo Café, the KTV lounge and beer garden, operated by Halo Bar, will be supplemented by a gym, the jackpot room and the video arcade, which

are currently under development and are expected to be completed by mid-2006.

The final phase, phase three, of development for the Ngee Ann Alumni Clubhouse, said Ms Tan, will be the building of a swimming pool, outdoor jacuzzi, children's pool and the shower rooms.

Work on these has started with the piling of the foundation.

The clubhouse is situated near the campus gate that leads to the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM).

Ms Tan explained that the phase three

developments will all be built in the plot of land to the left of the main clubhouse building, now fenced up.

Phase three will be completed before phase two, as members had requested that the clubhouse expedite the development of these popular facilities.

To be able to use the clubhouse facilities, Ms Tan said that Ngee Ann graduates have to pay a clubhouse fee of \$1,899 for a lifetime membership, whereas members of the public who have not studied in NP will pay \$2,100 to become associate members.

According to her, the building fund comes from the Clubhouse's 1,600 members, short of their 4,000-member target.

"Should we be able to hit the target of 4,000 members, we will think of other means to build other facilities," said Ms Tan.

"I wouldn't mind joining the clubhouse since the membership is lifetime and there will be quite a lot of facilities I would use. The place seems nice to relax [in]," said Seah Seng Kiat, 18, a final-year student from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT). ■

A Kool Movie Concept by NP Graduates Yields Gold Award

BY TAN SOO WEN AMELIA
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Three Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) graduates from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA) clinched the Gold Award for the first time, at the second National Marketing Competition on 26 June with their original movie concept for Singapore cinemas, Kool Movie.

Serene Tan, 20, a recent Business Studies (BS) graduate and team leader explained, "Kool Movie is about screening movies in KTV look-alike rooms and we positioned [it] to offer comfort [and] privacy at an affordable price."

The team's marketing proposal states that the "rooms are furnished with comfortable chairs or beanbags together with carpeted floors for the customers to feel at ease and enjoy utmost comfort whilst watching motion pictures which have ceased screening in the local cinemas".

Maxine Yap, 20, also a recent Business

Studies (BS) graduate, said, "We don't plan to compete with the local cinemas in showing current movies. Our plan is to show movies that have just ceased screening, about the same time when its DVDs are out."

Like a karaoke room, one can book a private screening for a group of friends. "We plan to accommodate the number of people depending on the sizes of the rooms... A small room would hold up to five people, a medium room holds up to 10," she explained.

The team gathered data about their target audience through market surveys. Maxine explained, "People aged 16 to 29 think that this is a good idea... compared to people aged 35 and above."

The graduates spent the school holidays last semester preparing the plan and had help from their marketing lecturers. Ms Tan Lai Wan, a BA marketing lecturer in her early 40s, explained that the graduates joined the competition towards the end of their final year and "by the time the results came out, they've already graduated".

Maxine said, "We decided to take part because we thought it was good for us to represent NP."

They took the time to do detailed preparation for the competition, including surveying 600 respondents, analysing data, conducting focus groups and doing up financial statements before coming up with their final report.

Ms Tan added, "What we did was to show them... what makes a good marketing plan... I'm impressed that they were able to apply the theory learnt in class."

The students' marketing plan also stated that the team is "looking at the possibility [of] a joint-investment with major cinemas in Singapore such as Cathay-Keris Films, Golden Village, Eng Wah or Shaw Brothers". The team has plans to "convey the viability of this new concept" to them.

Serene added, "This concept is very new and not used by any company yet... but if someone approached us to buy the concept we [would] seriously consider."

Organised by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIMS), the National Marketing Competition was previously open only to polytechnic students.

This is the first time that the competition was extended to all tertiary institutions. It drew eight teams from the National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS), the Chartered Institute of Technology (CITECH), Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), Singapore Polytechnic (SP) and NP.

Maxine said, "The win came as a pleasant surprise. The 600-respondent survey that we did and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Service (SPSS) might have impressed the judges! SPSS is an industry-standard statistical analysis software."

The NP team won \$3,000 cash, individual certificates, a plaque for the school and a challenge trophy. ■

China Campus: More Overseas Opportunities for NP Students

BY NUR IDAYU SUPARTO
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Students seeking overseas exposure can look forward to more opportunities abroad, once Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) opens its first overseas branch next September in Shenyang, China.

Located in the north-eastern part of China, the branch, the Overseas Education Centre (OEC), will offer Chinese nationals three of NP's engineering-related diplomas - Diploma in Mechatronic Engineering (MTE), Diploma in Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) and Diploma in Logistics Management (LMGT).

The diplomas will share the same syllabus as that provided in NP and lessons will be conducted in English.

Director of the Organisational Development Office (OD), Mrs Tam Li Phin, 51, said that China is the first leg of NP's international operations as it is an "up and coming" country with "plenty of opportunities".

Costing \$51 million in investments, the OEC is a joint venture between NP and local construction company G&W Group.

To ensure that its first overseas branch opens without a hitch, NP recently made the decision to push back the launch of the OEC from this September to next September.

NP hopes that the new China campus will be able to provide its students in Singapore

(Illustration: S.Meenakshi)



with more opportunities to experience life overseas through various immersion programmes such as student exchanges and community projects.

Mrs Tam said, "Up to now, about 50 to 70 percent of our students have had the opportunity [to travel overseas] and by 2007 we intend to provide 100 percent of our students with the opportunity to participate in an overseas [programme] at least once in their three years of studies."

Mr Wang Chin Chong, 54, director of the School of Multidiscipline Engineering (MDE), which offers the MTE diploma, said that the OEC's launch next year means that it will soon be more possible for engineering students to take part in overseas immersion programmes every year.

In order for such engineering students to

qualify, they have to be in the "top 20 percent of each of their cohort".

Candidates must also be able to foot the costs of studying abroad for a semester. Expenses include accommodation and airfare, which are partially subsidised by NP.

Engineering students who don't qualify for the programme and other students whose diploma is not being offered in the OEC, will still be able to visit the China campus through other programmes.

Mrs Tam assured, "The centre will also look at other opportunities [for other students], such as cultural exchanges and visits."

Adding that having such programmes helps to gear NP students towards having a global mindset, she said, "It will provide opportunities for students to experience a new economy in a different country, culture and educational scene. [With a first-hand] understanding of a different country's perspective, our students will be more prepared to work overseas."

The prospect of studying in China in their final year gathered mixed responses from some students.

Tan Shun De, 19, a second-year ECE student felt that the campus' location did not entice him to take up the offer.

However, Vinitha Sinnasamy, 18, a second-year Information Technology (IT) student, said, "[I will] get to go overseas and they'd even subsidise us. It's good exposure." ■

义安中文系-茶渊迎新会2005

黄佳仪报道
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在 传统茶馆茶艺品茶,欣赏二胡,古筝演奏,观赏书法挥毫,短剧以及歌唱表演等,是一般学生少有的体验。义安理工学院中文系约80名学生就有此福气可以参与校方特别为他们在‘茶渊’举办的迎新会。

7月9日早上十点半,学生们纷纷来到了位于尼尔路的‘茶渊’参加此迎新会。共同出席这个盛会的有义安理工学院副院长,陈汉章先生,传播系主任,Dr Victor Valbuena,中文系执行总干事,杨静云女士,以及其他中文系与传播系的讲师们。

杨女士用英语说道:因为中文系是与其他系不相同的,这是唯一以中文为主的课程,所以我希望同学们能为一个新课程感到兴奋,因此决定要有个特别的茶会来迎新。

迎新会上排满了为同学们安排的活动。节目包括茶艺示范,品茶,书法挥毫,歌唱表演,短剧表演以及华族古典乐器演奏。

对于这次的迎新会,陈汉章副院长(51岁)用英语表示:可以让学生们更了解中华文化,这对他们的将来有一定



茶渊迎新会2005大合照。(照片:杨应晖老师)

的帮助。

在书法挥毫的项目当中,陈副院长也受邀提笔,写了一幅对联:“茶香

溢渊阁,杯里味乾坤”。写得一手好书法的陈副院长也为成立的“华文学会”提了字。

据了解,拥有十六年历史的茶渊是第一次为学院主办如此大型的活动,而‘茶渊’市场部执行员,郭家伟(24岁)表示:“我们的宗旨是要推广中华文化,我觉得让新的一些学生接触我们的中华文化会较理想。”

郭家伟在茶会上示范了冲泡好茶的手艺也给大家介绍各种茶叶,茶具以及如何品茶。

迎新会也给了许多同学主持节目的机会,其中一名学生主持人汪玮玲说道:“以前没有过这样的活动,所以很新鲜,可以学到茶道也通过主持有了个经验,这些是从课本所学不到的。”

属于中文系的‘中文学会’也在迎新会上正式成立。委员会的成员也一一为大家自我介绍以及发表感言。‘中文学会’主席,陈韵蕾(17岁)也表示自己“身负重任”希望可以运用有趣的方式来推广中华文化。

迎新会的最后一项表演是由曾经在歌唱比赛获得冠军的中文系讲师,郑君心老师为同学们大展歌喉。原本准备只唱一首张学友的“心如刀割”的郑老师在众人下喊“安珂”(Encore)下多唱了一首张信哲的“忘情忘爱”。把迎新会的尾声带上高潮。2005年的中文系茶渊迎新会就在同学们的欢呼声中圆满结束。

义安国际学生会十年后新出击

黄佳仪报道
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国际学生会2004年中秋节庆祝活动。(照片:国际学生会提供)

创办了十年的国际学生会与本校的国际学生中心本是两个不相干的团体,但因两者的意义相同:都是为了帮助国际学生适应校园生活,所以在今年决定让国际学生中心来协办国际学生会的社团活动。

国际学生会也在今年改了旧条例,从此允许本地学生参加国际学生会与他们所主办的活动,不再像以往只限国际学生参与。

对于这项新条例,国际学生中心经理,Mr. Vickneshwaran Thangavelu(36岁)用英语表示:国际学生能和本地学生一起在社团内交流是件

好事,这新条例的概念是要让他们可以通过本地学生更了解新加坡,这也是学习的好机会。

对于国际学生会开放让本地学生参加,商务系三年级的陈丽莎(19岁)同学说道:“这可以让我们互相切磋,更了解彼此的文化,我认为是个很好的改变。”

据国际学生会主席林庭如(23岁)表示,社团每次举办的活动都非常成功,至少都会有100名国际学生前来参与。因为反应良好,国际学生会几乎每个月都会为会员举办活动。

第一项开放让其他学生共同参与

这可以让我们互相切磋,更了解彼此的文化,我认为是个很好的改变。

陈丽莎, 19岁, 本地学生, 三年級商务系

的活动就是在八月二十日的‘一日游’。这项节目主要的目的是让学生们去参观一些平时没有机会去的地方。行程包括:茶舱(organic herbal tea warehouse), 鸡精货舱(chicken essence warehouse), 包子制造工场(pau-making factory), 陶瓷货舱(pottery)以及小麦场(wheat grass farm)。

对于活动的宗旨,林庭如说道:“让学生们交更多的朋友,学多一点东西,使生活有趣一点,因为我们外国学生来到新加坡就是一个人住在房间里很无聊,让他们去走多一点地方开扩视野。”

紧接着,国际学生会也在八月二十四与二十五日举办了一年一度的篮球比赛。这也是一项允许本地学生参与的活动。球队一共有四名队员,这当中只需要一名国际学生就可以了。

接下来,国际学生会还会在九月份办中秋节庆祝活动以及十月份的国际学生会庆生活动,这些一年一度的活动和以往不一样的是本地学生将共同参与。

国际学生会如今共有约520名会员,里头包括来自中国,缅甸,越南,印尼等国家的学生。

中文学会将举办“中秋晚会”

黄佳仪报道
jiayi.tribune@gmail.com

刚成立的中文学会已开始为中文系策划种种活动。排行第一的将会是在来临九月十九日的中秋晚会。

中文学会委员已构思了晚会的形式以及策划了许多活动准备让受邀的中文系学生,家长与讲师们共同参与。

学会主席,陈韵蕾(17岁)表示:“这次中秋晚会的目的是要推广华人的传统文化,让学生们可以通过这项活动更了解及认识我们华人的传统节日。”

杨君伟老师(32岁)认为:“中秋晚会感觉上很像是对外宣发义安理工学院有这样一中文系,它同时看起来是要和家长进行联系,但是更重要的是要给这第一届的学生们更大的凝聚力,让他们有机会一起策划,一起工作,因为在学校的经验不只是读书而已。”

中秋晚会将在本校LT68举行,排满三小时的活动包括:每班必须呈献的表演项目,由中秋节做为主题的‘提诗赏析’,‘灯笼制作’以及‘猜灯谜有奖游戏’。

中秋节是个赏月佳节,但这次的晚会却是在室内举行。对于这点,另外一位负责讲师,陈颖老师(35岁)说道:“主要是考虑到天气。而室内有个舞台,是个正式的场合让学生表演一些他们擅长的节目,拿手的好戏。如果天气好的话我们也有考虑让大家在节目后半部移到户外,那儿可以赏月,吃月饼(以及)喝茶。”

中文系执行总干事,杨静云女士(不愿透露年龄)对当晚的活动表示期待,并用英语说到:就算学生们当晚表演欠佳,我们大家都还是会玩得开心。

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(Quarterly intakes in January, April, July, October)

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Samuel Wong's Book Brings East to West

BY SIVAPRIYA SIVAKURUNATHAN
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SPREADING THE PASSION: Samuel explains the Chinese Orchestra in English. (Picture: Courtesy of Samuel Wong)

Two years after publishing his first book on the pipa, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) alumnus and pipa player Samuel Wong Shengmiao has written a second book providing an English resource on all Chinese orchestral instruments.

Samuel, 22, a top Mass Communication (MCM) graduate from 2003 who will be pursuing a PhD in ethnomusicology in the University of Sheffield in Britain come September, launched *Qi: An Instrumental Guide to the Chinese Orchestra*, at the Esplanade Library on 19 August. "Qi" is

Mandarin for instrument.

His book is one of the few references to the Chinese orchestra available in English. According to Samuel, most books on Chinese orchestral music are written in Chinese.

The seed for the book was sowed when Samuel performed in Copenhagen, Denmark, two years ago and was asked for references to "any resource available in English about Chinese music".

He said, "I did manage to find a few bits of information but they tended to be very academic. They tended to be long essays which are full of jargon."

Samuel assured that his second book is written in "a very readable fashion". He added, "You don't even need a musical background to be able to read such a book."

15-year-old Chang Zen, an erhu player who purchased a copy of the book for himself, is a student at Wong's alma mater Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road), where Samuel himself became interested in the Chinese orchestra. Zen said he bought the book as he hoped reading it would help him "understand all the other instruments in the Chinese orchestra".

The book is divided into four parts, identical to the musical sections in a Chinese orchestra: wind instruments, plucked string instruments, bowed string instruments and percussion instruments.

He said that one of the special highlights of the book was that "each chapter is an instrument [of the Chinese orchestra] in itself" that goes into detail about the instrument's history, tuning, range, techniques, tonal colour, and finally ends off with a repertoire of music for that instrument.

The chapters also include "representative sections" which include famous musicians

who play the instrument in question and new musical pieces which are not yet found in other books about Chinese music.

Samuel revealed that the biggest obstacle he faced was obtaining the most current musical repertoire for the book. In a telephone interview, he said that the Chinese orchestral music he thought was current at the time became outdated in a matter of weeks because newer, more popular songs had been composed and played even as he was writing the book.

To solve the problem, he sought out esteemed performers, including some from the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, for advice on publishing the most suitable and current music.

Ultimately, Samuel hopes to "create an awareness of Chinese music" through his book and diminish stereotypes of the Chinese orchestra as being jaded, when it is in fact, relatively modern. Indeed, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra website states that the concept of the Chinese orchestra has only a "50-odd year history".

Ng Liang Zhi, 21, a full-time National Serviceman and friend of Samuel's, who helped out with the photography for the book, admitted, "I didn't have an interest at the start but as I contributed... I got exposed to a lot of [Chinese orchestra], so my interest grew for sure."

Now, he says, "It's very interesting. It's a whole different world of musical instruments and sounds."

Qi: An Instrumental Guide to the Chinese Orchestra is sold at \$24.90 and is available at Karl Heng Enterprise, Earshot Café, Singapore Chinese Orchestra Co Ltd, and the Teng Company website at www.thetengcompany.com.

WCG Comes to NP

BY MAS ATIKAH JU
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THINK FAST, ACT FAST: Students battle it out in the WCG competition held in NP. (Picture: Kate Lim Hwee Leng)

For the first time, the preliminary tournaments of the World Cyber Games (WCG) were held in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) in an effort to make professional gaming accessible to students. The WCG is an annual international gaming competition akin to the Olympics in the cyber gaming world.

Operations Manager for Rapture Gaming, a local games-related services company, and Singapore WCG, Mr Thomas Lim, 32, hoped to include student gamers as the WCG was previously seen as exclusive only to professional gaming competitors.

He said, "We know that there are student gamers who are good enough [to compete], we want to give the student gamers a taste of what WCG is like [by holding] these mini tournaments in the tertiary schools."

The three-day gaming competition, organised by both Rapture Gaming and Samsung, was held at the Atrium from 5 July to 7 July.

Competitions were also held in other polytechnics as well as the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU).

For the tertiary preliminaries, Warcraft 3; Counter Strike; Source; Need for Speed Underground 2 and DOTA All Stars, were selected due to their popularity. However, DOTA All Stars, a local favourite, will not be played at the WCG International Finals.

Due to an overwhelming response of over 280 applications, Mr Lim had to double the number of teams to 38.

Mr Lim added that there were difficulties in scheduling a common time for the gamers to compete as they had different timetables.

The competition drew a large crowd who gathered around the giant plasma screens to watch as teams competed.

The winners each received a Samsung MP3 player and represented NP for the tertiary finals at Nanyang Polytechnic where winners will be "seeded" into the top 16 for the National Finals at Suntec City in early September.

NP's winner for Warcraft 3, Clement Lun, 18, a second-year InfoComm Technology (ICT) student, who has been gaming since secondary school, was supportive of the tertiary gaming tournaments.

He felt that he had "better chances" of winning in the tertiary tournaments as opposed to entering the Open Category in the National Finals along with about 1,000 other gamers.

Mr Lim hoped that participants in the National WCG finals would have a professional attitude about gaming.

He said, "There was a lack of professionalism in the Singapore gamers, such as not turning up for the game on time."

Wider Social Circles with Match-A-Friend

BY SIVAPRIYA SIVAKURUNATHAN
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GOOD TIMES: Students make new friends through NP's matchmaking network. (Digitally Modified Picture: S.Meenakshi)

Match-A-Friend, a friendship-cum-matchmaking service formed by a group of Innovation and Enterprise (I & E) students netted a total of 110 new online friendships among Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students.

The idea for Match-A-Friend came from Joseph Tay, 19, a second-year Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering (CBE) student, who observed that students in NP "study all the while... and people hardly mix around among the schools".

Together with four other second-year students from Accountancy (ACC) and

Business Information Technology (BIT) doing I&E as part of their School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) module, Joseph wanted to set up "a common place where people can come and interact with each other".

This "place" was Siloso Beach at Sentosa, where 22 Match-A-Friend network members gathered on 13 August.

To publicise the outing, the group sent out a mass e-mail to the student population telling them about Match-A-Friend. In the e-mail, students were encouraged to add the I&E group to their Friendster accounts, a popular online social networking website, to sign up as Match-A-Friend members.

Attached to the e-mail was also a registration form asking for the participant's race, gender, weight and height as well as a brief personal description and what kind of friends or possible partners they wanted to meet.

These particulars were necessary for the group to be able to match-make participants effectively, said Madeline Ching, 21, an ACC student and project group leader. The group sorted out the forms according to similarities and then took note of possible pairings.

In total, 35 people responded to the Sentosa outing but only 22 turned up. Unfazed, the team remained enthusiastic and tried to create opportunities for the match-made pairs to interact through games.

According to Joseph, the games played had "a certain degree of physical contact that promotes interaction". These included

"Wacko" and "Dog-and-Bone" which involved plenty of tapping and chasing. And although love was not in the air, friends were made.

Ng Wan Sin, 17, a first-year Logistics Engineering Management (LEM) student who admitted it was her maiden match-making event, was so enthusiastic she "got all [the participants' hand phone] numbers".

Lee Jian Sheng, 21 a first-year Information Technology (IT) student, said he made "one or two friends" and was keen on meeting up with them. "The games in the beginning were ice breakers and were not so fun. However, during lunch we got to interact with each other better."

However, the real measure of the group's success came from an evaluation by their I&E: Entrepreneurship lecturer, Mrs Dorothy Kwok-Koh, in her forties, who went to Sentosa to monitor her students' progress. Mrs Kwok-Koh said it was a good effort as students were enjoying themselves.

She felt it was not just important to see "the outcome of the activity" but also to see "the demonstration of the I&E traits in the students". These are the 5Cs of courage, collaboration, self-confidence, strength of character and creativity.

The group will continue their match-making services if response continues to be enthusiastic. Said Madeline, "If the response is good, we might make it [Match-A-Friend] permanent, but we will only organise events during the school holidays."

Ngee Ann Poly Cricket Spirit Alive

BY CHEN SIYA
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The Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Cricket Club will make its first splash on a national level by debuting at the upcoming Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic Games (IVP) in November and are expected to do well.

The small but tightly knit club has been going from strength to strength since it became an official Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) in December 2004. Its members meet up twice or thrice weekly to train, barring common test and examination weeks.

In a friendly match against Republic Polytechnic's Cricket Club on 6 August at the Kismis field, the NP Cricket Club won by eight wickets. This was the second friendly match victory for the club, who beat Nanyang Polytechnic's Cricket Club by five wickets in June earlier this year.

Both victories have inspired and motivated the club to achieve more wins in the future. The team has been training for the IVP at the Singapore Cricket Association (SCA) every Saturday since June.

Said 18-year-old Anand Sathees Kumar, President of the NP Cricket Club and a second-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student, "Compared to the other polytechnics, we lack practice and are not as established. Some of the players in the other



CRICKET READY FOR IVP: NP's brand new Cricket Club looks set to take on other more established teams in the upcoming November IVP Games. (Picture: Kate Lim Hwee Leng)

poly teams are also national players."

Although there are no national players in the NP Cricket Club, most of the members have played cricket before and possess good background knowledge of the game, said Joseph Princetenn Manuel, 19, an NP

Cricket Club member and second-year Information Technology (IT) student.

He added, "Our team can function very well. We have adequate talent but we need a few weeks to train intensively for the upcoming IVP."

Starting out as a regular recreational activity among just three students in June 2004, the club has now grown to 14 members. Almost half of them, including Anand, are international students from India.

It was passion for cricket that brought these students together in the first place.

Then, Anand and his two seniors approached the Student Development and Relations office (SDAR).

In the beginning, the club faced problems with funding. Due to insufficient equipment provided by the school, some members had to fork out their own money to purchase bats and gloves, spending about \$100 each.

To help the club get on its feet, NP provided each member with a subsidy of \$18 for a jersey and track pants set as well as sponsored the professional coaching fees at the SCA.

Two lecturers, Mr Ahsan Uddin Shan, 31, from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS), who is from Pakistan, and Mr David Richard Francis, 28, a visiting lecturer from the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT), who is from India, help out with the running of the club's activities.

Mr Francis shared that despite the tough start he still has faith in the team.

He said, "I see the club taking off in a big way. I think [with] a little more exposure and a few more games under their belt... they can perform well at the upcoming IVP." ■

Viewing Perseids on Campus

BY SIVAPRIYA SIVAKURUNATHAN
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The Perseids meteor shower on 12 August saw 168 students spending the night on campus to observe the astronomy phenomenon, in an event organised by the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Astronomy Club.

The event came two weeks after the election of the club's new committee on 1 August, whose top priority is now to increase publicity and boost awareness of their activities, said its new president, Tang Kim Sua, 18, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student.

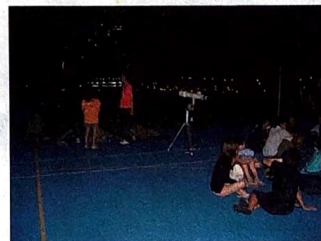
Kim Sua said the members of the Astronomy Club are working towards displacing the notion that "people who join astronomy clubs are the nerdy types". He hoped that by publicising the Astronomy Club, he can generate interest among students about it.

It has been two years since the Astronomy Club opened its doors to NP and invited students and staff to take part in its activities. That last time, in August 2003, coincided with Mars being the closest to Earth in 60,000 years and participants had a chance to get up close to the red planet via telescopes.

This time, participants gathered at the NP stadium to observe the Perseids meteor shower, which, according to the NASA website, is a shower of colourful fireballs that "come every year, beginning in late July and stretching into August".

Meteor showers come out of the fast-travelling pieces of dust from a comet's tail, resulting in striking light streaks, or meteors, when it disintegrates.

About 180 students applied to attend the event at \$2 per person and the response was so overwhelming that some 20 students who



STARRY STARRY NIGHT: Star-gazing enthusiasts clustered together. (Picture: Sivapriya Sivakurunathan)

e-mailed the club after the cut-off date had to be turned away.

One of the participants, Ng Shun Qiang, 17, a first-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student, saw the meteor shower as a chance to make friends.

Others, like Robin Lim Han Liang, 17, a first-year Business Information Technology (BIT) student, said that he had "always had an interest in astronomy" and was glad to stay over.

The response from NP staff however, was not as enthusiastic. Only four staff members, including the principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang, turned up for the event.

Kim Sua attributed this to the fact that "the invitation e-mails were actually sent out late [to staff]", only a week before the Perseids meteor shower.

He acknowledged that it was because "we had two weeks to plan this and some of our committee members were unavailable because they were busy with their projects and work".

Despite this, Kim Sua deemed the event a success. He said, "The turnout is good... this event is special [as] it is the first time in two years that the Astronomy Club has actually held an event that is campus-wide." ■

Racial Harmony Through Soccer

BY WANG EIGENE
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A group of Innovation & Enterprise (I&E) students organised the IE 7 Winning Challenge Cup, a soccer challenge to help forge racial harmony inside and outside of Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), on 29 July.

The students were from the Mechanical Engineering division (ME) of the School of Engineering (SoE) and consisted of three second-year students whose love of soccer spurred them to organise the event as an I&E project.

The challenge was open to both NP students and the public and each paid a \$40 registration fee to play. This was used for medals and cash prizes for the top two teams, and refreshments.

In order to encourage and strengthen the multi-racial bond in the community, teams had to be made up of different races. Said Mohammed Noor Azlan Hawa Bin Mohd Yazid, 18, one of the organisers, "The game was played two days after racial harmony day so it was a good opportunity for different races to mix together to enjoy the game."

This was well-received by participants and the matches allowed different racial groups to learn how to play with one another.

Noor Azlan added, "Almost 90 percent of the groups that applied had at least two different races in their teams."

Devaraj Maan, 17, a first-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student and his team mates were one of the youngest groups in the challenge.

He said, "The game was basically fun to play and watch. Although my team was much younger than my opponents, we were still having fun playing the game." ■



EMBRACING RACIAL DIVERSITY: Different races unite in a soccer match. (Picture: Wang Eigene)

He also added, "It's a good football game although each game only lasted for 10 minutes. It was entertaining."

However, the response only picked up nearer the closing date.

Noor Azlan revealed, "Initially, two days before the closing date, we only had less than 20 teams. However, at the last minute, we had a total of 28 teams. This exceeded our targeted number."

Due to the unexpected last-minute response, Azlan and his team had to eliminate more than four teams in the interest of time. This had to be done because they had only booked the NP sports field from 8am to 5pm that day.

Spectators themselves got into the mood as well.

"There was suddenly fan clubs and there was knocking of dustbins and singing to help support the mood and atmosphere of the match," said Noor Azlan.

The first prize went to a non-NP team, Grasshoppers and the second prize to an NP team, White Tigers.

The head of I&E, Mr Tan Hock Guan graced the event as the guest-of-honour and encouraged participants to support and enjoy themselves in the game. ■

IVP Sports Cut From 28 to 9

BY MARK TAN BING JUN
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Due to the changes in the polytechnic academic calendars, the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic Games (IVP) in January 2006 will see a reduction in the number of sports because of the clash with the universities' calendars.

The next academic semester for polytechnics will start in November, traditionally when the IVP is held, and will clash with university examinations as undergraduates start their semester in July.

This conflict in timing has made identifying feasible tournament schedules for all previous 28 IVP sports an almost impossible task. Hence, the IVP Sports Council, the overall governing body for tertiary sports, has reduced the number to just nine sports: basketball, netball, badminton, floorball, soccer, swimming, table tennis, volleyball and track and field.

These were chosen based on the maximum number of teams able to participate.

According to Mr Edmund Oh Boon Kok, 34, student development officer from the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR), these sports were also chosen based on them being "core sports in Singapore as well as a unanimous decision [made] by the IVP council".

The remaining nine sports, including rugby, soccer and hockey, will be played at the Polytechnic-Institute of Technical Education (Poly-ITE) level, as the semesters coincide. This means that sports previously dominated in the IVP by the universities, like rugby, may now see new winners at the



NEVER SAY DIE: With soccer being one of the remaining nine sports, its players want to achieve an IVP gold. (Picture: Mark Tan Bing Jun)

Poly-ITE games.

However, this also means that there will be no more opportunities to play against the best in these sports, which tend to come from the universities.

Benedict Ng Jun Long, 20, a second-year Building & Real Estate Management (BEM) student and president of the rugby team agreed. He feels that with the universities being excluded from the tournament, it would "create a more level playing field".

He stated that the university players have

an edge because they are "older, fitter after having just come out of the army and have more experience". Benedict added that the bulk of polytechnic students are "new to the sport having never played before" and that there is also a "lack of the number of experienced players in the team".

Mr Bernard Tan Yong Seng, 27, an SDAR officer, said that "in certain games, guys in the universities may have the edge over Polytechnic students as they've undergone competitions in 'A' Divisions [for JC

students], 'IVP' [for Polytechnic students] or 'SAFSA' [for men serving NS]". As for the women's teams, Mr Tan said that the "gap may not be that prominent as the age difference is only two years".

But despite the competitions being easier now, he confessed, "I'd rather our students compete at the highest level. Only when we expose ourselves to the competition standards of the perennial powerhouses will we be able to gauge our standards against the best and [be able to improve ourselves]."

Adrian Lok En Cheng, 24, a second-year Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering (CBE) student and captain of the Ngee Ann wakeboarding team, agreed with Mr Tan. He said that "even though the IVP is during the study break before the common tests, I would rather the universities be in the IVP".

Mr Tan added that "recent results have shown that we're capable of closing the gap with the 'Big Boys'". Ngee Ann's soccer team achieved second place in the IVP last year, as did the Track & Field women's team.

With the universities cut from 19 sports, the length of each tournament will be shorter as the universities normally contribute at least three more teams. This will result in players having less exposure and room to improve with match experience.

To counter the problem, there will be IVP Invitational Tournaments on top of the Poly-ITE games for those sports which were dropped. These can be held by any tertiary institute if the schedule permits and coincides with the rest of the tertiary institutions. As it stands, aquathlon, fencing, life-saving, softball and touch rugby have already expressed interest. ■

Sheer Grit Leads to NP Canoe Polo Team's Triple Win

BY EUNICE CHIA
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The women of the Ngee Ann Canoe Polo (NACP) team wrote a new chapter in their five-year history by coming in first for both the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic Games (IVP) and Women's Open, as well as being second in the Under 19s in a series of competitions that ended 21 August.

It was a hard-fought victory over three weeks, said Rudith Yang Pei Pei, 20, a final-

year Business Studies (BS) student and vice-captain of NACP. The team tied three times with Singapore Polytechnic (SP) in the Women's Open, until a final penalty shoot-out by Gracie Chua Siew Lan, 21, a BS graduate, brought victory to NACP.

The team also scored 3-1 in their showdown with the National University of Singapore (NUS) but fell short by a scoreline of 7-0 against the Temesek Polytechnic Women's team, clinching second place for the Under 19 category of the Canoe Polo Competition.

Still, the women managed to achieve

their objectives for this year of improving themselves "to beat their personal best" and winning a medal for every event they participated in at the swimming pool of the old Singapore Management University (SMU) campus off Bukit Timah Road.

Last year, the women's team occupied a second position in the IVP finals and third position in the Opens.

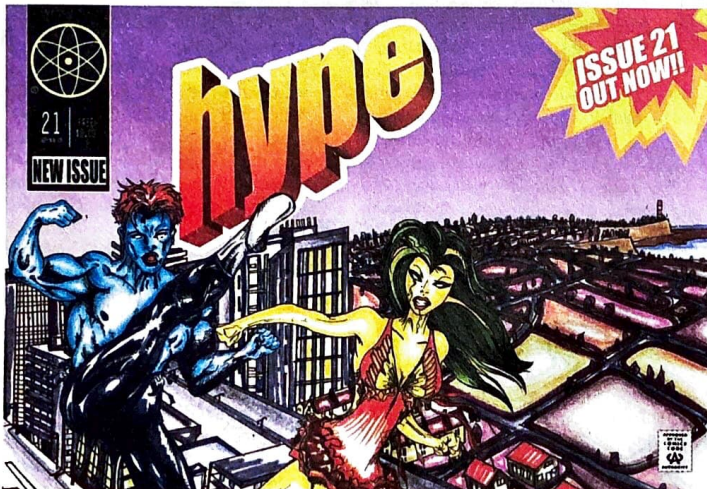
Training was intensive prior to the competition. The team trained twice a day and they booked pool slots six times a week in which two pool trainings were

compulsory. Rudith said, "It was based on sheer hard work."

Moreover, many players suffered injuries. Rudith said, "We still bear with the pain and go against it during competitions."

The men's team, on the other hand, came in third in the Men's IVP, as predicted by President of NACP, Alvin Lee Jian Jin, 19, a final-year Biotechnology (BIO) student.

NACP is currently training for their next competition, the Singapore River Raft Race which will be held in January 2006. "We aim to clinch a medal for it," Rudith said. ■



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