

ONLY SO MUCH

Cash-strapped students are seeking ways to support themselves. Reporter BELINDA CHNG investigates the situation, and explores how Ngee Ann has tried to lend a hand.

Despite the financial assistance schemes Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) offers, some students are still having problems coping with their finances in these hard economic times.

Mrs Ang Beng Wah, Director of Finance, said there has been an increase in applications for the Tuition Fee Loan scheme, Central Provident Fund Approved Education scheme and NP-administered loan scheme compared to 2000. The Finance Office also expects tuition fee loans to increase in the second semester.

Of scholarships, bursaries and loans

Although Mrs Tay-Ching Pui Fun, a student counsellor from the Student Services Office (SS), which processes all scholarship, bursary, study grant and study loan applications said SS "does not reject students who come to us", students interviewed said they have had difficulty applying for scholarships, bursaries and study grants.

Ms Marie, 19, a third-year Mass Communication student, whose father, the sole breadwinner, died last December, said, "I went to see the student counsellor in August to apply for a study grant but she suggested that I work because she said NP's policy is for students to be independent."

Mrs Ang explained that not all students are encouraged to work part-time as it may affect their grades. Only students who are doing well academically will be advised to work part-time.

Ms Marie said she was offered an NP study loan of up to \$1,200 per year but she was reluctant to accept it, as she already has to pay off her tuition fee loan upon graduation, and support her sister who has Down's Syndrome.

The Tuition Fee Loan Scheme has a value of up to 75% of tuition fees and is subject to average bank prime interest rates. The NP Study

Loan Scheme is interest-free and only offered to students genuinely in need of financial assistance.

Mrs Ang agreed that loans are not suitable for the more needy students as "a loan will only increase their financial burden immediately upon graduation".

However, she said NP provides financial assistance mainly for a student's studies and that NP could not help all cash-strapped families as "we have to work within our means". She added, "We give you an avenue to pay for your fees but if you choose not to do so, there's nothing more we can do for you."

Criteria for approval

Mohammed Nor Faizal, 20, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student, who got C and D grades last semester and whose application was rejected for an NP Bursary, said, "My father was retrenched so my family had no income. Now, my father found a job but his \$1,700 salary is still not enough because two of my sisters are schooling."

SS evaluates a student's application for bursaries based on his or her contribution to Co-Curricular Activities, community service, leadership qualities, latest academic results and family income, before arranging an interview with the applicant.

Students in first year are assessed based on their 'O' Level and first semester results. Hence, NP principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang said if a student is rejected, they "ought to accept that there will always be some students who are more deserving".

Source of funds

Funding for scholarships, bursaries and grants comes from donors and interest earned from endowment funds.

This semester, \$100,000 of the income generated from the endowment funds is available for disbursement of scholarships, bursaries and grants. The average funds available for the past two years was about \$180,000.

Mrs Ang said, "When we are most in need of scholarships and bursaries, income might be low because interest rates are low and the number of donors drop. We are limited by the amount that we have so we can't give out as many."

Mrs Ang explained why NP does not touch the principal sum from the endowment funds. "Scholarships and bursaries deplete the funds so if we don't keep the core amount, later years we'll have nothing." Although the Ministry of Education's grant to NP has decreased this year, it will not affect the budget for financial assistance, said Mrs Ang, as NP does not use MOE's grant to fund financial assistance schemes.

A question of fairness

As scholarships are awarded based on academic results, some students have questioned the sweeping comparison of grades between students from different courses.

A third-year Electrical Engineering student, who declined to be named, said, "Last year, I applied for a scholarship and bursary with three As, one AD and one B but I didn't get it. It is not fair to compare students from all departments like that."

Mrs Ang agreed that the sweeping comparison of grades between different

departments may not be accurate and that she will forward the suggestion to SS for consideration.

The student also questioned the assumption that all working family members contribute to the family. He said, "My brother is working but he doesn't want to pay for anything. My mother is the only one supporting the family. They do not care, as long as there are two people working."

Mrs Ang said that the student counsellors conduct interviews with students to allow them a chance to explain their difficulties. However, she added, "To know who contributes and so on, there's no way SS can verify that."

Foreign students interviewed generally felt NP is not helping them financially.

A second-year Logistics Engineering & Management student from Malaysia noted that foreign students are only eligible to apply for the NP Bursary, amongst the many offered.

Ms Yap Bee Hui, the Finance Manager, said, "The eligibility of application for scholarships and bursaries is determined by the donors. If no restriction is set by donors, the applications will be opened to all students."

Chia Lee Sian, 20, a second-year Mechanical Engineering student from Malaysia, whose bursary application was rejected, said, "My father is a fisherman so he has no income slip. My brother also doesn't have so it's quite difficult to prove my family income in my application."

He suggested that NP could allow students in such circumstances, to name two sureties who could vouch for the families' finances, for SS to verify the information.

All 11 students interviewed said there is insufficient information on financial assistance schemes available and four were unaware that they could see a counsellor for help.

Mrs Tay-Ching said, "SS gives talks during Orientation and schemes are stated clearly in the students' handbooks. Scholarships and bursaries notices are put up in departments, NP website and the Student Services and Information Centre. The scholarship and bursary exercise is also held in July yearly."

Mrs Ang said students should look out for information on the schemes. However, she said it is possible to intensify publicity by putting up more posters in the various Schools.



3 New summer school: An exclusive with the Principal



4 How safe and secure are you on campus?



8 Floorball Club: Pursuing a fast ball game

Building bridge builders

BY SAMANTHA CHAN
samantha_chan@journalist.com

Thirty-six secondary schools competed in a Bridge Building Competition organised by Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Building & Environment Division (BE) at The Atrium on 21 September.

The contest aimed to promote the division and to develop an interest in civil engineering among secondary students, said Mrs Tan-Ng Lay Har, a BE lecturer and one of the event organisers. "Bridge-building is interesting to students because they can see a tangible result. It is different from computer games which are virtual," she said.

With a maximum of four pupils per team, secondary school students designed and constructed mini-bridges using non-metallic materials. Bridges were judged mainly on the load they could carry compared to their own weight. Thus, a lighter bridge which withstands a heavier load is the stronger contender.

Mr Lau Kia Hwa, a BE lecturer and one of the event organisers, said some flimsy-looking bridges were surprisingly sturdy.

The strongest was the 'Shears Bridge' from Assumption English School (AES) which carried a load of 155.5 kg.

Using maranthi wood and cotton string, the team of four Secondary Two students built the bridge in the shape of an inverted triangle to provide better support for a heavy load.

Andrea See Yin Jin, 14, one of the AES team members who studies Design &

Technology (D&T) in school, said, "We learnt what is best for a bridge from research and our own mistakes. We did not learn anything like this in D&T."

However, 'Shears Bridge' was relatively heavy at 254 g and was defeated by overall winner Chung Cheng High School (Main). Weighing only 68 g, their bridge carried a load of 25.5 kg.

The four Secondary Three students began researching in September and built the bridge using balsa wood, plywood and glue. Chinese national and team member Wu Qi, 17, said that he learnt the fundamentals of physics in China when he was in primary school, so most of the concepts were common sense to him.

Mr Kwek Wei Hong, their mathematics teacher, said, "It's their competition. They have to do it themselves. So if they win, they will feel that it's their own effort. They have confidence in their own ability and had a lot of fun."

The team from Cedar Girls' Secondary School said that the competition was good hands-on experience. Koh Mei Xian, 15, a Secondary Three student from the team, said, "We all have different skills so we learnt a lot from each other. We also realise things that work on paper don't really work."

Although the girls did not win a prize, they were hardly disappointed. Mei Xian explained, "We did our best. We are here to get an experience and we enjoyed the process very much. This is more important."

Ms Tang Wai Yue, a physics teacher from Victoria School who attended the competition



BRIDGING THE GAP: Students from Chung Cheng High School (Main) with their winning bridge, which weighed a mere 68g. (Picture: Procella Tang)

with her students, said, "This is out-of-the-box learning for students. It definitely cultivates an interest in civil and structural engineering."

More than 60 teams submitted proposals, and BE had to limit each school to one submission and rejected proposals to allow more schools to participate.

Due to the overwhelming response, Mrs Tan said that BE is planning to make the competition an annual publicity drive to

promote their building courses.

Jeffrey Ng Peng Mun, 21, a third-year Civil & Environmental Engineering student, was in charge of adding loads to test the bridges. He said, "I was very tense. I don't know when the bridge is going to drop."

"But I also learnt some things as a load tester. I can see for myself the problems with the bridges and how the construction can be better. It is better than reading textbook." ■

NP staff and family members get A.C.T.I.V.E.

BY ANDY SOH
andy_soh@journalist.com

Two hundred and twenty Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) staff and their family members went on an 8 km trek at the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve on 14 September for A.C.T.I.V.E. Day 2002.

A.C.T.I.V.E. stands for All Companies Together In Various Exercises. The campaign aims to promote four components of a healthy lifestyle - regular exercise, healthy eating, no smoking and managing stress.

Part of the National Healthy Lifestyle Programme launched by the Health Promotion Board in 1992, the campaign targets all Singaporeans, with special focus on school children, employees and senior citizens.

NP's Human Resource Office (HR) had organised this year's event to support the campaign and to promote family bonding among NP staff.

Mr Lai Tar Meng, 35, HR Officer for Community Relations, said the trek was more challenging than last year's event which featured in-line skating and walking at West Coast Park.

Although the trek did not meet its target of 30 percent of each department's staff members joining, it had more participants than last year's 159 people.

Mr Lai said that he had scouted and chosen the route many weeks before the event to

"ensure that it offered the right amount of exercise" for the participants.

There was much uphill walking and steep climbing. The strenuous activity saw many resting halfway to catch their breath and have a drink of water.

Most of the participants finished the entire trek while a few did not as they had taken the wrong route, said Mr Lai.

When asked if these participants were too exhausted and so, went the wrong way, Mr Lai explained that A.C.T.I.V.E. Day should offer some physical challenges for it to be meaningful.

He added that the staff could always go on shorter and easier routes in their own time.

Mrs Goh Gek Huay, 35, Technical Support Officer from the Electronic & Computer Engineering Division, took part with her colleagues because she had enjoyed the President's Challenge Walkathon on 27 July.

She was one of the first women participants to finish the trek.

Said Mrs Goh, "[The trek] is very good and very challenging. I think it's more fun than tiring."

Mr Jaafar Yaacob, 52, Technical Support Officer from the Building & Environment Division had joined to "support his own department".

Although he felt that the trek was harder than last year's event, he enjoyed it greatly and would definitely join next year's event. ■

Wednesday walks to promote

H.E.A.L.T.H.

BY DANNY TAN
danny_tan@journalist.com

Forty-seven staff turned up for Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) first-ever Walk @ Wednesday on 4 September to spur each other on towards a healthy lifestyle.

The activity is in line with the H.E.A.L.T.H. (Helping Employees Achieve Life-Time Health) charter, a collaboration between the Singapore National Employers' Federation and the Health Promotion Board, signed by NP's principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang in June.

According to Mrs Sim Ai Ling, Assistant Human Resource Manager, "[The Walk] formalises NP's commitment in promoting employees' health and well-being... and hopefully to involve more staff to commit towards a healthier lifestyle."

The Singapore H.E.A.L.T.H. Award is an annual award to give national recognition to workplaces with commendable Workplace Health Promotion (WHP) programmes that improve the health status and productivity of employees.

Sixty-seven staff members officially signed up for NP's three-month programme. Participants are not required to fulfil a minimum mileage or clocked time, because it's "mainly to get them started with some kind of exercise", said Mrs Sim.

Participants were introduced to a comprehensive warm-up session by a fitness instructor from the Singapore Sports Council. They were given pointers on proper walking and running postures and techniques, such as the need to inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.

Mr Eric Liew, 42, a Technical Support Officer at the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology, admitted that he seldom exercised on his own.

He decided to join "to meet up with some of my friends for some regular socialising and joking... if you want to come for exercise, you must have the clique", he said.

Ms Yee Lai Yong, a Corporate Support Officer with the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, said she joined the programme to have "some time to relax myself after work... and [try to achieve] a healthier physical look."

Walk @ Wednesday is one of many activities available for staff to maintain healthy lifestyles.

Yoga, aerobics, line dancing, taiqi and Pilates have been introduced, and response has been good as the actual turnout rates exceed expectations. For instance, the Pilates class saw over 60 participants when 20 were expected.

NP also holds monthly talks that cover topics ranging from parenting to exercising right. Another programme under WHP sees 14 staff members use weight resistance workouts at the staff gym to induce fat loss. ■

In the works: Summer school

BELINDA CHNG finds out more about a summer school pilot programme, and other upcoming plans in a one-to-one exclusive with Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang.

After Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) abolition of supplementary exams in the year 2000, NP plans to introduce a summer school programme by next May, said Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang.

Only examinable modules will be offered to summer school students and there are no immediate plans to extend it to the whole of NP. The Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) Division will pilot the programme, with details currently being worked out.

Students who fail their examinable modules will be allowed to clear the modules during the school holidays while students with good results can opt to take a module in advance, freeing up time during the semester to work on projects.

Mr Chia explained, "Weaker students who have failed a module will have an additional module to deal with when the semester starts and things will continue to get tougher."

He said the summer school programme allows students more time to absorb whereas the supplementary exam forces students to cram what they have learnt in a short time.

Mr Chia said tentatively that students who fail their modules will be allowed to opt for the summer school programme or repeat the module in the next semester.

Many NP staff have heard about the new programme and are in favour of it, Mr Chia said, although there will be "no monetary benefit, except for the satisfaction of helping our students to cope better". The staff involved will be selected based on his or her availability, and the module that is offered, Mr Chia added.

Despite incurring a higher operating cost with the new programme, Mr Chia said the fee charged will be affordable as "we don't want to make money from it". He said, "If it brings about substantial benefits, we should be prepared to invest in the cost."

Though Mr Chia has limited contact with the students due to his schedule, he tries to "attend events organised for the students to talk to students and find out how they are doing".

He said that NP has plans to "set up an informal student panel to find out from students their needs and how to improve campus life" at the end of each semester.

New buildings are also planned for the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) and the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) in three years' time.

Mr Chia explained, "FMS and LSCT facilities are scattered in five or six different buildings now. We want them to be more centralised to be more effective." The centralisation will add impetus for growth, as LSCT and FMS have "programmes that are second to none, compared to the other three polys".

Progress report

Having been appointed principal for more than two years now, Mr Chia has worked at making NP known as the "polytechnic that delivers a broad-based, ability-driven education for its students".

Mr Chia said that the Ngee Ann Learning Model (NLM) provides students with a well-rounded education. Through modules and electives offered by the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS), students pick up skills apart from their main area of study.

Mr Chia also realigned the previous 13 NP departments into five core Schools and established the School of IS.



CCA SUPPORTER: "You make your best friends from CCAs, not from lectures," said NP Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang. (Picture: Noel Hidalgo Tan)

He said, "This was done to maximise our resources and we have seen a lot of efficiency gains."

"With the poly running on a budget of about \$160 million a year, these savings benefit the students too because it means there will be more funds available for student-related activities," he added.

The principal sees Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) as a vital part of education that helps students to develop confidence.

Mr Chia said that there is now an incentive for students to participate as they get bonus points when applying for local universities. "It is through CCAs, community projects and

overseas attachments where students learn leadership skills," he said.

The former National University of Singapore athlete added, "You make your best friends from CCAs, not from lectures."

To increase membership, Mr Chia feels that clubs and societies must market themselves better. He encouraged each CCA to spruce up its website and work harder to "convince students of the rich experience that the CCA can offer".

He added that CCAs would be allowed to organise activities in the new convention centre as this helps to generate more student interest. It should be ready by end-November.

Sciences brought to life at Biotech Fair

BY GEETHA VISWAMBARAN
geetha_v@journalist.com

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Biotech Fair 2002, held from 29 to 31 August, saw an encouraging response of 14 secondary schools submitting 45 projects.

The fair was jointly organised by NP and the Singapore Science Centre, and supported by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR).

NP and the Singapore Science Centre host the annual event, which started in 1991, in alternate years.



DO-IT-YOURSELF: Students produce non-toxic, natural beach balms made from ingredients such as beetroot, aloe vera and essential oils. (Picture: Priscilla Tang)

This year's theme is "Biotechnology: Bringing Sciences to Life". Dr Chew Tuan Chiong, Director and Chief Executive of the Singapore Science Centre, said that the fair's aim is to raise awareness and generate interest amongst secondary school students in the field of science and technology.

The programme included a Schools' Project Competition for secondary school students, a seminar with notable industry practitioners and an exhibition. The winning schools were Tanjong Katong Girls' School, The Chinese High School and Raffles' Institution.

Preparations for the fair began in January. Mrs Tang-Lim Guek Im, NP's Course Manager for Biotechnology & Biomedical Sciences, said she was satisfied with the increased school participation rate and the quality of the projects.

Held at The Octagon, the exhibition saw students manning booths that featured their projects, such as an all-natural fruit solution of lime and lemon that prevents the growth and spread of pimples. Also featured was a non-allergenic, cost-effective, natural mosquito repellent which utilised sweet basil leaves.

Another project was a study done on how yeast extracts, high in nutritional value and *Lactobacillus*, boost the speed of growth and survival rate of flowerhorn fish. The study will enable commercial fish farms to export the fish faster, as well as bring it to the local market.

First-place winner, Lin Wei Xin, 15, a Secondary Three student at Tanjong Katong Girls' School, said, "It was fun discovering new things and we were able to apply what we learnt in our school curriculum."

Miss Chang Teck, Head of the Science Department in Yusof Ishak Secondary School (YISS), said that NP is innovative in organising the fair to create opportunities for students to "build confidence, creativity and curiosity".

She also felt that the best feature of the event was that all the student works got displayed.

YISS students did a project on algae control, by placing water hyacinths to prevent the clouding of water in their school's open water body system.

NP students helped in the fair by ushering and helping industrial partners to promote their products and introducing courses in NP's School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT).

Darren Choo, 18, second-year Biotechnology Student, said, "I feel that all schools that participated should be praised well, based on their efforts."

Besides the Biotech Fair, NP attempted to attract students to LSCT courses through school talks and workshops. It also plans to reach out to secondary school students through a lab enrichment programme, said Mrs Tang-Lim.

Playing it safe...

How much do you know about dealing with medical emergencies and current building evacuation procedures? Do you know who our campus supervisors are? Tribune takes a look at the things we take for granted: safety and security on campus.



Evacuation: more awareness needed



BY BELINDA CHNG
belinda_chng@journalist.com

Some Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students seem unaware of emergency evacuation procedures although the NP Safety Committee has drawn up plans for the five main Schools.

All 17 students interviewed by Tribune in a straw poll said they did not know where to assemble during an emergency. Many also expressed concern over the lack of information on evacuation procedures.

Chai Ching Hsiang, 17, a first-year Information Technology student, said, "Our lives are at stake. What if we are somewhere at some corner in school and we don't know where is the exit?"

Nur Ernie Eryanni, 18, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student, felt it is important for NP to keep students informed.

"In times of fire, surely there will be chaos and people will panic," she said.

According to Mr Phua Kian Peng, the Engineering Services Manager from NP's Estate Management Office, NP formed an Emergency Planning Response Team in 1998.

The team then set up the Building Response Teams (BRT) that are responsible for evacuation procedures for each School and Division.

The 15 BRTs will evacuate the buildings when the emergency alarm is activated. They will inform and direct students and staff to a designated assembly area (see sidebar), said Ms Kwok Shan Shan, secretary of the NP Safety Committee.

Comprising 10 to 15 staff, each team consists of a BRT head, a deputy, first-aid attendants, rescue and fire attendants, technical attendants and campus supervisors who will search the buildings for casualties.

Since the five main Schools take turns to conduct a fire drill and evacuation exercise during the annual Safety Week, most Schools only have a drill once in five years, although Mr Phua said that the Schools are free to organise their own.

The School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS), NP's sixth School, does not conduct emergency practices as IS students already take part in fire drills organised by their disciplinary Schools.

All six Schools organise safety programmes, such as quizzes, talks and video screenings, during Safety Week held in July yearly.

Asked if NP has considered conducting a

Do you know your nearest emergency assembly areas?

General assembly areas

Sector 1
Blocks: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 34, 35, 36
Assembly area: Main Field at the Sports Complex

Sector 2
Blocks: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 27, 31, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 72, 73, 74
Assembly area: Admin Field opposite Block 1 (in front of Canteen One)

Sector 3
Blocks: 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 71, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83
Assembly area: Block 50 Field

Source: NP Safety Committee

Individual Schools/Divisions assembly areas

Information available at press time

Information & Communication Technology (ICT)
Lift lobby and open area on the second floor between Blocks 27 and 31

Business & Accountancy (BA)
Block 72 Level 3 carpark and Block 74 open field

Quality Assurance Engineering (QAE), Mechanical Engineering (ME) and Film & Media Studies (FMS)
Block 79 carpark and Block 52/53 carpark

Mathematics, Science & Computing (MSC) Division
Lecture Theatres 24/26 carpark and open space outside Canteen Three at Block 30

Source: Safety representatives and BRT members from individual Schools/Divisions

Facing

BY MATTHEW LEE
matthew_lee@journalist.com

Often dismissed as retirees with too much time on their hands, they are sometimes even ridiculed and cursed at as they enforce school discipline.

But they do not make the rules.

Campus supervisors are part of the Services Office. Besides maintaining discipline on campus, their duties range broadly from offering medical assistance to students' registration. As Mr Koh Han Hin, 59, p. 9, "We are here to do anything that concerns helping the students."

Ngee Ann (NP) would be incomplete without the campus supervisors. Yet so little is known about them. Tribune tries to shed light into their personal lives and their role on NP students.



Assisting in medical emergencies

BY DANNY TAN
danny_tan@journalist.com

Under Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) revised guidelines for medical assistance procedures, the person at the scene is responsible for deciding what actions to take.

"The person who is attending to the casualty has to determine for themselves if the person has incurred an injury that warrants an emergency evacuation or non-emergency evacuation," said Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, 33, NP's Student Services (SS) Officer.

"The new procedures were modelled to be self-sufficient," he explained, "and when there's an incident, the person who finds or encounters the incident should try to resolve the incident on their own, rather than coming back to Student Services and asking for assistance."

"If they're not able to take care of the situation as and when the incident arises, then they call Student Services and we'll try to assist," he added.

SS had revised the procedures to exclude the role of the Health Promotion Officer (HPO) after the former HPO left on her own accord.

Mr David Lui Eng Chye, 54, Director of SS, said that NP does not intend to find a replacement. He explained that SS had been under-utilising the position that was inherited from the defunct NP medical clinic.

The clinic at Block 18 closed in 1999 after

two years. Drs. Gethin Liow and Partners, who managed the clinic, did not find it economically viable.

Mr Vickneshwaran added that it was not financially feasible to "have a nurse on campus to be on call for medical needs as and when they arise".

The most cost-effective way of handling medical situations, suggested Mr Lui, was to "work with outside agencies, in this case either the hospitals, the clinics nearby; train more people in first aid to be able to identify [conditions] and spread the message to all students and staff that we all have a role to play to help each other".

SS has informed all staff of the new medical assistance procedures and posted the guidelines on its website.

SS defines a major injury as "one that cannot be treated by a first aider and needs the attention of medical professionals at a hospital". Conditions that need urgent medical care include "acute asthma attack, severe chest pain, severe vomiting, bleeding from eyes, nose or ears, severe bleeding, [and] possible broken limbs".

In such cases, an ambulance should be called immediately. The affected person should be accompanied, while the security guard post and the SS should be informed.

For minor injuries and conditions, such as abrasions, cramps, cuts and sprains, the person should offer first aid if he or she is trained. The injured person should be referred to a clinic if necessary.

Laptops top list of stolen items

BY SUHARTI SAMSUDIN
suharti@journalist.com

Laptops have been singled out as the most theft-prone item in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), according to Mr Vickneshwaran s/o Thangavelu, 33, Student Services (SS) Officer.

Between January and July this year, nine laptops, or notebook computers, have been reported stolen. Over the years, only three to four have been recovered, he said.

Said Miss Diana Toh, Systems Analyst (Support) at NP's Computer Centre, "When you lose your notebook, you don't just lose financially but you will also lose all your data, that is, your assignments and projects."

Students could prevent such thefts by securing their laptops to the table with cable locks, said Miss Toh. They also should not leave their computers unattended when they queue up for food at the canteens.

Apart from laptops, there have also been occasional cases of stolen wireless parts such as cards used for laptops, and PDAs, said Mr Vickneshwaran. Bags have also been reported stolen.

When theft occurs, SS will take a statement from the student and conduct an investigation to see if there is any way to trace the item.

Reports of lost items are handled differently. When an item is reported lost, SS will log it in their Lost and Found system and monitor the situation until the item is found and returned.

Since July 2002, 258 items were reported lost, with 157 items recovered.

If recovered items are not claimed, SS will keep them for a period of about three months before selling them in a jumble sale, said Mr Vickneshwaran.

"Items that are not sold will be destroyed," he added.

To help prevent theft, electronic lockers, also known as e-lockers, were installed for staff and students at four locations: the Atrium, the Library, Canteen 2 and the Sports Complex.

However, Mr Vickneshwaran said the e-lockers are under-utilised, although they can be safer than ordinary lockers. He explained that electronic locker combinations are "a bit more difficult to beat" than key combinations.

Other than SS' measures, the Estate Management Office (EM) provides security guards and security cameras on campus.

Six fixed surveillance cameras operate on a 24-hour basis at the main gate, the security guard post and other locations. Other cameras are installed and operated by the Schools themselves.

Security guards also patrol the campus, with four deployed in the day, and five at night.

According to Mr Mui Cheng Hock, Director of EM, "At least one guard is deployed at the guardhouse and the others are deployed to do foot patrol or any other enforcement duties at various parts of the campus."

NP's security measures aside, students should still be responsible in caring for their belongings, said Mr Vickneshwaran.

"Just because you're in a school doesn't mean you're safer. There may be someone watching you, any time. I think in Ngee Ann's context, where it's an open campus, anyone can walk around. It's better to be safe than sorry," he added.

Students may report stolen or lost items at the SS office at Block 18, #02-07, or online at www.np.edu.sg/sts.

ing the campus supervisors

Koh Han Hui

Age: 59

Not married

Been in NP: 6 years

Previous job: Construction foreman

Likes: Chatting at the coffeshop, eating the Canteen Two chicken rice, reading Newsweek, and on Sundays, walking around in town and catching up with friends

His say: "It is our duty to help the students, not only in discipline areas. We are

sort of like guardian angels. We try to help in whatever we can."



D. Vijyakumari

Age: 50

Married with two sons, one an NP graduate and the other a current student

Been in NP: 2 1/2 years

Previous job: Cashier at Cold Storage

Likes: Listening to Tamil and English pop songs, eating the Canteen Two chicken rice, reading The Straits Times, and on Sundays, spending time with her family

Her say: "We are strict, as we need to maintain the image of our students. If not, the reputation of the school will go down."



Cheong Siew Yuen

Age: 62

Married with three daughters

Been in NP: 10 years

Previous job: Warrant Officer in the Singapore Armed Forces

Likes: Working out at the gym with dumbbells, reading self-help books and Time magazine, eating anything with chicken at Canteen One as chicken is "lean and healthy", and on Sundays, looking after his grandchild and helping out with the cooking

His say: "It is the responsibility of the school to instil some discipline into the students. If not, when they go out into society, they will get easily frustrated when they do not get their own way."

(Mr Cheong declined to have his picture taken.)

Chan Fook Kee

Age: 55

Married with two sons and one daughter

Been in NP: 3 1/2 months

Previous job: Chief Security Officer at Nanyang Polytechnic

Likes: Rearing "luo han" fishes, reading newspapers, eating the economic Chinese mixed rice at Canteen Four, and on Sundays, going out for good "makan" with his wife

His say: "The students in Ngee Ann are well-disciplined. However we are always here to guide them should they go astray."



What I learnt this semester



BY NOEL HIDALGO TAN
noel_tan@journalist.com

Someone mentioned this to me in passing: "At the end of the day, when I die, I'm not going to look back and say, 'I wish I spent more time at work.'"

I never really understood that until this semester.

I've always enjoyed my work in school. When I started my poly education, it was a refreshing, enjoyable and engaging change from the previous three years of "work" – which was mostly the brainless eight-to-five routine of NS life.

Coming back to the schooling life was something I wanted to do. It was something I liked doing, and occasionally, it was something I was good at doing too.

In fact, I enjoyed it so much that school was a new life I embraced. There was a dynamic state of tension I was always in,

juggling school with friends, family, work and other obligations, but in the end, I chose to engage with school the most and diminished my presence in the other areas.

This is by far the most demanding semester in my time here. The work is near endless: always a meeting to attend or plan, stories to edit or write, paperwork to file, research to look up, calls to make, or otherwise some fire to put out. And of course, classes to attend.

It was my life, and I was enjoying every minute of it.

Then, while laying out the previous issue of Tribune, I received a call one afternoon from my mother telling me that my dad was warded in hospital.

Although I quite literally dropped everything to visit my father in hospital that afternoon, my instinct was to return to school in the evening to resume work.

I didn't make it back to school. Before I left the hospital, my co-editor called and relieved me from "my duty".

On hindsight, my father's condition was worrying but thankfully not anything immediately critical. And the two long hours on the way to the hospital put my work into perspective. In the days

to follow, I was "pretty out of it", plodding along where I could but not altogether engaged with my work. Thankfully, the proverbial ship continued sailing even though I was feeling a little sea-sick.

This semester, I learnt that I was so engaged in work that sometimes I forgot how it felt to have a connection with the people who matter in my life.

Not just because of what happened to my father – which in the end wasn't as serious as feared – but because of what other people meant to me, and sometimes, what I meant to other people.

And those moments of connection like the family dinner, that midnight phone call, or the morning SMS are a lot more important than meeting some crummy deadline. Or making money, for that matter.

The moments of connection are the ones that make me the most human.

I learnt that I should try to be more of a human being than a human doing. Because while there's still a lot of work left that's needed to be done, nothing is as important as, say, mending a friendship. Or comforting a grieving friend. Or going to church.

The Ngee Ann Tribune
is a publication by third-year print
journalism students of the Diploma in
Mass Communication course.

TRIBUNE
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

Advisors: Veronica Leng
Choy Kok Kee

Editors: Amanda Koh
Kelvin Bik
Noel Hidalgo Tan

Designer: Hilary Isaac Hoe

If you have anything to say, contact us and be published here in the forum. Let your story be known. We also welcome our readers' feedback and suggestions on each issue. Please write to:

The Editors, Ngee Ann Tribune
School of Film & Media Studies
Blk 23, Ngee Ann Polytechnic
535 Clementi Road
Singapore 599489

E-mail: nptribune@hotmail.com

Website: www.nptribune.com

Letters should include your full name, contact number and school. The Editorial team reserves the right to edit all letters where necessary.

YOUR SAY

Knowing people



BY KELVIN BIK
kelvin_bik@journalist.com

I don't know people. I trek in and out of school each day, and I see faces whom I have come to "know" after two years here as a student. We stop, but only if and when we are not rushing off to another class or project meeting.

We talk.

We part.

We do our "hi's and bye's".

Sometimes, in my head rings a bewildering "Excuse me, do I know you?"

I have many acquaintances, people who wave at me and smile knowingly at whatever "rubbish" they hear me saying. I would

I travel through and pick up little fragments of information floating like jeram down our choppy NP divide.

I piece together the reality of those people around me, through all my little contacts that form my much-denounced but oft-used grapevine.

I avoid the people whom I have heard so many negative things about: how X always runs up late and how Y never hands in the work.

I make those judgments every day.

Somewhere along the line, I shake aside my belief in seeing the potential good in people and convinced myself that I was being Professional.

I do still believe that work ought to be done.

I will believe that people should be held responsible for what they do.

But when I choose to see my acquaintances only as working partners, it is no wonder that I can sit in a lecture theatre or a tutorial class full of people – people whom I should have known for years – and still feel utterly alone.

year slipped into suicidal depression and could have died without anyone caring.

I didn't know that another friend broke off an intense relationship and with that came pain and rage, began fumbling in studies.

I didn't know when a close friend began smoking like a chimney just to "de-stress".

I didn't know.

If you asked me what my dad did yesterday, I couldn't tell you.

If you asked me what my mom cooked for dinner, I couldn't tell you.

If you asked me when my sister got married, I couldn't tell you.

I don't think you are as bad as I am. I hope not.

I hope you have always known that people, even those who drive you mad with stupid jokes, matter.

I'm learning to make time for the people who matter, to ask "How are you?" and press for an answer to sit next to a friend in his freezing room, and to look into

times, just sometimes, friend.

Who let the cats out?

BY JESSICA ANN THOMAS
jessica_a.thomas@journalist.com

In response to the stray cat problem in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), NP employs pest controllers, ISS Services Pty Ltd, to capture and remove cats found on campus.

The Estates and Development Office (ED) received complaints from NP staff about cats in the canteens, the Atrium and other public areas.

Before calling in the controllers, ED tried measures such as denying the cats food at the bin centres and canteens. Circulars were sent out to advise the campus population not to feed the cats.

"Stray cats can be a public health nuisance. The law allows us to trap and dispose of them," said Mr Ng Kay Kat, Director of ED.

For the school, the Agri-food and Horticulture Department (AFH) and was

responsible for the cat problem.

Controller ISS

supervisor



Source: Tribune, Volume 26, Issue 1, August 2002, page 2

A freshman's look

...BESIDES enjoying the column "Knowing People", I found the article about donating blood very useful! I enjoyed it because I have always been curious about such things and have secretly wanted to donate blood a few times, but never knew where to do so during my free time. So, the information provided is very helpful.

I also liked the articles where the NP students were giving their views on a certain subject... I think one of the best and most important things about a campus newsletter is that it features the point of views of the students and allow them to be heard...

I like the school information printed out as well. It keeps me updated on what's going on in campus and of certain things that I am supposed to know of, but am usually too busy to be informed (for example, the delay in the new NP construction project going on).

The news featured [on] the NP fresher's night was very entertaining. I really liked the "mini interview" the journalist had with... Miss NP... It allows us to know how they feel etc...

However, I was very curious to see who had won Mr NP, but there was no photograph of Mr NP... I think adding a little bit more photographs into the newsletter here and there would be great!

Overall, I think it's a great Tribune paper and I thoroughly enjoy reading it! Good for a break away from all the assignments!

Masturah bte Abdul Latif, 17,
First-year Early Childhood Education student
3 September 2002

Editor's reply

THANKS, Masturah, for your feedback.

About Mr NP, he was Tan Wei Li, 18, a first-year Mass Communication student. He was mentioned in Issue 1's Page 7 article on Freshmen Orientation Hopnrite. A small photo of him with a quote also appeared in the centrespread at the bottom left-hand corner.

Like you, we would like Tribune to be a platform where students and staff can voice their concerns to us at nptribune@hotmail.com

Club to look after cats?

I AM writing this in response to the article "Who let the cats out?" published in the August issue of Tribune.

I was thinking that if it was possible for the cat lovers in the Poly to form a club to look after the welfare of the cats in campus... I feel that cats removed by ISS simply "creates a vacuum" for a new bunch of cats to take up the place.

The club can seek advice from the Cat Welfare Society (CWS). The CWS is a non-profit organisation, run entirely by volunteers who want to improve the welfare of stray cats in Singapore. CWS' aim is to alleviate the pain and suffering of stray cats and kittens that live in our streets. To my knowledge, CWS provides training on how to be a responsible cat feeder. This includes how to feed cats in a proper manner and to keep the place clean and hygienic after feeding. This needs a lot of commitment.

There is... an issue that I am worried about, and that is, cats might roam in a canteen and make a mess on empty tables with leftover food.

Another problem will be the scepticism of the school. The Poly may find it a hassle in keeping and maintaining stray cats. In fact, it will not be an easy task.

Thank you.

Quek Ser Ming, 20,
Electronic & Computer Engineering student
29 September 2002

Editor's reply

THANKS, Ser Ming, for your concern. To start a club, consult the Student Development and Alumni Relations office at Block 72. Our reporter Jessica Ann Thomas had followed up with the Estate Management Office, who said it was willing to sterilise the cats but not to keep them on campus. Their concern is the potential health problem the cats' presence poses in the canteens. Jessica is working on a project with the Cat Welfare Society to have a sterilisation and adoption drive in October. To find out more, do email Jessica at jessica_thomas@journalist.com

Yutaki's act of balance

Not only did the 19-year-old act on television, he dances and teaches too

BY CHIA SIHAN
chia_sihan@journalist.com

Juggling the roles of full-time student, performing artiste, dance instructor and Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) member, third-year Chemical Engineering student Yutaki Ong, 19, is an example of a well-rounded Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) student.

"I've promised my family that I would complete my education in NP. They are very supportive of what I'm doing," he said.

"Besides, I enjoy studying here. It's a matter of prioritising. I'll try to finish schoolwork within school hours. When school's over, my focus shifts to what I'll be doing next," he

added, although he admits he is "not an excellent student".

Groomed by regional performing arts company Club Tiramisu, he had starred in MediaCorp TV's Mandarin comedy 'Katong Miss Oh' with popular artiste Zoe Tay. Despite having a small taste of glamour, Yutaki believes in staying grounded.

Also a hip-hop dance instructor at the Next Stage Performing Arts Company and stand-in instructor at NP's New Revolving Age (NRA) Hip Hop Dance Club, Yutaki is part of the NRA Funk Team which represented Singapore at a competition in France in June.

"I've had several encounters, both good and bad, through my work experiences. These

experiences have been invaluable, and have taught me to be always humble and open-minded. I don't believe in having an attitude," he said.

The stage name "Yutaki" came about when he was influenced by Japanese pop culture some years ago. "My friends like it, and seriously, I think it has brought me good luck," he said. He declined to disclose his original name.

Yutaki said that being a workaholic had contributed greatly to his performance in diverse roles, and he was thankful for the opportunities that came his way.

"Life for me is like an adventure. I think it's wonderful that I've the chance to teach at NRA. The members come with different dance

backgrounds, and they're all willing and keen to learn," he said. "Of course, there are times when things don't work out. It's not possible to please everyone."

The popular Korean and Japanese pop tunes that Yutaki uses during his dance lessons have become his trademark.

"I admire the way the Koreans, Japanese and their media can take something from the mainstream, and with their creativity, make it into something different," he explained.

Yutaki wants to make a mark in the entertainment industry, but is reluctant to settle for just Singapore. "There's a bigger challenge in breaking into overseas markets, as they're so much larger and unsaturated," he said.



FLEDGLING ARTISTES: Yutaki Ong finds pleasure in teaching other keen performers to dance. (Picture: Chia Sihan)

That's my Jordan!

BY CATHERINE TAN
catherine_tan@journalist.com

Fans of Chinese singer and actor Jordan Chan got up close and personal with the Hong Kong star during his "That's Mine" campus concert on 30 August in Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Lecture Theatre (LT) 26.

Jordan was in Singapore for four days to promote his new Mandarin album.

The concert was co-organised by NP's Poly Stage Production (PSP) and Jordan's record company BMG. According to PSP, the free tickets were snapped up two days before Jordan's first performance in NP.

Students who had just completed their common tests and left the examination halls wasted no time. Li Min, 19, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student, and her friend, Fu Ting, 20, a third-year Information Technology student started queuing outside LT 26 at 3.30 pm, two hours before the concert.

Both had been fans of Jordan for about four years. They described him as a "cool" and "funny" man who sings "simple and happy" songs. This was the first time they saw him perform live.

Dressed casually in a long-sleeved beige pullover with matching pants, Jordan's first words at the concert "It's so weird to sing here" in Mandarin drew immediate bursts of laughter from the 360-strong audience.

Sporting gold-bleached hair and diamond ear studs, he sang five songs from his R&B-flavoured album during the one-hour concert.

Hosted by two radio personalities from UFM 100.3, Xiao Zhu and Wang Wan Rong, the concert warmed up quickly, with fans chanting Jordan's name even before he appeared onstage. Screams went up a few more notches as the singer walked around the LT while singing his first song.

Despite feeling unwell, Jordan interacted with the audience by chatting with a male fan about hairstyles and teasing a female student about wearing shorts to the concert. He also tossed out his album posters to the audience during the show.

Another concert highlight was a game segment when seven students went on-stage and sang excerpts of Jordan's songs. Jordan chose the three best performers as winners. They walked away with prizes, which included free CDs, posters and snacks.

To facilitate safety at the concert, PSP members were stationed at various parts of the LT to prevent the audience from leaving their seats unnecessarily, standing up for a prolonged period of time or becoming too rowdy.

According to PSP-president Adrian Kong, 19, PSP tries not to schedule concert dates too near to the common test week, examination week or during the holidays. The Jordan Chan concert, however, was held near the end of the common test week because of Jordan's schedule and for students to relax after the tests.

Mr Ian Wong, 26, PSP advisor from the Student Development and Alumni Relations Office, said, "This time round, the response is slightly better than some of the previous concerts, partly maybe because most of them had just finished their class tests."

BA Bazaar woos lunch crowd

BY JOEY TAN
joey_tan@journalist.com

The BA Bazaar, organised by the School of Business & Accountancy (BA), proved to be a huge success with over 500 students and 52 lecturers participating.

The event, held in conjunction with BA's Lecturers' Day, took place on 20 September during the BA lecturers' break from 11 am to 2 pm. The bazaar aimed to encourage more interaction and to improve relations between lecturers and students.

Held outside Shop 73, the Canteen One Co-op, the bazaar had stalls selling an array of new and second-hand clothes, food, drinks and desserts, stationery, and fashion and handphone accessories.

One event highlight was BA lecturer Mr Jeffrey Wu's arm-wrestling competition. His charismatic hosting style attracted a large crowd of students and lecturers around the arm-wrestling table. Mr Wu himself also competed.

"[This event is] excellent of course, when you win three times in a row," joked Mr Wu, who was invited by the BA Society to hold the contest.

Another BA lecturer, Mr Tan Geok Kian, said, "This bazaar is very exciting, very enterprising, and there are a lot of innovative ideas."

Said Joyce Ling Xiao Hui, 17, first-year Accountancy (ACC) student and one of the stall owners, "It (the enthusiasm) is quite obvious because everyone is shouting, 'Come, buy this!'

Come, buy that!"

Samantha Lim Ru Hui, 18, second-year ACC student and Vice-President of the BA Society, said that planning and executing the bazaar was definitely more fun and exciting than last year's concert event.

Although the bazaar was an internal event, and publicity took place during BA lectures in the form of transparencies and verbal announcements, the high-traffic area where the event was held attracted non-BA students as well.

The students funded all the stalls themselves, and any money made will go to the respective class that set up the stall or the BA Society.

Joyce said, "I don't think there will be any losses. Anyway, we're doing this for the fun and the experience."



ARM-TWISTING: Lecturers and students build strong ties while challenging each other. (Picture: Andy Soh)

Pursuing IVP hope

Barely a year old, members of the Floorball Club are training hard to master the intense game. Sports correspondent ANDY SOH reports on the situation.



STILL NEW TO THE GAME: The 57-member NP Floorball Club says they need a proper coach to improve their game. (Picture: Andy Soh)

Four teams from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Floorball Club joined the National Floorball Carnival 2002 on 7 and 8 September, but were eliminated in the first round.

The club, however, was not disheartened, and treated the carnival as a chance to condition its players for the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) Games.

"At least it lets us know where we stand and I can see the players training harder for next year's IVP," said Wilson Foo, 19, President of the NP Floorball Club and second-year Chemical Engineering student.

Wilson and a group of secondary school friends had formed the club in July 2001.

Held at the Chua Chu Kang Sports Hall, the carnival was jointly organised by the Singapore Sports Council, the People's Association Youth Movement and the Singapore Floorball Association.

The event saw six categories of competition for men and women of different age groups. NP sent two men's and two women's teams for the event that featured only three-on-three games.

A standard floorball game is played between two teams on a 40 m by 20 m court over three

20-minute periods. Each team has six players, where one serves as a goalkeeper. The aim is to hit the ball into the opponents' net with a stick.

Floorball is more versatile because it can be played on most hard and smooth surfaces.

The stick is similar to an ice hockey stick but has one hitting side as opposed to two, while the floorball is slightly bigger but lighter than a tennis ball.

In Singapore, a scaled-down version of floorball called streetbandy is often played. Streetbandy has only three players in each team and no goalkeepers.

Both Wilson and Timothy Soh, 19, a club member and third-year Chemical Engineering student, said floorball's main draw was the high speed at which the ball is passed around.

With 57 members in the NP Floorball Club, Wilson felt that response to the sport has been good.

Although some members have hockey-playing backgrounds, most of them are completely new to the sport, he said.

The club currently lacks a coach. Wilson himself trains the players in fitness and drills, but said that the club relies on "self-learning" to pick up floorball skills.

According to Wilson, the departure of

Marina Rumi bte Ibrahim, who was both coach and player for the club, has affected the club badly.

Marina plays for the Singapore women's national team, and used to bring along her national team members, such as Jill Quek, an NP graduate and Singapore's top floorball player, to train the NP team.

Marina, 21, a first-year Singapore Management University student, said that the women's team probably became weaker after she left. "At the moment, [the club] needs a leader and a proper coach to improve," she said.

She felt that the NP women's team is "quite good" compared to the other tertiary institutions.

However, she added that the NP men's team might have some difficulties playing against the university men's teams, where most of the players are physically stronger after going through National Service.

Remaining hopeful for next year's IVP, Wilson said a coach for the club will arrive "very soon".

The NP Floorball Club trains on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 9 pm. To join the club, email Wilson Foo at ritzbis@singnet.com.sg

Dance Cha-Cha-Champions

BY CATHERINE TAN
catherine_tan@journalist.com

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's DanceSport Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) bagged first prize in the tertiary division at the 15th Lion City International DanceSport Championships.

Held on 3 August at the Raffles City Convention Centre, the championships saw Li Tian Fu, 18, second-year Information Technology student, and his dance partner, Rosanne Chong, 18, second-year Business Studies student, take the limelight, beating five other couples.

Competing in the Latin category for local participants only, they had to do a "Cha-Cha-Cha" routine.

Of the six couples, five were from NP's DanceSport CCA, whilst the sixth couple, who came in second, was from the National University of Singapore.

As DanceSport had only established itself as a CCA in March, the competition was a first for many of the NP participants.

Organised by Shawn & Gladys DanceWorld, the Lion City International DanceSport Championships is considered one of Asia's most glamorous dancing events with both international and local participants.

The judging panel included adjudicators from Australia, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, China and Germany.

Rosanne said, "It takes a lot of effort. We practised very very hard... and so when we got first, we were very happy."

She said that one of the main difficulties was finding time to practise, as her partner's schedule often clashed with hers. They usually

had to practise only after 5 pm, and each session could last till 11 pm. Practices took place at the Shawn & Gladys DanceWorld studio.

The championship was Rosanne's first competition while Tian Fu had previously competed at the 3rd ADSA Singapore Open DanceSport Championships organised by the Singapore DanceSport Federation in mid-April.

Another couple who participated are DanceSport CCA members Esther Lim and Kelvin Toh, who came in third.

Both did not expect to win, as they were still new to Cha-Cha-Cha, especially Kelvin, 20, a third-year Biotechnology student who only joined the CCA in May. He said he had missed the basic lessons by then and had to learn the steps with help from other members.

Esther, 17, a second-year Banking & Financial Services student, said she was surprised that she overcame her stage fright to perform well.

To her, chemistry with one's partner was the most important thing when dancing, although responsibility was equally important as one's actions could affect the other. Kelvin agreed. "I am scared because she is scared!" he said.

Kelvin added that keeping up with the music rhythm was his biggest challenge. "It's very weird when you don't dance on time to the beat," he said.

NP is the first tertiary institution to implement DanceSport as an elective in the Sports and Wellness Programme before it became a CCA.

According to DanceSport CCA President Yachicko Masda, 20, a second-year Business Studies student, students from other tertiary institutions usually picked up their dance skills through private lessons conducted off campus.

DanceSport CCA currently has 30 members. However, Yachicko said many NP students still stereotype Cha-Cha-Cha dancing as being old-fashioned, making it difficult for DanceSport to attract male students and retain new members.

"They think it must be for the old people... for the boring people," she said.

Yachicko added that the songs they use often surprise people, as they include pop singers such as Jennifer Lopez, Enrique Iglesias, Pink and Shakira.

All of them agreed that learning the Cha-Cha-Cha had benefited them.

Yachicko, Tian Fu and Rosanne said that dancing improves coordination, helps one lose weight and relieves stress.

"You forget everything when you are dancing!" said Rosanne.

Kelvin added, "You can also correct your walking posture."

They are now progressing to the higher grades of dance such as the Rumba and Jive.

DanceSport CCA members meet every Tuesday, 5.30 pm, at the Karaoke Room beside the Sports Hall. Interested parties can email the CCA at np_dancesport_cca@yahoo.com.sg



"CHA-CHA-CHA": DanceSport champions Rosanne Chong and Li Tian Fu train for hours just to dance in perfect coordination. (Picture: DanceSport CCA)