

One school, many faces

You cannot fit a Nanyang Technological University (NTU) student or employee in a mould. Each is different and undeniably, their university experiences have played a part in shaping them, says DAWN WONG.



"The NTU sports department has given me so much support I can't even thank them enough. Ever since I was in year one they've supported me both financially and emotionally. For example, last year I was awarded the NTU sports scholarship worth \$2,000. They also nominated me for the 7th World University Championships in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. Emotionally the sports officers have become more than administrators, they're my friends."

— **Miss Jeanette Wang, 22**, fourth-year student at the School of Communication and Information. A national triathlete, her triathlon feats include the A'Famosa International Triathlon 2002 held in Malacca where she came out tops in the women's 16-29 age group. She has also represented her faculty in floorball, netball and touch rugby.



"The exchange programme was eye-opening. The university has the best professors and the best equipment. I'm interested in pursuing journalism as a career so going on this exchange put me in a good position to gain exposure in this field. The Nanyang Chronicle was instrumental in me pursuing journalism. You get a chance to practise being a journalist where you have teacher-advisors and fellow students to help you edit your pieces and give you ideas."

— **Mr Wong Choo Sin, 23**, third-year student at the School of Communication and Information. This year, he went on an exchange programme to the University of Missouri in the United States. The school is renowned for its journalism courses. He has also been an active member of the Nanyang Chronicle, the campus newspaper.



"My experience in the Hall 2 Junior Common Room Committee (JCRC), which is the hostel's management committee, helped me a lot in running the canteen because it provided the management and people skills I needed. I was the JCRC vice-president last year when Adrian was the president. This year, I've taken over as president. With the JCRC, I had to do a lot of budgeting and managing of people. For example, under me, I had 15 main committee members who each headed his own committee. So I had to learn to manage people with different characters. I also needed to canvass for money and products from outside companies."

— **Mr Terence Ho, 25 (left)**, fourth-year student from the School of Civil and Environment Engineering and **Mr Adrian Yeo, 25**, fourth-year student from the School of Mechanical and Production Engineering. Together with a former NTU student, they beat close to 30 applicants for a three-year tenure to operate Canteen 2 near Hall 2. The canteen opened last month.



"Part of the culture in NTU is to be bold in whatever you dream to do. I had this wish to lead a group of like-minded volunteers for an overseas expedition. The advice from my professors was not to just come here and study, but also to take part in student activities to appreciate what is really meant by "university life". Hence, when approached by the club's outgoing student management last year to initiate this expedition, I agreed without any hesitation."

— **Mr Huang Zongren, 22**, third-year student at the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. In May, he led 22 NTU students to Bangalore in India for three weeks where they helped to refurbish the Godrahalli Government High School. The community service project was co-organised by the NTU welfare services club.



"After Australia, I wrote a report on my experiences there and volunteered to be a mentor to students interested in going on an exchange programme to Queensland. At the same time, I was active in NTU, assisting the foreign students coming to NTU on an exchange to adjust to the environment in Singapore. Likewise, I was also a mentor to those students intending to serve out their industrial attachment in China."

— **Mr Reynold Seah, 24**, fourth-year student at the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. He was on a six-month-long exchange programme at the University of Queensland in Australia last year and just did a five-month industrial attachment at a state-owned company in China this year.

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"I was rather fortunate to get the Nanyang Scholarship though I did not do extraordinarily well for my A levels compared to students from top junior colleges. I still remember I was asked what I wanted to do after I graduate and I told my interviewers that I intended to pursue my PhD and return to lecture in NTU! And that's how it got it. In fact, I related the same story to my panel of interviewers for my later Nanyang Overseas Scholarship and they were very surprised to know that I am still pursuing the same dream I had five years ago!"

— **Miss Eileen Fong, 23**, project officer at the School of Materials Engineering. She received the Nanyang Scholarship that funded her undergraduate studies. Later, she clinched the Nanyang Overseas Scholarship, which will sponsor her future doctorate.



"There were students from Canada, the United States, Sweden and Singapore talking about their industrial work experiences. I had a greater perspective of what the North American and Swedish students were like. Through interactions with them I saw that they had the same worries and concerns as we do. Most of them were also very outstanding individuals and that made me feel that what I've achieved so far, compared to them, is really nothing and that I should work harder."

— **Mr Wu Guowei, 24**, fourth-year student at the School of Computer Engineering. He represented NTU on the student panel at the World Association for Cooperative Education International Symposium on work-integrated learning for students in Sweden this year.



"I chose the Nanyang MBA because it offers a unique mix of global perspectives with an Asian focus. This is evident in the extensive curriculum and international faculty. The strategic insights and analytical skills I've gained from this programme have equipped me well for a job that demands nothing less than incisive thinking, strategic planning and effective communication across cultures at senior levels. The programme's modular structure and GE's support also allows me greater flexibility in juggling business, MBA and family commitments."

— **Mr Jack Lim, 35**, who is pursuing the Nanyang MBA (Masters of Business Administration) programme at the Nanyang Business School. He is a market development director at General Electric (GE) International. He went on the Overseas Business Study Mission to New Zealand, where he networked with the country's senior government and industry leaders.



"During my lectures, I try very hard to entertain my students and keep them awake and laughing. I always have some kind of visual item to show them rather than just talk about a pure subject matter. For example, to show the different mechanical properties of plastic, metal or ceramic, I use bowls made of these materials and I illustrate what happens when I hit them with a hammer. It's comical because the students don't expect you to really break anything!"

— **Associate Professor Christopher Shearwood, 42**, from the School of Mechanical and Production Engineering. He is one of the winners of NTU's Excellence in Teaching Awards this year. He has been with the faculty for four years.



"My professors were very helpful in imparting knowledge. If I encountered any problems they would help me out. When I received an e-mail from my school encouraging me to apply for the A*Star graduate scholarship, I wasn't sure about it. But there was this particular professor who asked me to see him and he explained to me what it was all about. He was the one who helped me to see the potential that I had and that was one of the main reasons I applied for it."

— **Mr Mustafa Shabbir Kurbanhusen, 25**, first-year PhD student at the School of Mechanical and Production Engineering. Last year, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in engineering with first-class honours. Now, armed with a graduate scholarship from the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star), he is currently pursuing a PhD in robotics and biomechanics.



"The life sciences is now perceived as having a good potential for growth and many junior college and polytechnic students are interested in pursuing a career in life sciences. Yet, they are often not sure what that career really entails and how NTU's course can prepare them for it. As the career guidance officer, I have the opportunity to listen to and address the students' concerns individually. I think this channel of communication between them and NTU is valuable for both sides. The students learn how they can benefit from NTU's education. We, on the other hand, learn about their needs and this allows us to fine-tune our curriculum for the future."

— **Assistant Professor Sze Chun Chau, 34**, from the School of Biological Sciences. Her main research areas focus on bacterial biofilms and gene regulatory circuits. She is also a career guidance officer for the faculty.

...with an Asian focus