

SP RIT

With **SP**, it's So Possible

HEY GORGEOUS!

HOW'S LIFE FOR AN SP STUDENT AFTER WINNING HEY GORGEOUS?

THE PHOENIX RISES IN AUSTRALIA

THE STORY OF AN UNBEATEN SPIRIT THAT RESURRECTS A SOLAR CAR TO RACE IN AUSTRALIA

SP OPEN HOUSE 2016

CHECK OUT THE HIGHLIGHTS!

SPELLBINDING

HOW HAS SP'S LIVING LAB AT CHANGI AIRPORT FARED THROUGH THE YEARS?

EXPLORING IRAN

TREASURES IN THE PERSIAN LAND





UniSIM Open House 27 Feb 2016
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Solar-Powered Phoenix

The story of an unbeaten spirit that resurrects a solar car to race in Australia.



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I can **achieve** my goals

There's nothing to stop me from realising my dreams.
With the motivation and inspiration I got from SP,
I know I can soar towards success.

With **SP**, it's So Possible

SP+PAVAN
Diploma in Electrical
and Electronic Engineering

SP+U

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Welcome to Singapore Polytechnic! There's school tours galore, tons of lecturers and student helpers to show you the way, and copious amounts of food and fun wherever you turn!

At this year's Open House, a new record was set – with visitor numbers highest ever since SP had its Open House. And mind you it's not just another poly Open House. The SP Open House 2015 campaign won the inaugural Asia Pacific Communications Award 2015 in the category of Campaign by a Governmental Institution!

From anxious parents to eager students (we bet most of you only came for the popcorn!), we welcomed them all. Learning facilities across all nine academics schools were open to visitors, giving them an in-depth look at the awesome learning environment here. And for the first time, visitors set foot into the spanking new AeroHub and the SP Business School building, located a stone's throw away from the SP Convention Centre.

We kept the punches rolling, from an Ironman cosplayer to popular social media influencers like siblings Narelle and Benjamin Kheng from the Sam Willows, and home-grown YouTube favourites Night Owl Cinematics, and Munah Bagharib, one-half of Munah & Hirzi, the wacky musical spoof and parody duo.

Don't miss out on the happenings in SP. Stalk us on Instagram, we're the most followed polytechnic ever!

Catch up on all the action on fb.com/singaporepolytechnic.



This is not dancing (SP Mixed Martial Arts).



Could we please choose a smaller tyre next year for the SP Strongman Club?!



Time for business students to bust out the entrepreneurial spirit. I smell profit...and popcorn.



Gusto, do not repeat, do not fall on Benjamin and Narelle!



May we interest you in our many SP publications? (Yes, that's the winner of Hey Gorgeous 2015, Gan Zhi Jian, on the backdrop. Pay attention!)



It's hard work but tons of fun being a DJ, as Munah Bagharib, one-half of Munah & Hirzi, the wacky YouTube duo, found out in SPACE Radio located on the Hilltop.



"Yeah, that's a real Skyhawk behind us. And you know what, two more planes on the way."



Thank you, Team ABE for giving our visitors a good time touring SP campus!



This is dancing (SP DanceSport).



Coming through, coming through...! Have you seen my fellow SP bots hanging around?



Shhh...Mr Robot, don't tell R2-D2 we were playing football without him!



Save meee! My brother doesn't know how to drive SP's Solar Car!



Goodie bags full of awesomeness! All that chatter on social media about the bag's awesomeness is true!



We thought teenagers won't go for balloons, how wrong!



"Control tower, SP student ready for take-off, over."



"Look who else is visiting SP: meet my new friends, Narelle and Benjamin Kheng from the Sam Willows!"



"Ok, I'm officially lost. What to do at SP Open House?"



Smile, folks! It's Open House 2016!



This green monster is actually a real engine of a ship.



"Clear your plates after eating at SP! Ironman will kuai kuai obey."



"Ironman hungry. Ironman eat."



"Harry Potter, I think I got more fans than you!"



Pose for the camera? So easy. Wait till you set up the whole event!



Who says scientists are boring? Haven't you watched The Big Bang Theory? We're adorable!

IRONMAN



"What Super Heroes? How come I'm not one of them?" (Ironman huffing and puffing...)



With them, SP Open House is So Possible. Meet the Acers, 300-strong student community and the coolest peeps around.



Look again, the crazy one is not the student. SP lecturers can be fun too!



"Who cares about Iron Maiden, meet my new lovelies."



"Give it up, peeps. My little pinky can do the job!"



Welcome to my lair. Let me show you the meaning of...design.



Step up here for your goodie bags!



"Can someone tell the popcorn aunty to relax? I'm only trying to help."

THE SOLAR PHOENIX



SPIRIT finds out why SunSpec4, Singapore's sole participation in the biennial World Solar Challenge held in the outback of Australia, was given the nickname 'Phoenix' and discovers a story of camaraderie, grit and resilience!

THE CAR THAT ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT

On 25 August 2015, SunSpec4 met with a debilitating roadblock. A freak fire saw eight months' worth of sweat and blood reduced to ashes. It was devastating for the team of 52 students from the **School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE)** and the

School of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering (MAE). To add salt to the wound, the destruction happened right before its unveiling to the SP Board of Governors. That could have been the end for SunSpec4, the fourth generation solar car built by SP engineering students bound for the World Solar Challenge (WSC) 2015 in Australia.

Bryan Chu, final-year **Diploma in Clean Energy (DCEG)** student, was the team lead for the motor driving system and the student leader of the electrical team. He recounted, "I was right at the door of the lab where it (the fire) happened. I felt so helpless because there was nothing I could do." If you say boys don't cry, you should have seen Bryan that day.

Fast-forward just a month later, the team pulled off a miracle to rebuild SunSpec4, through sheer grit and determination. Nicknamed 'Phoenix', it's the modern version of the legendary bird rising from the ashes. Achieving this was no easy feat. Since the fire, they toiled from morning to night. But they weren't alone in their struggles. Mr Wong Kim Yin, Group Chief Executive of Singapore Power and a SP Board Member, supported the team's endeavour to rebuild SunSpec4. In addition to the previously committed amount of \$1 million to sponsor SP's entry in WSC for three years, he also committed Singapore Power to cover the air freight cost of flying SunSpec4 to Australia, effectively buying lost time for the team.

By 2 October 2015, Phoenix was en route from rebirth to the outback in Australia for WSC!

ARRIVING DOWN UNDER

Darwin was a first for many students in the team, but most were simply happy just to have made it, especially after recovering from the heart-stopping incident. Darryl Ng from the **Diploma in Mechatronics and Robotics (DMRO)** and mechanical team

lead for SunSpec4 recounted his feelings arriving at Darwin International Airport. "It feels like such an accomplishment just being here, even compared to 2013 (which SP also took part)."

Darryl was part of an advance party that arrived in Darwin three days ahead of the car to prepare for its arrival. No time was wasted as they travelled to Hidden Valley Race Track to reserve a lot for the car. Apart from buying various supplies for the race to cover wear and tear, Darryl and the advance party also spent time working with Charles Darwin University

to fashion a 'wooden plate' that would support the car on the flatbed trailer.

Aside from all the preparatory work, Darryl had his mind only on the car. "I was quite worried that the car would be damaged during air freight."

"His fears were real", added Cheong Yong Quan from DCEG and one of the team drivers. Other teams had reported of their cars being damaged during shipping. Thankfully, Lady Luck was shining on Team SP Down Under – the car arrived unscathed.

On the Road in Australia



After an arduous struggle to the starting line, SunSpec4 finally flagged off from the start point in Darwin. **SPIRIT** finds out from Darryl Ng and Cheong Yong Quan more about the ins and outs of their journey towards the finish line.

ANY INTERESTING SIGHTS AND HIGHLIGHTS ALONG THE WAY?

Darryl: Being in the lead car, I was on the move non-stop from 8am to 5pm, relaying information such as weather and traffic conditions to the other vehicles behind me. After 5pm, I'd help work on the car before sleeping. It was tough, but fun! The sand flies were a constant source of irritation! Also, after the third day on the road when we were further south, the temperatures started to drop, and we had to deal with that.

Yong Quan: Driving through the Australian

Yong Quan: The battery voltage reading was erratic, and eventually failed along the way. Fortunately, we could rectify the issue quickly during our control stops at night.

ANY THOUGHTS ON CAMPING IN THE OUTBACK?

Darryl: We came well-prepared with electric heaters to boil water and cook food. Come to think of it, I only ate cup noodles along the way!
Yong Quan: It was extremely cold at night, but we had fun resting at the campsite. I remember sleeping under a sky full of stars and the moonlight, such a beautiful sight.

TESTING + SCRUTINEERING

Next on the agenda was rigorous testing and tweaking to ensure that the car was road and race worthy. To qualify for a spot on the starting line, the team had to pass a stringent scrutineering test where race officials ascertained that cars were within race specifications and complied with safety regulations. Failing the scrutineering test meant immediate disqualification from the race – yet another potential roadblock looming for the team!

With no time to waste, the team launched straight into action. As much time was invested in rebuilding the car in Singapore, actual road test experience was lacking. The team had to juggle between testing and resolving technical issues that the car threw at them. Though tough, the team found it in them to work together like a well-oiled machine.

It wasn't long before the car was ready for the scrutineering tests which took place over a few days. Everything was going according to plan, till disaster struck – the car couldn't pass a breaking distance test! It exceeded the stipulated distance by a mere three metres. There was mass panic as it was the end of the road if they couldn't cross this hurdle.

Unwilling to go down without a fight, lecturers Mr Steven Chew and Mr Foo Fang Siong put their heads together and rallied the team. In the



next heart-stopping seven hours, the SunSpec4 team redesigned, rebuilt and retrofitted a new braking system for the solar car. Armed with new brakes and renewed bravado, Team SunSpec4 attempted to surmount the test against all odds. By then, conditions were unfavourable as night had fallen and visibility was low.

First attempt – Failure again!

Refusing to fade into darkness, the team illuminated the road markers with their mobile devices to aid visibility. Crack driver, Cheong Yong Quan (DCEG), guided by the lights of his team, pulls off the unthinkable – he piloted the car to stop precisely within the required breaking distance, passing the test! Euphoria ensued in the Singapore camp. SunSpec4 will see the light of day and make it to the starting line to race 3,000km across the Australian continent, from Darwin to Adelaide.

Outback, we were treated to uniquely beautiful sights and sounds. I also remember passing through quiet 'two-street' towns.

ANY MAJOR CRISIS ON THE ROAD THAT THE TEAM HAD TO SOLVE ALONG THE WAY?

Darryl: The crosswinds were something the team was not really prepared for, as the car was too light. As a result, we couldn't travel at top speed to ensure the safety of the car.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO APPLY THINGS LEARNT FROM THIS PROJECT INTO THIS REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE?

Darryl: For a good part of the solar car project, we were taught to figure things out on our own. The lecturers equipped us with the tools to find our own way, and I felt that this gave me an edge over my other classmates.

Yong Quan: The solar car project exposed me to things I would never have learnt in the classroom, for example, when we had the opportunity to learn how to properly bleed the brakes of the car.

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS WHEN THE CAR COMPLETED THE RACE?

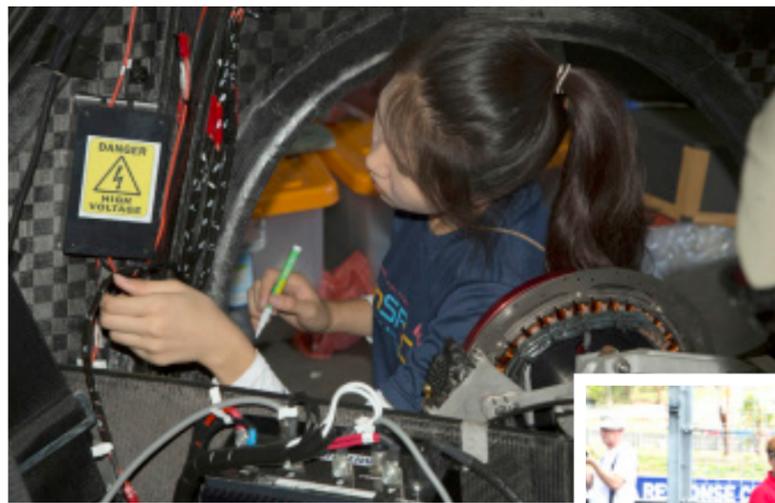
Darryl: It was surreal and anti-climactic at the same time. The team spent so many days together, then it suddenly all concluded in a bittersweet way. But I suppose, through this experience, I have become a more confident individual. Through the trials and tribulations, I now know what I am capable of under pressure.

Yong Quan: I was very happy that the car could complete the race all the way to the finish line, safe and sound. For me, meeting other teams from all around the world and learning from them was a fantastic experience. Joining SP, I never imagined that I could build a car, and drive it across an entire continent – it gives me a great sense of accomplishment that team SunSpec has achieved this together. You know, with SP, really so possible!



Memories of World Solar Challenge 2015

It was a momentous journey for everyone who played a role in conceptualising SunSpec4 and seeing it take off the roads in Australia. SPIRIT shares the fun and excitement in Australia in this photo gallery.





A sign for **Kosin** to do Engineering

Giggles and smiles: Kosin's main form of communication. That, and she ain't got no chill correcting you on how to pronounce her name. It's pronounced 'cosine', like the mathematical formula. Perhaps it was a prediction that she'll eventually join the Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (DME). It all started from her name.



Ever the cool one, Kosin preps for one of her many emceeing roles.

In her true element, sleeves rolled up, getting mechanical: one of the many rides at Universal Studios Singapore that Kosin helps maintain during her internship.

Kosin's name is the perfect icebreaker in any conversation. Ask about the origin and it all makes fated sense, right down to where she is now – a final-year mechanical engineering student with a Grade Point Average (GPA) that's just decimal points away from being perfect.

Both her parents loved mathematics and physics, and till today, still argue over who was responsible for naming her. Naturally, the inspiration was the trigonometrical function that we've long forgotten since leaving from secondary school.

Maths and physics coat her blood. The entire family helped to pick a diploma that would best suit her talents, bringing her right to SP's doorstep.

"I just get it," she says, when asked about her natural flair for numbers of formulas. Don't doubt it: she's been on the Director's Honour Roll for two years straight.

However, don't underestimate her. She's more than just gears, representing SP's **School of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering (MAE)** as the MAE Ambassador. She recounts, "I was recommended – *saboeed* actually – by my friends when our lecturer asked if anyone was interested and suitable to emcee!" The rest is history. Since then, she's emceed for several MAE events, including the Freshmen Orientation Programme and the Toy Design Competition Prize Presentation Ceremony.

"I get to be on stage and wear pretty clothes – don't judge me," she warns playfully. "But most importantly, through emceeing, I got to know a lot of people, from my peers, to lecturers and even the MAE Director."

Ask her about her favourite part of SP life, and she'll tell you it's emceeing. For her, the thrill is still with the first event she's ever hosted. The Freshman Orientation Programme 2014 was the first time she had ever emceed. "To be honest, I still don't know where I got the guts to stand alone (she says with emphasis) on stage! It did help to boost my confidence a lot though!" Through her experiences here, she hopes to be able to continue emceeing in the future.



"To those girls who want to try engineering, I warmly welcome you to the engineering world. Don't worry, because there are more and more girls in engineering nowadays! Be brave and pursue your dreams."

It's a complete change for someone who still considers herself an introvert. Till today, she still wonders how she ever managed to become so talkative. *(Editor's note: she never stops!)*

She's also ridiculously well-rounded, playing the piano occasionally, ice-skating in her free time, and being a past member of Gusto, SP's Cheerleading Club. She still performs the moves to keep fit and limber, cutting a lean figure. She's shamelessly vain as she'll proudly tell you with an absolutely straight face. Her motto: work hard to shop hard.

Currently, Kosin is performing her internship under Resorts World Sentosa, maintaining the rides for Universal Studios Singapore. It's a fun experience for her, as she gets to tinker with

the rides that brings entertainment to so many. Next on her future is university, though she's still considering her options.

Her bubbly nature serves her well in the legendary gender imbalance for engineering, which is typically male-dominated. She proudly proclaims that she bullies the boys into submission, taking a stand for girl-power everywhere.

This is the advice she has for ladies who wish to take up engineering, but are hesitant because of the stereotype, "To those girls who want to try engineering, I warmly welcome you to the engineering world. Don't worry, because there are more and more girls in engineering nowadays! Be brave and pursue your dreams."

Taking Off

At The AeroHub

Day 5 of 2016 saw the opening of the highly-anticipated SP AeroHub, marking another milestone in SP's engineering education since 1958.

Spanning 4,660 square metres, the state-of-the-art four-storey AeroHub is equipped with facilities that are typically found in an industry aircraft hangar.

It now houses two aircraft – the A4SU Super Skyhawk and the UH1H Huey Helicopter, and will soon welcome two new additions – a King Air B90

turboprop and a Hawker 700 turboprop aircraft. These aircraft will provide experiential learning for the students from the Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering (DARE) and Diploma in Aerospace Engineering (DASE).

All the labs and workshops previously used by DARE and DASE students and located in different blocks are now under one roof in the AeroHub. These include the Wind Tunnel Lab, Aerodynamics Lab and the Avionics Lab. Relocating them in one building will allow the students to collaborate more easily.

The AeroHub also houses a Research and Development Centre that will support the development of technologies such as full-motion flight simulators, hybrid rocket propulsion systems, VTOL (Vertical Take-off and Landing) Intermeshing and co-axial UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) systems. A full motion flight simulator with an interchangeable F16 cockpit, a Boeing 737 cockpit and a F1 race car cockpit is also located here.

AEROHUB



Guest of Honour at the opening ceremony, Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of Southwest CDC, toured the AeroHub and took the cockpit seats in the A4SU Super Skyhawk (left photo) and the A320 Flight Simulator and Maintenance Trainer.



A group photo at the headquarters of CP Foods, a popular food brand in supermarkets here.



Checking out the shrimps at CP Foods Shrimp farm, but of course after several disinfecting procedures.



Yummlicious! Don't we all love food tasting?



Optometry student Yeo Yshaw (left) doing vision screening with his handheld device in a Myanmar village.

Seeing Is Believing

As the Chinese saying goes, reading 10,000 books is not as useful as travelling 10,000 miles to experience it for yourself. Of course, there's no need to go that far. Just follow what the students from the School of Chemical and Life Sciences did during the recent school vacation – they flew to Thailand and Myanmar and got a taste of learning beyond our shores.

WHAT GOES INTO FOOD?

Ever wonder how they make the shrimp wantons and sausages that's seen in supermarkets? Thirty-four second-year students from the **Diploma in Food Science and Technology (DFST)** and **Diploma in Nutrition, Health and Wellness (DNHW)** certainly did. They joined the overseas immersion programme (OIP) and flew all the way to Bangkok to visit the farm and factory of CP Foods, a leading agro-industrial and food corporation in the Asia Pacific region.

"The trip to Bangkok is nothing new. But I was interested in visiting CP Foods. I always have the CP wanton for steamboat so I'm curious to see how they are being manufactured,"

explained Lim Pei Ying, DNHW student.

DFST student Jaron Chua described the trip as an eye-opener and a good learning experience. "You don't get to see such big farms in Singapore. The factories are similar to those in Singapore, but on a much bigger scale. Observing the whole process from the farm to the end product allows us to understand the concepts better and a clearer picture of possible career opportunities. I'm a visual learner and believe that learning shouldn't be confined to four walls," he said.

For Pei Ying, the trip has changed her perception of future career opportunities for her course. Initially, she thought that her career path would be limited to health promotion and

other clinical-related jobs. Now she's realised food corporations also hire nutritionists.

Of course, these were not the only perks of the trip. How can one observe the whole food process without trying the food products? Luckily for them, CP Foods was generous. They not only shared knowledge of their food manufacturing and operations, but also gave food samples – from sausages and chicken, to shrimp fillets and the famous shrimp wantons. As if that wasn't enough, the students also visited a university and sampled traditional Thai desserts made during the hands-on dessert-making session.

The trip was indeed fulfilling – for both their minds and their stomachs!

GIVING THEIR EYES A NEW LIFE

While their DNHW and DFST mates were in Bangkok, 25 **Diploma in Optometry (DOPT)** third-year students returned from their community service trip in Myanmar where they conducted vision screenings in three villages located at Yangon, Maubin and Pathein.

The task was nothing new, considering they've conducted vision screenings several times in the SP Optometry Centre and community centres. But to do the same in less than two weeks for approximately 2,000 people with poor facilities, communication barriers and minimal assistance? It was definitely much tougher.

"The first day was the most hectic as we didn't know how to manage the crowd. Also, unlike the Optometry Centre where everything was within our control and we had a time limit of one and half hour for examining each patient, we had to work faster there. Since they had no machines (optometry equipment), we brought our own handheld devices and improvised on the spot. For example, there was no ophthalmoscope, which is used to see the back of the eye. So we used a torchlight instead," says Clara Hin, a DOPT student.

"Even moving from site to site was difficult especially with a big group like us. We were dropped off in the middle of the road in some deserted area and we had to walk some distance to reach the venue," added course mate Noelle Tan.

"In Singapore, the moment we ask our customers to read the chart, they will read immediately. In Myanmar, we had to explain and demonstrate as they weren't familiar with the chart. When we asked them to cover their eye and read the chart, some of them covered both of their eyes," recalled Yeo Yshaw with a chuckle.

With so many challenges, it also meant more learning opportunities. The students learned to work faster, improvise using limited resources, improve their teamwork and even speak simple Burmese to the locals. The two lecturers accompanying the students also observed that the students became more tolerant and demonstrated empathy for the less fortunate. While helping the locals, the students were

humbled by simplicity of life there.

"To them, glasses are luxury items. When they received the glasses, they were so happy. Some said to us, 'Wow, I didn't know I can see the world so clearly,'" said Clara.

As for interesting encounters, Yshaw recalled, "On our last day, we went to the night market to buy roses for the girls. When my buddy and I were on our way back to the hotel, a motorist suddenly approached us. He was staring at us and asking what we were doing...in Burmese. Later, we asked the translator to help us as we kept getting suspicious looks from the locals driving close to us. Apparently, we learned that when you are holding a rose, there's a political meaning to it as there was an ongoing political campaign in Myanmar involving the rose. The translator had to quickly explain that there was no relation."

Catch a video of their Myanmar trip on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BuOgvp3E08>.



A Dragonboater's Business

When Gan Zhi Jian starts works in a financial institution as an investment banker or stock broker, his main problem will be finding shirts that won't burst at the sleeves. The beefy SP Business School student is an active member of the SP Dragonboat Team that has won numerous medals over the years. But now he has another headache – after winning the title of MediaCorp's Hey Gorgeous.

Why would someone staying in the east apply for a poly located in the west? Ask the former Bedok View Secondary School student Gan Zhi Jian and he'd say, "Why not?" With a direct MRT service from point to point, he reckons it would actually save him time compared to having to take a bus, or worse, taking the bus and train.

It was The Right Choice magazine that SP sent to him in December 2012 that got him interested in joining the country's first poly. "I read about the **Diploma in Banking and Finance (DBKF)** course that I was interested in and went online to find out more about the modules," he recalls. And with backing from some SP seniors that he knew, it became a clearer choice. What finally solidified his choice was the visit to SP's Open House where he felt the positive vibes. "After visiting the school facilities and talking to the students and lecturers, I knew this was it!"

With a variety of business courses offered by SP, why Banking and Finance? "From young, my father was always telling me about financial investments and how the bankers make money. He also told me accountants can make a lot of money. But I wasn't interested in accountancy, so I chose banking and finance which can also make a lot of money," quips the 20-year-old who will be interning with a local bank from this January.

Students in the DBKF course have a choice of specialising in Banking or Investment during their second year. Zhi

Jian chose the Banking option as he feels there's a great human touch in banking. "In fact, I like to do sales," he reveals. "I get a great sense of achievement when I make it to the top," he says, recalling the days when he was the top sales person in IT fairs. Selling banking products, therefore, poses a challenge he can't refuse. Seems like a job cut out for this adventurous guy who isn't shy to talk to strangers.

If he has any regrets joining SP Business School, it would be that he joined too soon. Zhi Jian wishes he was born two or three years later so he could enjoy the facilities in the new Business School building that just opened. "The new building is really so cool. It's nearer to the MRT entrance and sheltered all the way. I especially like the Social Hub, a place for us to chill. And there's also a Food Court on the ground floor," he gushes over the awesome new building.

He has more good things to say: "I love our lecturers. They don't just teach from lecture notes but will share their personal experiences from the banking and finance industry. This is their way of making what they're teaching more relevant and real. For example, we learn about real cases where people make gains or losses from banking products and why it happens," he adds. So to SP Business lecturers Mr Kenneth Tai, Mr David Tan and Ms Angela Koh, Zhi Jian says, "Thank you".



Zhi Jian and his bros from SP Dragonboat Team.

All SP students are encouraged to get some overseas exposure. For Zhi Jian, one of his memorable moments is a fully-sponsored trip to Japan. "We were selected to attend an immersion programme to learn about Japanese business management. We visited companies that shared about their best practices. There was also a home-stay with a Japanese family," he relates vividly on the 10-day trip.

Another overseas trip he embarked on was to Sarawak for a regional dragonboat competition. The SP team clinched all the major titles at the race and was featured prominently in the Sarawak newspapers.

Dragonboat is not for the faint-hearted. He chose this CCA as he heard that it's a respectable CCA. "A senior told me if I can survive dragonboat, I can survive anything," says the sporty chap. For more than two years, it seemed to him that he saw more of his dragonboat team members than his family. A typical non-competitive training schedule means training five days weekly for three hours each. One month to any competition, this intensifies to a punishing daily training, twice a day.

With the intense training frequency, it's no wonder that the dragonboat team is a closely-knit bunch. "We see each other every day. It's natural that we become close. Our motto is One Stroke One Heart. Among us, there's no hidden agenda, we all open our hearts to each other," says Zhi Jian proudly of his team.

"The toughest thing about dragonboating is of course the training. We train under very harsh conditions and sometimes we feel like stopping. But everyone pushes everyone. The race itself is

just one or two minutes long but at that moment, it's the race of our lives!" says Zhi Jian.

For two years in a row, Zhi Jian and his fellow hunky dragonboaters mates achieved the highest honours a poly dragonboat team can possibly get. They won the championship at the POLITE Games (inter poly and ITE competition) two years in a row. They also clinched the Open Category at the DBS Marina Regatta, taking home a \$20,000 cash prize!

His abs-to-die-for physique was seen by Singaporeans in the finals of MediaCorp's Hey Gorgeous show which Zhi Jian took home the crown. How did this come about?

Story has it that one fine day, Zhi Jian was training in the SP gym when the show's hosts Dasmond Koh and Vivian Lai. He was persuaded to join the competition as he thought to himself, "Ok lah, maybe got chance to go on TV." He swore it never crossed his mind that he would win, especially with strong competitors like fellow SP mate Sean Roberts and his swooning good looks.

Now how? Banking or acting?

Zhi Jian is seriously considering his options. A showbiz career is sure as tempting as a banking one. But whatever it is, he surely wants to get a university degree after National Service. Maybe, as he says, he can try out acting during his vacations and see if he has the chops for it.

Whatever it is, the SP diploma has made Zhi Jian work-ready, life-ready and world-ready.



A Soupy Deal

After countless chocolate lava cakes and frozen yoghurts, it's good to go back to basics. This time, the treat's in the discreet. Want a full meal while circumventing the 'no food' rule in lectures? Then slurp up some SCÜP!



A world of flavour inside these cups!



Think! Think... brainstorming is difficult work.

SCÜP is an abbreviation of **S**oup in a **C**up – complete with typographical flair! It's the start-up brainchild of four final-year **Diploma in Business Administration (DBA)** students undergoing their Entrepreneurship Option. Every student taking this option is attached to a mentor and these boys should count their blessings to be mentored by Mr Manuel Minelli, owner and director of award-winning gelato consultancy, Gelato Specialists.

Offered by DBA, the Entrepreneurship Option specialisation hones the skills needed to start and – more importantly – sustain a business. Students are educated on business aspects from accounting, market research, to the nitty-gritties of supplier sourcing and logistic arrangements. In their final years, students will put the theory into practice as they develop their own start-ups for six months or more. Investments are from their own pockets, as are the profits and losses.

The start-up strategy that the four-man SCÜP team focused on, was food. "We thought of what was lacking: a source of food that's convenient and sustaining but won't get you kicked out of class for chewing!" said Chew De Han, who's in charge of sales for SCÜP.

Due to strict rules on contamination, the team isn't allowed to handle the preparation of the food without a license. Therefore, they procure it through a supplier who prepares and delivers the soups according to the team's specifications.

Available from the waffle stall at Food Court 3, in tall, minimalistic, disposable coffee cups with the brand neatly printed on the side, SCÜP is the sneaky cheat meal you didn't know you wanted. Currently, western-styled soups can only be found at Food Court 5, sold by Subway. But even those are served in conventional bowl packages that needs a table, a spoon, and loud slurping.

If you're expecting to see four young dudes ladling it out, think again. SCÜP operates through a third-party business model, where the product is sold to vendors, while all promotions and marketing is taken care of by the team. To get some SCÜP, you'll need to ask the owner of the waffle stall...ooh waffles with soup....tempting.

"The owner was convinced because we weren't just supplying the ingredients. We took care of the publicity as well," explains Mark Venon, who also looks after the logistics. Their entire



(From left): SCÜP members Chua Ren Jia, Ryan Reh, Chua De Han and M Mark Vernon with their mentor Mr Manuel Minelli (centre), Owner and Director of award-winning gelato consultancy, Gelato Specialists. PS: if you think Ryan looks familiar, you're right. He's the cover boy in the last edition of SPIRIT (Vol 3 2015).

branding is visible across SP, with flyers on the walls and an enormously space-occupying standee that advertises SCÜP at Foodcourt 3.

But they're not stopping there. The team is currently scheduled for talks to supply soups to a local café. In general, soup suppliers have a minimum order, which smaller, local cafés can't meet. That's where the SCÜP team intends to step in, ordering a bulk amount and then redistributing them to smaller institutions. In such situations, the institutions would usually then sell the soup under their own name. End consumers wouldn't know about SCÜP at all. Though the initial direction was to sell soups under the brand SCÜP, the team acknowledges the importance of adapting to the market. "Of course we're vain, we want

our brand to be visible. But ultimately, this isn't about ourselves, but filling that niche that the market wants," said Chua Ren Jian, who's in charge of design.

For them, there might even be an unexpected benefit. With a business model based on supplying, there'll be chances to continue operations well after graduation and during their National Service.

That's entrepreneurship, folks.

Grab yourself a cup of SCÜP! Currently available at Food Court 3 at the waffle stall for \$3.40 a cup. Check them out on Instagram at @scupinacup.

GETTING IT RIGHT ALONG THE WAY

The path of entrepreneurship never did run smooth. The SCÜP team shared with SPIRIT how it all went down.

- **We only see the tip of the iceberg.** Sales began in mid-October, but brainstorming and conceptualisation started in April. Tantrums and shouting matches included. The entire setup was tedious and things that seem so common sense suddenly didn't anymore. We even had to consider things like how to transport the soups and what time to do so.
- **Research, research, research.** We checked food companies websites and cold-called them, just trying our luck. That's where we found out that companies who can afford websites expect higher volume of orders, which we can't afford. We ended driving around industrial food estates and setting up impromptu meetings with suppliers on

the ground, who were quite accommodating. These hidden gems just took a bit more effort and much thicker skin to find!

- **Sometimes, add a little white lie...** We just lied our faces off. Telling investors you're students doesn't inspire much confidence in them. Some companies wasted no time in rejecting us outright. So for those that we met, we made sure to dress and come prepared – formal wear, no flip flops!
- **Don't expect overnight success.** Even after appointing the supplier, we worked together to refine the taste and the processes...even adding a single extra ingredient to the mix could bust the budget completely. We've sunk a lot of cost into the marketing as well. So being an entrepreneur is far from easy; there's a significant amount of investment necessary to see the rewards...and even that doesn't happen for everyone.

Inspired by his father's entrepreneurial experience, DBA student Bryan Lee sets up a business called Moostry with fellow course mates selling faux leather accessories such as laptop sleeves and pencil cases.

4 Years On and

Going Strong

Take a peek into the enterprising world of SP Business School, where students can fulfil their dreams of starting their own business and learn how to manage one. As part of the school's unique Entrepreneurship Programme, students get to try their hands at running a full-fledged retail business at SPELL, SP's off-campus business living lab located at Changi Airport. Plus, the programme allows students to conceptualise and build their own start-ups where they are free to pursue any business idea. **SPIRIT catches up with SP Business School students Wong Hui Min, Bryan Lee and Sim Shi Rong, who share their experiences as budding entrepreneurs in SP.**

"Welcome to SPELL," chime two young girls stationed at the counter as you wander into the sleek fashion store located at Changi Airport Terminal 3. What immediately catches your eye are rows of brightly coloured dresses and a variety of fashion accessories, like classy faux leather laptop sleeves, cute pouches and unique, wood-carved handphone cases arranged neatly on a table for your choosing. You pick a chic item and pay for it, noting the warm and friendly service provided by the shop staff as you leave the shop, happy with your purchase.

While this may seem like any other shopping experience, the Singapore Polytechnic Entrepreneurship Living Lab (SPELL) is anything but ordinary. First opened in 2011, SPELL was

the first, and still is, the only off-campus retail store fully run and managed by SP business students. A collaboration between SP and Changi Airport, this unique learning facility was created to give SP Business School students an authentic learning experience in running a business. The students are placed in charge of all business operations, such as merchandising and product sourcing, sales, inventory management, manpower scheduling and web and social media management.

For final-year **Diploma in Business Administration (DBA)** student Wong Hui Min, who is part of the Merchandising team for SPELL, her experience in the store allows her to apply what she learned from classes in a real business setting. "We get to go on

product sourcing trips – such as to South Korea – and we did a lot of planning to decide what products to bring into SPELL and how we to display them. That's something I can't learn from a book."

Celebrating its fourth anniversary this year, SPELL is getting new upgrades to enhance the students' learning and improve store sales. One of the store's new high-tech features is a video analytics system to help students monitor store performance and analyse customer demographics. This nifty system can even identify a customer's age, gender and even whether he or she is smiling, all for the purpose of helping the students to understand their audience profile. "The students managing SPELL will not only benefit from having information

that will help them understand customer behaviour, they can also review their sales performance. This sort of information is crucial to businesses, and especially so for hands-on learning, where students get to experience what the retail industry is using," says SP Business School lecturer Mr Kenneth Wong, who supervises the students running SPELL.

The store also taps on Skype and live cameras to allow real-time remote teaching and student assessment by lecturers back at the Dover Road campus. Previously, lecturers used a simple closed-circuit television (CCTV) system

Japanese-themed convenience store that sells affordable and uncommon products for students on-the-go.

Final-year DBA student Bryan Lee runs a business called Moostry with three other students, selling faux leather accessories such as laptop sleeves and pencil cases. Bryan chose to participate in the SP Business School's Entrepreneurship Programme with inspiration from his father, who owns local bakery chain Barcook Bakery. Explaining his team's business idea, he says: "Moostry is targeted at students. My group mates and I found that laptop

customer wants to buy more for their friends, we're unable to provide."

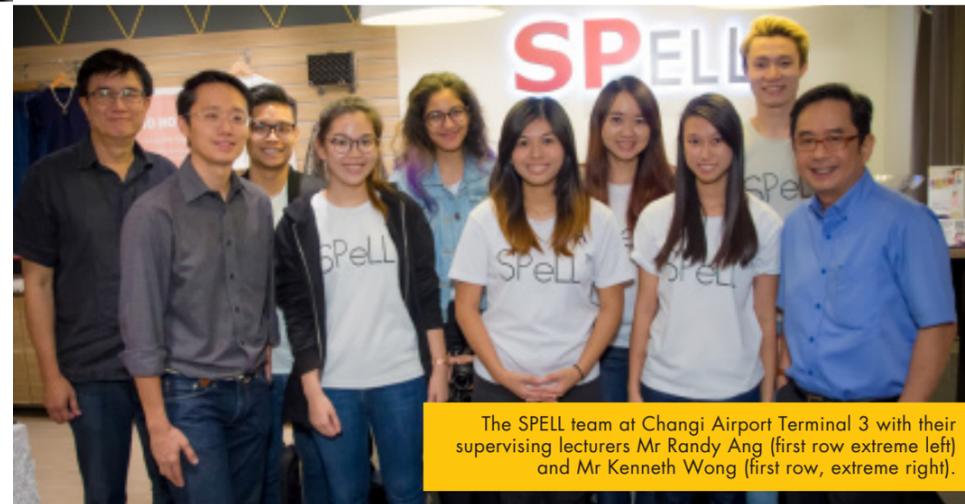
Pressure is needed to turn coal into diamonds. The students find themselves emerging a little wiser with each problem they face. Hui Min, who runs fashion apparel store T.A.M. with three other course mates, shares that the most important skill they have picked up from starting their own business is how to solve problems: "While running our business and working in SPELL, we encountered different situations and problems. Sometimes we can't approach anyone for help so we have to handle the



(From left) DBA students Hing Li Yi, Sim Shi Rong and Wong Hui Min start a business selling fashion accessories like bags and clutches.



SPELL is equipped with a video analytics system to help students monitor store performance and analyse customer demographics.



The SPELL team at Changi Airport Terminal 3 with their supervising lecturers Mr Randy Ang (first row extreme left) and Mr Kenneth Wong (first row, extreme right).

to monitor activities in SPELL from campus. With the new cameras and Skype, lecturers can provide students with real-time instruction and observation without having to leave their offices.

SPELL is one of the hallmarks of SP's Entrepreneurship Programme, an option offered to third-year students taking the DBA course. Besides gaining work experience in SPELL, students in the programme – all 38 of them – are required to set up and commercialise their business ideas as their final year practicum. The budding entrepreneurs are free to explore any profitable idea – their start-ups range from selling faux leather accessories to forming a

sleeves in Singapore are usually priced rather high, that's why we decided to sell sleeves that are more affordable. Our products are made of faux leather so they would be less expensive."

Plenty of hard work goes into running a start-up, for sure. Running a business is never smooth and the students encounter challenges each step of the way. Bryan has his share of hiccups: "We sometimes face difficulties meeting customers' demands. First of all, we are a small start-up and we have little capital. As a result, we couldn't carry a lot of stock for one design. We wish to carry a greater variety of products but in reality, we could only afford one or two pieces for each design. If a

problems ourselves." Despite occasional setbacks, the girls are doing well. Mentored by Beatrice Tan, Singapore fashion icon and owner of popular clothing label KLARRA, T.A.M.'s bags and hand-made clutches are selling well.

Her team mate, DBA student Sim Shi Rong, agrees that such hurdles are part and parcel of running a business, adding that this is how they grow from the experience. "Taking the Entrepreneurship option sums up everything I've learnt in my first and second year in DBA. For example, we can now come up with our own marketing campaigns for our business ventures. I like how the programme provides us with the rare opportunity to run our own little but real business. When we start pumping our own money into the business and watch it grow, it's just a different experience altogether. It's very real," she adds.

Visit spellverve.com to check out SPELL's catalogue of clothes and accessories. You can also visit talkingaboutme.co for Hui Min and Shi Rong's chic fashion accessories as well as moostry.com to look at Bryan's classy selection of laptop sleeves, watches and pencil cases.

Note: SPELL is located at Changi Airport Terminal 3, Basement 2 South, B2-52/53. Open daily from 10am to 11pm. Tel: 62143858.



Not Just A *Gorgeous Face*

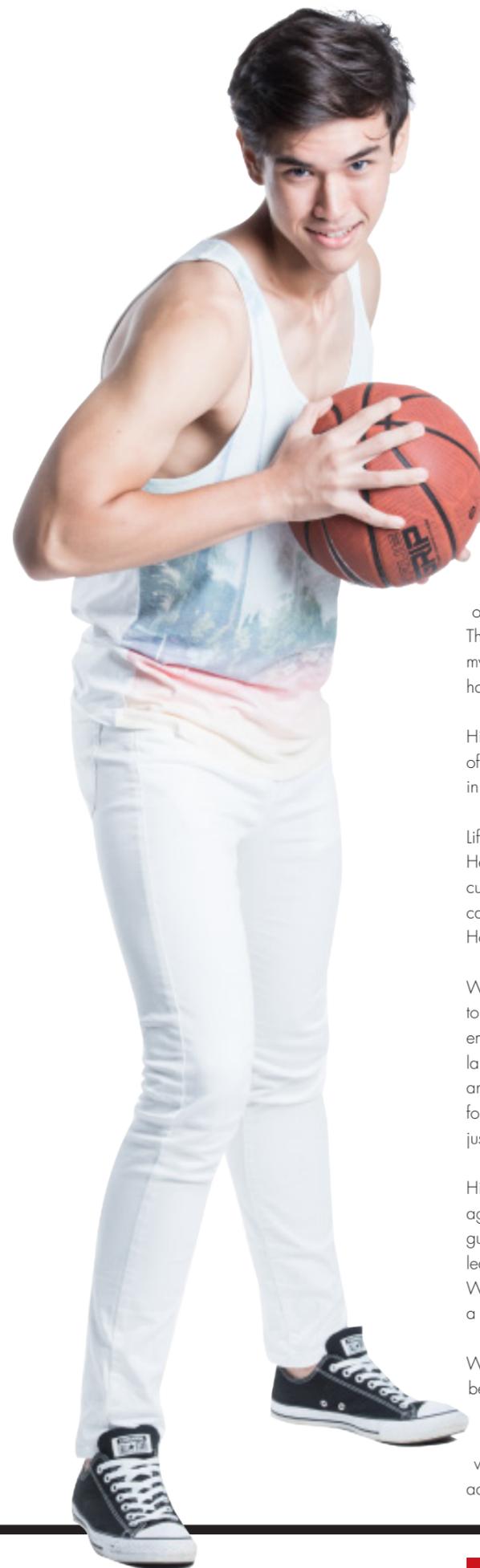
It's merely his first semester in SP, but **Diploma in Infocomm Security Management (DISM) student, Sean Robert, already has plenty going for him. In the span of a few months, this hunky student has made plenty of friends, met greater teachers, and gained stardom through a talent quest show. Read on for his eventful experiences and how it's like to be a student at SP.**

First-year DISM student Sean Robert has had an amazing start to his SP journey. In his first semester alone, he was scouted by reality campus search programme 'Hey Gorgeous' and emerged as one of its eight finalists. He's recently made a girlfriend (sorry girls!) whom he met through the show. He's taken part in many school activities, gave cyber wellness talks in several secondary schools, and despite his busy schedule, he also managed to achieve excellent grades in school. "This all happened in my first semester! It's been crazy," says Sean with a laugh.

Now in his second semester, this genetically-blessed young man is certainly enjoying his SP experience. For one, Sean is close to his classmates and has met friendly lecturers who are cheerful and encouraging. It also helps that his modules are interesting and the workload manageable, since they have a good balance of projects and exams.

"I like it that there's a split between projects and exams. It's not like one of those courses where every single module has a project, and you're just cramming five different projects at the same time. Whereas there are other courses where every module has an exam and no projects, so you're just studying a lot. So we have a healthy balance in DISM course. It's not as stressful," shares the former Holy Innocents' High School student.

His favourite module so far: Programming Fundamentals, which trains students to use Java and solve problems with programming tools. What drew Sean to SP's DISM course in the first place was the opportunity to learn ethical hacking, a module offered to second-year students. "My interest in hacking came from my love for video games.



Whenever I play a game, I would always try to find an exploit – the fastest way to beat the game or solve a puzzle. This actually sparked my interest in ethical hacking," he says.



Sean (bottom row, far left) with the dapper finalists from campus search reality show 'Hey Gorgeous'.

His passion in digital security prompted him to apply for the Infocomm Polytechnic Study Award offered by the Infocomm Development Authority for deserving students with to pursue their passion in information technology.

Life in SP isn't just about academics. For Sean, good food and a vibrant campus is a huge plus. He recommends checking out the school's newly-renovated Food Court 4, especially the Japanese cuisine stall which regularly spots a queue. He was also attracted to the organised and lively campus environment, which left a big impression on him when he first visited during the SP Open House earlier this year.

What stands out as Sean's most memorable moment in his first semester is, of course, being chosen to represent SP in MediaCorp's 'Hey Gorgeous' along with two other students, one of whom emerged as the talent search show's champion. Recalling how he was scouted, Sean says with a laugh, "I was just walking to SP when I saw the show's hosts. I recognised them from Channel 8 and thought they were filming some other show. I tried to sneak past them, but they pulled me over for a chat. Back then, I didn't even know that they were filming 'Hey Gorgeous'. I thought it was just a fun show to promote poly life."

His good performance in the show opens up many paths, one of which is a contract by modelling agency Nu Management, owned by top Singaporean model Sheila Sim. She was one of the guest stars in the show's semi-finals, and asked Sean if he's interested to join her company. Sean's leaving his options open but he's game to try modelling, acting or hosting during his vacation. While this experience certainly turned Sean – who has nearly 2,000 followers on Instagram – into a mini-celebrity, he remains humble and admits he's still getting used to all the attention.

While his future as a model and actor looks bright, Sean still aspires towards his dream job of becoming a penetration tester at Google. The role involves testing a computer system, network or web application to find vulnerabilities that a hacker could exploit. He takes his passion beyond the SP campus as well, sharing his knowledge with secondary school students through the cyber wellness talks held in various secondary schools, covering topics like cyber bullying and internet addiction. So be on the lookout! Sean may just one day pop into your school.

Animated for Work



Behind every animation are drawings. Lots and lots of drawings.



Hui Min (left) and Samantha (right) have received much praise from their co-workers for their hard work.

The *kaypoh* instinct is strong at **SPiRiT**. From higher education to conquering the corporate world, or the delicious idleness of bumming around (what's your secret, we want in!), we're always on the mother hen graduate lookout.

Local animation production company, Sparky Animation, graciously permitted **SPiRiT** access to Samantha Tan and Lim Hui Min, two **Diploma in Digital Animation (DDA)** interns-turned-employees at Sparky Animation, who chose the path of strong, independent women working hard for their money (flips hair) instead of the you-think-must-have popular university education.

Sparky Animation is one of Singapore's most established animation companies, producing content for the world-wide market. *Dinosaur Train* and *Mr Moon* are amongst their most recognised content, having aired on MediaCorp's OKTO Channel and on international broadcasters like Disney Junior.

Since graduating in 2013, Samantha joined Sparky Animation as a Junior Visual Effects Artist after freelancing for a time. Hui Min graduated in 2014, and is now a Junior Character Technical Director. Both took up DDA in SP because of their interest in the science behind 2D and 3D animation. "I've always been curious about animation production. After learning more about the course during the Open House, I decided to fulfil my dreams through this course," said Hui Min.

WHAT'S THE MOST EYE-OPENING THINGS YOU'VE LEARNT AT SPARKY THAT YOU COULDN'T HAVE IN THE CLASSROOM?

Samantha: The efficiency of animation tools which help make effects creation less tedious. I had little knowledge on effects when I first joined and it was tough learning and producing work on time. Thankfully, with help from the team, I managed to pass that phase.

Hui Min: I learnt there's more than one way to achieve a certain outcome and that whatever we do in school and in the industry may not be the same. Quality and quantity of work are crucial since there are a number of projects and I have learnt to be flexible to changes.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE INDUSTRY IMMEDIATELY UPON GRADUATION?

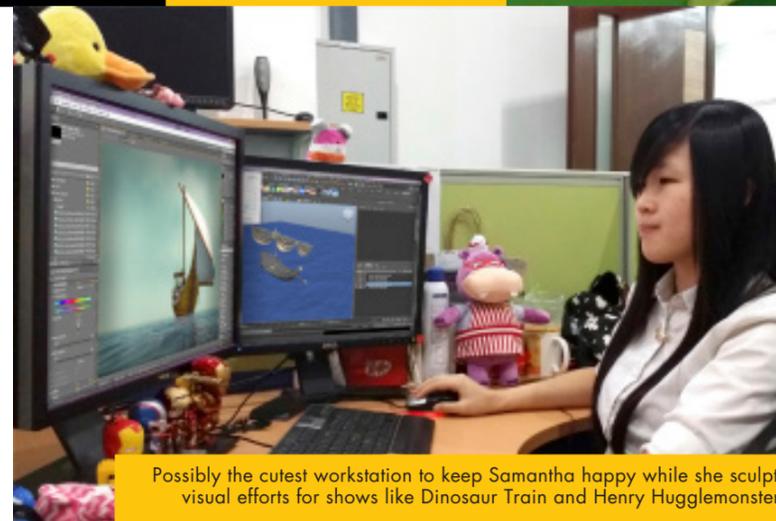
Samantha: I wanted to gain work experience and felt it would also give me more time to decide if a degree was needed for the job scope I wanted to pursue. Finances were also an issue then.

Hui Min: I couldn't decide what to study and wanted to try something new—gain some work experience. Currently, I'm enjoying my work life, so if I were to further my studies, I will probably take on short courses.

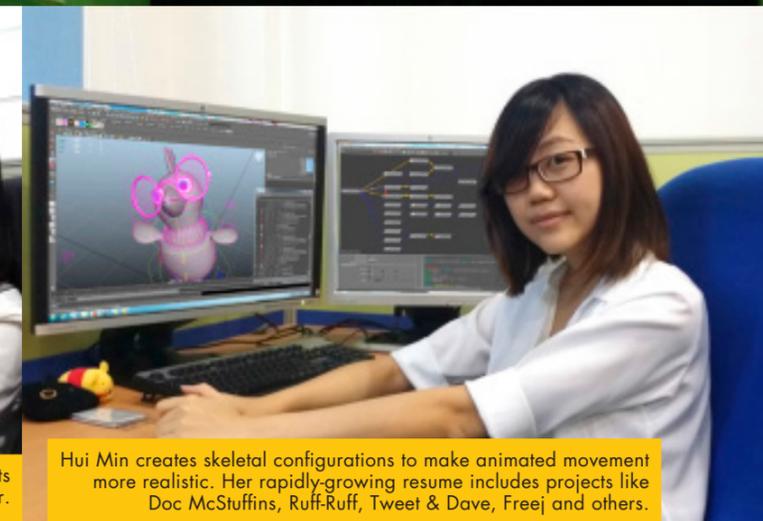
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR YOU?

Samantha: Possibly overseas for a different experience, but in the same industry.

Hui Min: With better skills because of my work experience, while doing more prominent projects. I also want to take part in projects that benefit society too.



Possibly the cutest workstation to keep Samantha happy while she sculpts visual efforts for shows like *Dinosaur Train* and *Henry Hugglemonster*.



Hui Min creates skeletal configurations to make animated movement more realistic. Her rapidly-growing resume includes projects like *Doc McStuffins*, *Ruff-Ruff*, *Tweet & Dave*, *Freej* and others.

SPARKLING OPPORTUNITIES

Sparky Animation has been working with SP's School of Digital Media and Infocomm Technology (DMIT) since 2009 and kicked things up a notch this 2015. At Graduation this year, they sponsored the **Diploma in Digital Animation's (DDA)** Silver Medallist – awarded to Lum Yu An, also a past Sparky intern. Both parties also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to provide extended internships for students. Under this programme, up to three final-year DDA students will undergo a one year internship with Sparky Animation.

Adequate training was the reason. Mr Nguyen Manh Ha, Visual Effects Department Manager of Sparky Animation remarked that longer internships meant acquiring deeper skills. "A typical internship lasts around 16 weeks, which is mostly spent on familiarisation. By the time their skillsets have reached an adequate level of contribution to productions, their internships are over," he explains. "Basically, we want to devote enough time to their training, where they can independently take on challenges in the job. A year-long internship programme answers that need."

Aside from Sparky Animation, DDA students have also interned at other reputable companies. These include Japanese video game producer Bandai Namco Entertainment Inc., famed for its best-selling *Tales* franchise of Japanese role-playing games; and visual effects giant, Double Negative, whose work can be seen on blockbusters like *Interstellar* and *The Avengers*. Graduates have also gone on to companies such as Gumi Asia, known for the popular turn-based mobile game, *Brave Frontier*.

Diploma, Work, Degree



In 2007, he graduated from SP with average grades. But that didn't stop Raymond Chua from joining a multinational visual effects company, travelling to London to work on his firm's projects, and pursuing a newfound passion for computer programming. He shares with SPIRIT the twists and turns in his post-SP journey, including his pursuit of undergraduate studies at the University of Adelaide (UoA), offered by the Ngee Ann Adelaide Education Centre.

I DIDN'T GRADUATE FROM SP WITH SPECTACULAR GRADES.

My Diploma in Multimedia Technology focused on multimedia content such as graphic designs, audio and games, which I excelled in. However, I scored mainly 'C's and 'D's in computer programming subjects, and I eventually graduated with a GPA of 2.89.

PROGRAMMING DIDN'T INTEREST ME THEN,

but I was interested to explore graphic design in greater depth. While studying for my diploma, and even after graduation, I would read extensively to beef up my graphic skills. I also found opportunities to talk to professionals in the field to find out what key skills I needed as an entry-level candidate. Though embarking on

these pursuits in my free time pulled down my grades a little, it made me more informed about what was required to achieve my aspirations, develop my skillsets and carve out a career in this industry.

BEEFING UP MY TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW PAID OFF, AND I LANDED MY FIRST JOB

with Double Negative Visual Effects, a multinational company where I was given opportunities to work on computer-generated special effects for Hollywood movies such as John Carter, and Captain America: The First Avenger.

LIVING IN LONDON SPARKED OFF A FRESH PASSION FOR PROGRAMMING IN ME.

One of Double Negative's many projects in London needed assistance and I was selected to be flown there to offer my expertise. During the stint, my supervisor, a Frenchman in the company's research and development team, wrote his own software programmes to automate some tasks which would otherwise

have taken up substantial time and effort. In a way, he has helped me understand the potential of programming, and ignited my interest to further my studies in this field.

MY PROGRAMMING TRAINING IN SP GAVE ME THE FOUNDATIONS NEEDED TO MAKE THE SWITCH.

Having learnt a wide range of multimedia skills, and been exposed to a multitude of design platforms meant that I was able to pick up new skills and knowledge quickly.

CURRENTLY, I AM STUDYING FOR A BACHELOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE, A PART-TIME DEGREE AT UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

The greatest benefit from this degree programme is the soft skills that I've learnt. The regular group projects sharpened my ability to communicate with my course mates and contribute in a positive, collaborative environment. Modules also greatly emphasised the development of good problem-solving approaches. My grades have been consistently above average and on track for distinction. As a recipient of the bond-free Ngee Ann Kongsi (NAK) Scholarship, I'm able to focus more on my studies as the financial support helps ease the burden.

NOW I AM WORKING FULL-TIME AT COMMONWEALTH SECONDARY SCHOOL.

My job involves managing the school's computing and robotics club, working on educational technology projects and conducting computer science-related workshops for students. One of the key reasons I took this job was the valuable chance to start something new and to run a club related to my interests. One of my favourite highlights is that "Oh, now I get it!" moment when a student manages to grasp a concept fully after I explain it, and gets excited about applying it to their robot or programme.

TIME MANAGEMENT IS REALLY IMPORTANT AS MANY MODULES REQUIRE SELF-STUDY AND PERSONAL COMMITMENT.

I spend up to two hours studying every night. To minimise work schedule disruption of its students, NAA's part-time programme

is delivered via intensive weekend classes taught by the university's lecturers, who fly to Singapore from the Adelaide campus to share their experiences and knowledge. Students at NAA undergo the same curriculum, receive the same sets of lecture notes and sit for the same examinations as their peers over at UoA's Australian campus.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL, SWIMMING AND RUNNING HELP ME TO UNWIND.

I try to run at least four to six kilometres each time. Exercise, the therapeutic warmth of the sun and the sound of sea waves, help clear my mind.

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO MAY DISLIKE A CERTAIN TOPIC IN YOUR STUDIES: PERSEVERE.

Things may change along the way. The market direction may switch; you may discover a new passion. I'm glad I had passionate lecturers and helpful course mates in SP and NAA. Because of them, I was able to develop the skills needed to pursue my aspirations.

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE NOT WILLING TO SACRIFICE THEIR TIME.

I regret to share that I didn't manage my time well in the past. Time management has taught me perseverance, and I recommend that you do the same. Keep using your time for worthy pursuits, and you will find it worthwhile. It will put you in the zone, and soon the sacrifice won't matter anymore. You'll become more focused and hungry to succeed.

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

UoA is one of the most prestigious universities in Australia. It's consistently ranked in the top one percent worldwide and is a member of the Group of Eight which includes Australia's leading research-intensive universities. Local polytechnic diploma holders get generous course exemptions for advanced standing into the bachelor degree programmes, with degree programmes offered under the Ngee Ann Adelaide Education Centre. For details, visit www.naa.edu.sg.

Meet up-and-coming designer Joanna Yeong – this design student can create beautiful graphics, weave words that grab your attention and even craft artworks to teach people about important social issues. One may call her a design whiz, but Joanna knows not to take her talents for granted – after all, she only picked up these skills over the course of her studies in SP. Follow her journey as a student in the **Diploma in Visual Communication and Media Design (DVMD)**, where she shares the joys and challenges faced while on track to becoming a designer.

The Design Whiz

Budding designer and SP student Joanna Yeong is a jack-of-all-trades – she can create mesmerising original designs, shoot and edit videos, write professional copies to sell a product, and even develop interactive 3D artworks. It's hard to imagine then, that she didn't know any of these skills three years ago when she first stepped into SP. In fact, the 20-year-old had a tough time deciding where she wanted to go after her 'O' Levels.

"Back when I was taking my 'O' Levels, I wasn't sure of what I wanted to do in the future. I'm not very good in subjects like maths and science," says Joanna, who was from Xinmin Secondary School. Her older sister, an SP alumna, then introduced to her course. The course content fascinated her – it teaches students how to design beautiful graphics and create eye-catching branding advertisements for products, was something

new and interesting to Joanna. While she initially had her doubts about joining the course as she didn't have any background in design, Joanna decided to put her worries aside and go for it.

Now in her final year, Joanna is well-equipped to join the creative industry, having gone through foundation modules that impart design, illustration and writing skills

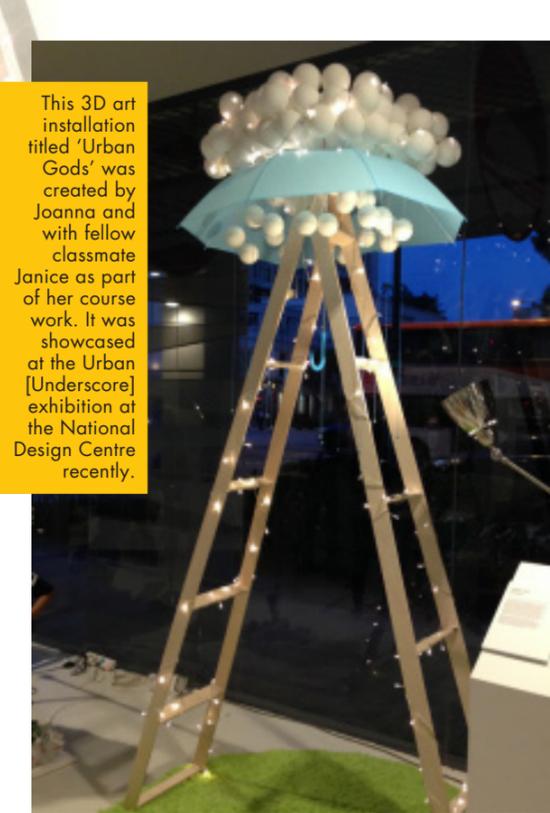
Joanna is the cover girl for SP Design School's latest brochure.

to students. Describing how DVMD provides her with a 'whole package' of skills useful to a professional in the creative industry, she says: "We go through a variety of modules which cover fields like branding and advertising. For instance, you get to learn how to manage a company's brand image, design logos, and come up with advertisements that can connect with the target audience."

For Joanna, the best and most fulfilling part of being in DVMD – besides having no exams (yay!) – is being able to bring her ideas into life in the form of artworks or projects. For instance, she recently created a 3D art installation titled 'Urban Gods' with fellow classmate Janice as part of the New Media Design elective module. Joanna explains: "The concept behind the project is that in our daily life, people can easily find information online using Google and other phone applications but we don't really appreciate what we have right now. We just take our ease of information for granted. Thus, we created a cloud-shaped installation hanging high above which requires people to look up and pull a string down in order to read the messages. In getting people to look up at the cloud and receive messages, it symbolises people actively asking for the information instead of it being handed to them." Upon completion, their installation was showcased at the Urban [Underscore] exhibition at the National Design Centre not too long ago.



This 3D art installation titled 'Urban Gods' was created by Joanna and with fellow classmate Janice as part of her course work. It was showcased at the Urban [Underscore] exhibition at the National Design Centre recently.



It's not always a bed of roses however, as design students like Joanna have their own share of challenges. For instance, while they don't have exams, DVMD students have to do several projects and assignments each semester. "My friends who went to other poly courses tell me that it's good to be in my course, as there are no exams. However, we have plenty of projects and sometimes face sleepless nights when we have to rush them out, so it can be rather stressful," she says. To cope with multiple project deadlines, Joanna learned to prioritise projects that are more urgent and work on one assignment at a time.

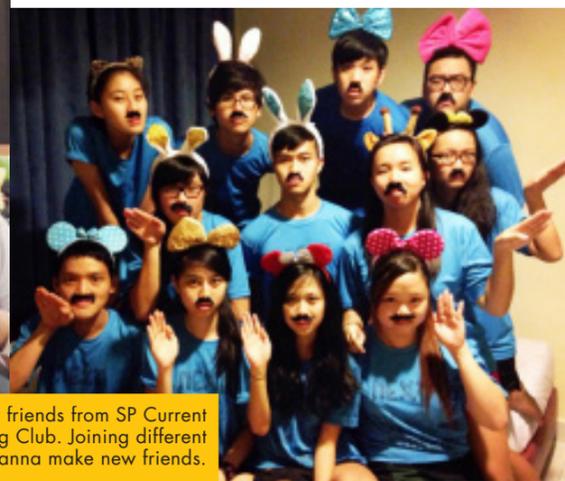
While school assignments can keep Joanna busy, the active student still manages to find time for pursuits outside of class time. Before starting her final year at SP, Joanna put her design skills to use during a seven-week internship at brand consultancy company Toolbox Design, where she assists in designing the company's projects. She's also a member of The Student Agency, a student-run integrated

design and branding agency in SP which provides opportunities for students to work on real clients' projects. For instance, Joanna is in the team of students that conceptualised the creative campaign for SP Open House 2016. Joanna is also a member of the Current Affairs and Debating Club, which organises inter-school debating competitions and freshmen orientation camps for SP students. "I think I'm just very *kaypoh*, I like to explore different clubs and make new friends," she adds with a laugh.

She's in love with the SP Design School new building which has plenty of greenery, recreational spaces and overlapping classrooms where students can hang out after class. "There's also a new food court. I was told that our design seniors had a role in designing the interior of this food court," she enthuses.



Joanna and her friends from SP Current Affairs and Debating Club. Joining different clubs in SP helps Joanna make new friends.



ASEAN Camaraderie SP WAY



Welcome one and all to YMAC! Participants from all ten ASEAN nations are coming together.

What happens when you put over 200 youths from member countries of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) together for four days and have them discuss hard-hitting topics like economics, environmental matters and societal cohesion? You'll be surprised by their diplomacy.

At the fourth Youth Model ASEAN Conference (YMAC) 2015 last October, SP played host to 200 local polytechnic students and foreign participants. It was the second year running that all ten member states sent youth delegates to the event, which simulates the proceedings of an ASEAN Conference, and is supported by the S Rajaratnam Endowment.

During the four-day event, the participants

took on the role of diplomats to network with and strengthen bonds with their ASEAN peers, enhance their knowledge on regional economic, environmental, security, social and cultural issues, as well as start and strengthen dialogues on issues discussed that impact the growth and development of the region. They tackled various regional issues concerning ASEAN growth and development, before presenting their resolutions at a colourful closing

ceremony attended by Guest-of-Honour, Mrs Josephine Teo, Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Prime Minister's Office.

YMAC aims to further foster cultural sensitivity, non-discrimination and awareness among the ASEAN youth communities. Through the process of interaction, it hopes to bring positive changes to the community and forge long-lasting friendships amongst participants.

YMAC is SP's unique creation. It started out as a compulsory module that students in the SP Outstanding Talent (SPOT) Programme would undertake. Towards the end of the module, students would prepare for a mini model ASEAN Conference, take on roles as delegates



SP students play their part: Diploma in Business Administration student and Secretary-General for YMAC 2015 Laura Ann Lau (left) facilitated a dialogue session between participants and Mrs Josephine Teo.



A bittersweet moment for participants as YMAC closes.

SP WINS FIRST ASEAN PEOPLE'S AWARD

We did it! SP was honoured with the inaugural ASEAN People's Award in 2015. It's a first not just for SP, but for the whole nation. There are only ten recipients for the award, one for each ASEAN member nation. SP is the first recipient ever of the awards for Singapore. The 61-year-old institution was picked from a pool of 22 nominations for Singapore, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) received in late August to September 2015.

The Award recognises organisations which have made significant contributions to regional community building over the years. SP and the other recipients will receive a US\$10,000 (\$S\$13,900) cash grant to encourage the awardees to continue with their activities. The award ceremony was held recently in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong in attendance.

The award comes after careful consideration of SP's ASEAN Outreach Thrust, where the curriculum has begun including community building programmes to improve the lives of people across ASEAN.

Amongst SP's ASEAN Outreach Thrust programmes are our overseas community service and Overseas Community Involvement Programme (OCIP) programmes. The data speaks for itself: since 2010, SP has conducted 84 overseas community service projects with 1,885 students across ASEAN countries like Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam, to name a few. It's not for show either, students have contributed by constructed buildings, performed health and eye care and even English language lessons.

Then there's Learning Express (LeX), a 14-day overseas study trip to an ASEAN nation. Started in 2013, LeX has grown to over 11 destinations in four ASEAN countries, benefitting close to 900 students. They'll brainstorm solutions to the community's problems, to deepen their awareness and understanding of ASEAN's diverse culture and current affairs amongst youth.

Of course, there's the YMAC event, for its involvement of not only the polytechnic community, but also students from Institutes of Higher Learning from fellow ASEAN member states.



Plenty to see here! Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mrs Josephine Teo took the gallery walk that exhibited the resolutions passed by the participants.

and debate. It proved so popular with students that it was expanded to become the YMAC programme we now know.

The topics discussed amongst participants included cyber security and economic development – all poignant topics in this digital age. Amongst their recommendations: standardising cyber security rules and regulations in the ASEAN region; beefing up information and communication technology scholarships for promising ASEAN students. These are youth participant solutions, mind you!

While the conference was happening, there was a whole sleuth of helpful SP staff and students in the background ensuring that the event ran smoothly. Some of these included the SP Theatre Compass and first-year students from the School of Digital Media and Infocomm Technology who collaborated on a video production of the YMAC song, which was presented as a live multi-media performance using computer graphics and 'shadow actors' with a video montage.

Not only that, students from the **Diploma in Creative Writing for TV and New Media (DTVM)** were also on ground to document the YMAC conference, covering it from start to finish. They spoke to participants, guests and organisers, producing little snapshots of the event.



Singapore Polytechnic receives the ASEAN People's Award from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during the 27th Asean Summit held in Kuala Lumpur.

The Write *Choice*

You can create ambient sounds for films at this impressive sound stage located at the National Film Development Corporation in Kuala Lumpur.



DTVM student Drake Law trying out the safety gear used by Al Jazeera journalists working in dangerous locations.

In addition, the students attended a masterclass on writing for animation, which taught them the elements for a good story. This specially arranged class was conducted by Avant Garde Studios, an advertising and animation production firm. Besides the creative process of coming up with animated characters, instructor Keeta Brennan shared with the students her personal story of creating, writing and marketing her dream, which scored many successes but also ran into serious problems along the way. Student Kimberlyn Kiew was all excited after the experience: "Previously I was

Learning from the guru: DTVM students learn how to create and write for animation characters from Keeta Brennan, the Creative Director of Avant Garde Studios.



Learning's more fun in the outdoors, without the haze of course. In SP, it's common for learning to go beyond the lecture halls and tutorial rooms – to the outdoors – so long as it provides a beneficial experience. Every student has the chance to go on overseas trips for different purposes, like this group of students from the **Diploma in Creative Writing for TV and New Media (DTVM) who recently ventured to neighbouring Kuala Lumpur for a fun and eventful learning experience about the local media industry.**

Study trips that form part of the school curriculum are very valuable as they provide students the opportunity of learning through travel, and in an unfamiliar environment. Thirty-five second and third-year students from the DTVM course achieved just that – they embarked on a Creative Writing Study Tour to Kuala Lumpur, which exposed them to the many different aspects of the media industry in Malaysia's capital.

The three-day tour was an opt-in programme designed specially for the students, who were accompanied by five lecturers, so that they

can see how their lessons transform to media projects in the real world. Over the course of the trip, they visited well-known media companies and networked with established writers.

One of the media companies they visited was the office of web-based news organisation Malaysiakini where they learned about non-traditional news reporting from the perspective of non-mainstream players. DTVM student Andrew Vimal felt that this was his favourite part of the programme. "Stepping into a building with people who fought for democratic

ideals and press freedom resonates strongly with me," he says.

The students also got first-hand accounts from the editors and reporters of international news organisation Al Jazeera, whom also imparted insight on the editorial policies of a non-western media giant. The exciting bit? The students got to try on the bullet-proof vests and helmets that Al Jazeera journalists have to put on during dangerous assignments. A few students even got to try out the camera equipment. For DTVM student Bernice Pua, this visit was the biggest eye-opener. She shares: "It's very rare to be

able to see the office of such a high-profile news network. It's refreshing to be able to witness the people who risk their lives to simply get a story on air."

To learn more about film-making, the students went to the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia where they saw its huge sound stage, and learned to create realistic ambient sound effects in films in a space called the Foley Studio. The group even got to watch a yet-to-be released scary movie trailer.

The group experienced a totally different adventure when they visited a new company that created and promoted children's animated programmes. The folks at the Lil Critter Workshop shared their ups and downs as a



Student Winnie Goh (and SPiRiT writer!) in the Aljazeera studio.

unsure about whether I would actually want to write for animation but after this trip, even after realising how difficult it is, I want to write for it more."

The trip has given DTVM students a valuable exposure to how professionals carry out their duties in the industry, providing them with a real world perspective on what they have learnt in DTVM. "The different workshops and companies allowed me to really see in depth the processes that go behind the scenes and I'm grateful for the experience," says student Ryan Goh. It also gave them clear ideas about their internship options as well as what lies ahead for them after they graduate.

Smooth Sailing

In person, Cheong Xuuen from the Diploma in Nautical Studies (DNS) is stoically quiet and remarkably posed – all good qualities for an aspiring captain, who needs to be ready to handle unpredictable situations out at sea. Not to mention that with his skills in taekwondo, he'll easily be able to kick any mutinous sailor's behind in an instant! SPIRIT pulls him aside for a little chat.

It might just be his first semester here at SP, but don't underestimate Xuuen. In these few short months, he's excelled in his course, received the Tripartite Maritime Scholarship, and committed to both the Singapore National Taekwondo Team and the SP Taekwondo Club.

To some, that might seem excessive, but Xuuen knows what he's doing – starting off with his diploma. His love for sailing and the sea came at an early age, when he took up sailing as a CCA during primary school, and represented his school in several regattas. His passion eventually led this Bedok Town Secondary School alumnus to apply to SP, with a determination to pursue a career related to his interest.

Ask about his favourite part of SP life and you'll find that it encompasses everything from his studies, the learning environment, to the friends he's made and being able to represent SP in taekwondo competitions.

Already, he's gotten a real-life taste of how it's like being on a commercial vessel, when he attended the Maritime Experiential Learning (MEL) Camp just months ago. A collaboration with Star Cruises since 2004, the MEL Camp gives students from SP's Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) a direct experience of how it feels to be on-board a cruise ship. During the four-day return cruise to Penang and Phuket, students get to learn about the global shipping industry while living aboard and witnessing first-hand how a cruise ship operates.

"It was an enriching experience. I made lots of new friends, even with the Japanese exchange students," Xuuen said, recalling the event. "Basically, we came, we saw, and we learnt. Every little bit the ship was an opportunity."

For Xuuen, he can't wait to go sailing in his second year, when DNS' 12 Months Sea Service module commences.



On board MEL Camp on Star Cruise for see-to-believe how a ship is managed.



Already, he's polishing his skills by learning all he can in class. "Navigation modules are my favourite, because that's what I want to do in the future," he shares. It's a clear path for someone who has wanted to be a captain since primary school.

Perhaps the greatest validation that he's blazing his path in his own way, is earning the Tripartite Maritime Scholarship, which is offered only to SMA students. It fully covers tuition fees, provides annual and uniform allowances, and even a monthly S\$1,000 allowance during academic and training phases. Better still, depending on their Certificate of Competency (which evaluates their officer rankings) achievements, recipients would also receive monetary bonuses. Compulsory courses are also fully sponsored.

Studies aside, taekwondo is equally important to Xuuen. He started at a tender age of seven, when his parents signed him up for the activity, believing that self-defence was a good skill to learn.

Naturally, he hated the extra activity, as all kids do. "I didn't like it at first!" he recalls. "I was forced to go but I stuck with it throughout the years."

The difference came when he turned 14 and

was invited to join the Singapore National Taekwondo Team. He became a gold medalist in inter-school competitions for four years straight, one of the reasons that earned him the Singapore Schools Sports Council Best School Boy in Taekwondo in 2013. In addition, he's also represented Singapore in various competitions over the years, such as the Asian Cities Taekwondo Championship in Hong Kong and the World Taekwondo Federation Tournament for the 2014 Nanjing Youth Olympic Games in Taiwan. If not for certain situations, he would have also represented Singapore in the recent 28th Southeast Asian Games in 2015.

Closer to SP, he represented the institution at the International Clubs Taekwondo Champion where he emerged Silver for the sparring category.

"I've learnt many things like self-discipline, determination, courage and all the important sports values through taekwondo," he shares. These are the same values that he carries into his studies and everyday life.

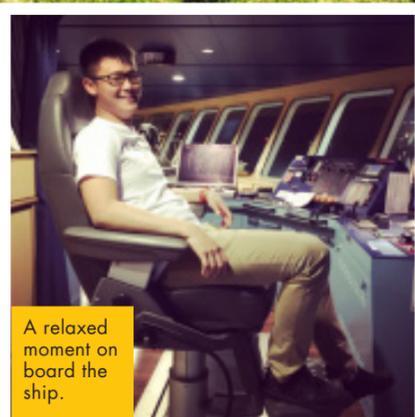
Don't underestimate him, but don't be too frightened of him either. At heart, he's still a real mommy's boy, when asked for a secret. "I still give my mom hugs and kisses every morning," he shares with a laugh.



Zachary at the house where 19th century French warrior Napoleon died. It's located in Saint Helena, a volcanic island off the east coast of Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.



Sailing



A relaxed moment on board the ship.

When **Diploma in Nautical Studies (DNS)** alumnus Zachary Loh graduated five years ago, he didn't imagine that he will be salvaging a World War II ship off the remote tropical island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean. Neither did he imagine that he will be the first Singaporean to step foot on the island where French Emperor Napoleon was imprisoned after the Battle of Waterloo.

In 2008, Zachary Loh made the decision to take up DNS in SP after his 'O' Levels at St Patrick's School. He had a week-long attachment to the Singapore Maritime Academy during his secondary school days and was impressed by the learning facilities as well as the career opportunities.

"The poly route has given me the freedom to pursue activities such as CCAs beyond studying for my diploma. The Poly Marina, high-tech simulators and other cool facilities awed me as you don't have these in a secondary school. You could say my sense of adventure was nurtured in SP. However, I had no idea where I would sail to or what to expect once I started working the day after my National Service!" he recalls.

Over the years, Zachary's passion for the maritime industry grew deeper. He never expected life as a seafarer to be so exciting and fulfilling. From making important decisions to operating heavy machinery and steering massive ships, every new exposure deepens his commitment to the seas.

The on-the-job training he received onboard, coupled with the skills and knowledge acquired from DNS, were adequate in preparing him for the seafaring career. Now a Second Officer with a vessel, he says he could forgo further studies for the time being.

"To be honest, this is a tough industry and one

really has to put up with the daily challenges that are thrown at you as you climb up the ranks. However, the maritime industry is also one where career progression is dependent on one's skills and experience. If you're eager to learn and face the challenges, you will see your skills deepen and with the right job experience, you can earn more than a degree holder."

Some of the skills that Zachary learned on board the ship include the operations and maintenance of various equipment such as radio sets and medical tools. He's also involved in the planning of the vessel's passage from point A to B. And he's also the medical officer on board his vessel!

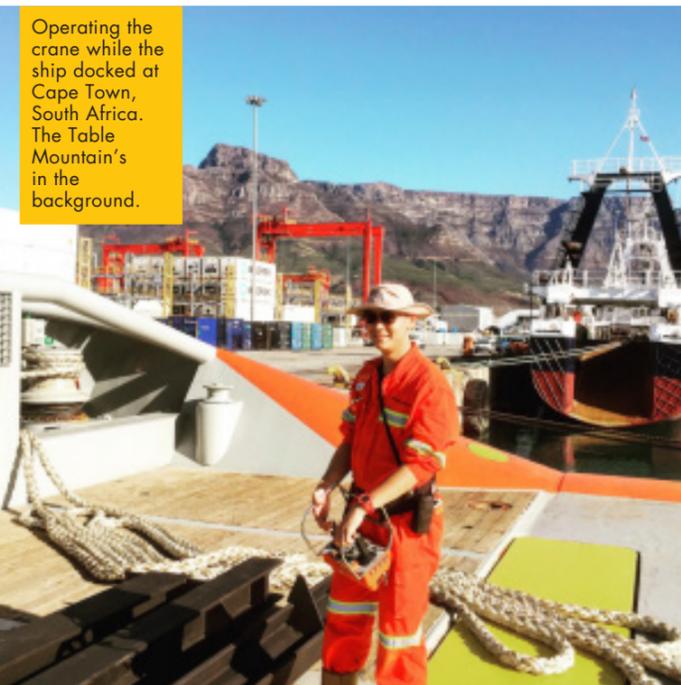
Despite his multiple roles on board the ship and the homesickness that comes with being away from home for long stretches (months) at times, Zachary firmly believes that he's on the right path and has no hesitation sharing encouraging others to join him.

"Don't go into the maritime industry if you're half-hearted. This is an industry that emphasises intelligence, perseverance, creativity and skills over paper qualifications. The passionate lecturers at the Singapore Maritime Academy can only guide and nurture your passion in this field. It's also important to have the support of your family and friends. But what's next is entirely up to you," says Zachary.

Standing proud with fellow crew members on board.



Zachary looking dapper in his uniform.



Operating the crane while the ship docked at Cape Town, South Africa. The Table Mountain's in the background.



A beautiful double-rainbow moment captured by Zachary in Saint Helena.



DCEB students and their lecturer going to the "dream bridge" – Kokonoe Yume Bridge.

Explore a town in Japan that most of us have never heard of. Checking out places in Taipei that were struck by earthquakes. And step into the hot kitchen on board a Star Cruise ship? Same same but different. That aptly summarises the overseas adventures that SP students go through when they embark on overseas learning trips. They go to countries we go, but they see the things we don't.

Unusual Overseas Trips

IN JAPAN

Japan is a popular tourist destination, but have you heard of Oita? Twelve **Diploma in Civil Engineering with Business (DCEB)** second-year students went on an eight-day study trip there to learn about the sophisticated infrastructure in Japan, without even knowing anything about Oita.

From the laboratory lessons at Oita National College of Technology (ONCT) to the out-of-classroom learning trips to Oita Prefectural Office, Nippon Steel Factory and tourist attractions like Kokonoe Yume Bridge and the famous Beppu Jigoku Hot Springs, these DCEB students witnessed how the different civil engineering concepts learned in textbooks can be applied in real life.

For DCEB student John Lim, he was impressed by the Kokonoe Yume Bridge (Japan's longest and highest pedestrian bridge). "It is surely impressive! There was a diagram nearby that roughly explained about the structure of this suspension bridge. Considering that the bridge was so high above the ground and the surface of the ground was uneven, it should be very difficult to construct. Yet, not only did they manage to construct it, they made it pretty sturdy. The views from the bridge was also spectacular."

The group also visited the famous Nippon Steel Factory where they saw steel slabs being made up close...at over 1,000 degree

Celsius! At the Oita Prefectural Office, they learned how the Japanese guarded themselves against natural disasters. The office itself was constructed on rollers and springs that will structurally reinforce the buildings.

John was also awe-struck by the red and blue *onsen* (spring water) at Beppu Jigoku. The heat from the *onsen* is said to be known for improving blood circulation while the households in the area also use the heat from hot springs to heat up their place.

IN TAIWAN

Where else can students learn about building structures that can withstand earthquakes? The places that have experienced them, of course! Eight **Diploma in Architecture (DARCH)** and **Diploma in Civil Engineering with Business (DCEB)** students flew into Taipei, Taiwan, for an international competition on earthquake engineering. It required them to design seismic-resistant building models that could withstand the simulated earthquake forces, using easily available and low cost materials.



Team SP clinching 4th place at IDEERS.



Witnessing the damages by earthquakes at Chelungpu Fault Preservation Park.

Was it possible for students from two different courses to work together? It was indeed challenging especially since they were originally working in two different teams and had to group together as one after being informed that only one team per institution can participate. They were the only non-university team to compete in the Undergraduate Category, against 41 other university teams from other countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia and China. Despite these odds, they clinched fourth place, quite a feat already given their relatively younger age!

Winning the competition may be their motive, but that was not the only item on their itinerary. They also went on a day trip to earthquake-related places such as the Longteng Broken Bridge, Chelungpu Fault Preservation Park and the 921 Earthquake Museum of Taiwan. Through these visits, they could relate the concepts taught in classroom to what they saw in the failed structures.

Team Leader Ng Yi Shien described the day-trip as eye-opening. "Chelungpu Fault Preservation Park was built to preserve the surface rupture of the Chelungpu Fault caused by the 1999 Chi-chi Earthquake for research purposes. In this park, there are videos, photographs, graphical illustrations and interactive exhibits that provide us with knowledge about earthquakes. The visit to the 921 Earthquake Museum of Taiwan was the most interesting due to the information and visuals. Some of the damaged buildings from the 1999 earthquake were preserved, with

some structures reinforced to prevent further collapse. It was an eye-opening experience as we could see the extent of the damages up close. There were also interactive exhibits such as a scale where we can jump and gauge the magnitude of our jump against the actual earthquake's magnitude," relates Yi Shien.

ON STAR CRUISE

Overseas trips in SP trips are not limited to second and third-year students. Seventy-two first year **Diploma in Hotel and Leisure Facilities Management (DHFLM)**

the cruise management team regarding the operations in various departments such as entertainment, food and beverage and rooms division.

When the ship docked, they explored Langkawi and its crystal clear water and beautiful hills. In Penang, they saw the famous Penang Bridge and tasted local specialties such as Penang char kway teow and laksa at the Red Garden hawker centre.

For DHFLM student Melissa Ang, the trip was



DHFLM students at the cruise's gala dinner night.

students embarked on a four-day-three-night study trip on-board Super Star Gemini. The ship sailed to Penang and Langkawi. For some of them, it was their first cruise trip on a cruise liner.

During the trip, the students were given tours of the kitchen galley, laundry area and the casino. They also attended talks given by

very relaxing and a good way for them to learn and recharge. "We get to see how people work behind the scene – like how the restaurant operates and how they manage the casino. The fun part was the short trip to Langkawi where we get to see the resorts and the beach," says Melissa.



Forty students from the Diploma in Human Resource Management with Psychology (DHRMP) all set and ready to explore Dim Sum Land.

Journey to Dim Sum Land

Lei hou ma? A group of 40 students from the Diploma in Human Resource Management with Psychology (DHRMP) embarked on a trip to the hometown of Jackie Chan and Andy Lau. No, they weren't there to pick up kungfu or Cantopop. Instead, the students went on an experiential study visit at a university and four notable companies – including Hong Kong Disneyland and Courtyard Marriott Hong Kong Sha Tin – in Hong Kong.

First on their itinerary is a visit to Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), where the students experienced a warm welcome from the staff and students. While they were slightly late due to a flight delay, the university had everything prepared for them and ready to go, including a sumptuous lunch that the group delightfully tucked into. At the university, they also got to meet an SP graduate from the **Diploma in Business Administration (DBA)** course! Talk about a small world.

On the second day, the students dressed in dapper business wear, all ready to kick start their corporate visits and catch a glimpse of how it's like to work in the real business world.

They first paid a visit to local electric company CLP Group, which supplies electricity to 80 per cent of Hong Kong's population. The students were introduced to the key priorities of CLP's human resource department. With an aging population, the company emphasises on grooming talent from within the company. They were then given the rare, eye-opening opportunity to tour around one of Hong Kong's few power stations.

Leading property company Sino Group was the students' second stop. Here's a fun fact: Did you know that Sino Group, one of Hong Kong's leading developers, was founded by

a Singaporean businessman? It is affiliated to reputable companies in Singapore such as the Far East Organization and Yeo's. The students also got a crash course on the company's well-developed set of human resource initiatives, designed to attract and retain employees effectively. One of the unique benefits they learnt about Sino Group is that the company rewards employees with paid leave based on the number of hours of community service work. This is to encourage employees to put in more effort in doing community service.

The students also visited Courtyard Marriott Hong Kong Sha Tin Hotel and – in their favourite part of the trip – Hong Kong



During a visit to local electric company CLP Group, the students were given the rare, eye-opening opportunity to tour around one of Hong Kong's few power stations.

Disneyland. As both are globally reputable companies, they had much to learn about their success. During their stopover at Courtyard Marriott, the students learned about the hotel's recruitment strategies. For instance, it uses an online quiz to recruit a person with the best fit to the company's culture. The hotel also remains attractive to employees by providing many opportunities for internal transfers, as well as career progression for workers.



It was back to their childhood as the students stepped into the colourful world of Hong Kong Disneyland, where they were introduced to the theme park's unique business culture.

It was back to their childhood as the students stepped into the colourful world of Hong Kong Disneyland. They were introduced to the theme park's Foundations for Career Success programme which hires students as Disney cast members, exposing them to the unique business culture and allows them to explore their career interests. One of the most impactful aspects of the programme is that the cast members are constantly reminded of their roots and values to ensure that every show goes smoothly. The cast members are given a supportive working environment to help them stay committed to the company and dedicated in their work.

It wasn't all business, however. At the end of each 'work' day, the students explored the streets of Hong Kong at night. They did what

Singaporeans typically do best – eat and shop! They also visited several tourist attractions, including Mongkok, Tsim Sha Tsui and the Avenue of the Stars. The students were also treated to authentic Cantonese cuisine, as well as massive baskets of dim sum – yum! They also learned much about their host country at the Hong Kong Museum of History, where ancient artefacts on display tell the story of how the country came to be.

From corporate visits to magical playtime at Disneyland, the students unanimously agree that the Hong Kong Study Trip was not only an informative learning experience, but also a trip where friendships were forged and strengthened. The chances of going on such a



What better way to learn about Hong Kong's history than a visit to the local museum?



Hong Kong is known as Dim Sum Land for a reason – baskets of tasty treats galore!

trip where the students learn, experience and enjoy together as course mates do not come by often, and they would definitely keep these memories for years to come.



A Tale of 3 Cities

SP business students at Wat Phra Si Sanphet, the holiest temple on the site of the old Royal Palace in Ayutthaya, Thailand.

A 15-week learning journey overseas where you'll get to live, study and experience different cultures? Who can say no? Sign me up! Twenty students from SP's Business School did just that – between September and December last year, they journeyed to Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand to learn more about the cultures and business practices in these countries. These adventurous students shared with SPIRIT the highlights of their Tri-City Study Mission trip and how they emerged from the experience wiser and humbled.

A trio of 19-year-olds stood outside a pharmacy in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, bracing themselves. In an attempt to sniff out sensitive information on the city's pharmaceutical industry without revealing their true identities, these intrepid youths posed as sick patients to avoid drawing suspicion. As quick as spies, they asked the resident pharmacist questions, probed for detailed information, and quickly left without being found out. No, they weren't protégés of James Bond, nor were they investigative reporters. These were really students from SP Business School on a mission – the Tri City Study Mission, to be exact.

The Tri City Study Mission is a 15-week experiential study trip that allows SP students to live, study and conduct ethnographic studies in three ASEAN cities. The inaugural programme brought 20 business students to Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, where they partnered with Procter and Gamble (P&G) to



The Tri City team partnered with P&G to investigate consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns for the cough, cold and flu industry in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand.

investigate consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns for the cough, cold and flu industry in the three countries. The students, with their accompanying lecturers, interviewed around 60 households and 180 pharmacy stores across the three countries to gain insights of medicines locals used when they develop a cold or cough.

It wasn't easy. Firstly, the Tri City team had to overcome the language barrier. While the students and lecturers were assigned English-speaking buddies from the host countries who helped translate interviews, words can get lost in translation. Final-year **Diploma in Business Administration (DBA)** student See Chi Kiat says, "It was difficult to convey certain information, such as medical terms like 'phlegm'."

SP Business School lecturer, Ms Lynn Zhuo, who accompanied the students to Ho Chi Minh City, said that posing as mystery shoppers in pharmacies caused the team to buy a lot of medicine they didn't need. She added,

Despite the challenges, being able to conduct market research for a real client and gain first-hand insights into the pharmaceutical industry was a learning experience in itself. "Interestingly, the students realised that whatever they've read online about the three countries could be different from what they experienced on ground. Gathering those insights made the project more interesting," added Ms Zhuo.

Final-year student Gerald Aw says, "Now that we've gone through the experience of conducting real research, we have more knowledge in the field of market intelligence. While we still can't gather data perfectly, it'll ease our jobs if we ever decide to pursue this path."

While this is the first time the students conducted research on a big scale, P&G complimented them on the job well done. "We were really pleased with the insights gained from this research. We plan to incorporate these learnings immediately in the marketing campaigns in our core markets. The team had

The students also visited notable companies in the three countries, like the offices of Yakult and Ichitan Group, Thailand's largest green tea manufacturer. During the visit to the latter, they toured the company's factory and the Ichitan museum where they learned about the company's founder and its eco-friendly living concept.

Another highlight of the trip was the homestay experience with their hospitable buddies in Ho Chi Minh City. Final-year DBA student Siti Zulaikha's buddy introduced her to various local delicacies, her favourite of which is the bánh mì, or Vietnamese sandwich. On his last day in Vietnam, fellow student Lionel Lew's hosts even organised a farewell barbeque for his group!

For the students, the Tri City Study Mission was a valuable learning experience they will never forget. "Every poly graduate goes through similar experiences like taking modules and going through an internship. The trip was an invaluable opportunity to experience something so real and different," says final-year student Violet Koh.



Experiencing Chef-for-A-Day in Ho Chi Minh City.

gone a thorough job to ensure a broad and deep understanding of our target research group," says Dr Elizabeth Desmond, Associate Director, P&G Personal Healthcare, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa.

Business aside, nothing spells adventure like exploring the

"It was a challenge having to probe the pharmacists for detailed information. When they recommended a certain kind of medicine, we had to ask questions like, 'Why did you recommend this?' and 'Do people here usually take this medicine?' We had to be really thick-skinned and careful not to divulge our intentions or where we came from. For one simple piece of information, the students needed to ask three to four pharmacists. Market intelligence is not easy, it's like being a spy."

sights and scenes of a foreign land. For a spectacular view of the sunrise, some students ventured to the iconic 2,329-metre-tall Mount Bromo in Indonesia, one of world's most active volcanoes! Final-year DBA student Tay Kai Ling, revealed that they had to assemble as early as midnight to move off and catch the sunrise in time. Fellow student Gerald shares, "The sunrise was beautiful and surreal, even though we were freezing from the single digit temperatures."



SP student Gerald Aw standing tall on Mount Bromo, one of the world's most active volcanoes sited in East Java, Indonesia.

Get *SPOT*-ted



The student team that helps our campus stay SPOT-less!



All in a day's work: packing tokens for the underprivileged and serious discussions for YMAC 2015.



diverse college-level Model United Nations conference.

As for community service efforts, we were also involved in the SP initiatives such as the Tray Return Initiative and Clean Campus Campaign.

ANY ACTIVITIES YOU'VE BEEN PARTICULARLY PROUD OF?

Boon Huat: The community service activities are the most rewarding. We've performed activities like Gen Ed Gives Back, where we help collect and distribute food items for the underprivileged, and the Clean Campus Campaign where we helped keep the campus CLEAN by picking up unsightly litter. The important thing is encouraging more people to do their part to keep our campus clean.



From left: Kuik Yik Ming (VP); Lye Keen Ho (Logistics Head); Leong Boon Huat (President); Joel Neo Jiun Hao (Treasurer); Lye Jia Wei (Secretary); Tio Zhi Kai (Welfare Head) & Chong Han Lyn (Publicity Head). All seven committee member handle a different aspect of running the club!

ABOUT SPOT

The SPOT Outstanding Programme is a talent development and enrichment programme under the care of the **School of Communication, Arts and Social Sciences (CASS)**. It aims to nurture academically-gifted students into capable humanitarians, communicators and leaders, even after they graduate. Every year, it accepts around 150 students across all diplomas.

SP Scholars are automatically enrolled into the SPOT programme, with other students being eligible to join after evaluations of their academics results, CCA performances and lecturer recommendations. Some of the character and personal development activities they will experience include specially-tailored General Election modules in their second year, overseas research trips, networking sessions with industry professionals, and scholarship application trainings.

For some, the classroom is like a second home, but sometimes you need a third one.

That's where clubs and CCAs come in! For students enrolled in the SP Outstanding Talent (SPOT) Programme, there's a club to show them how to excel both in and out of the classroom. **Leong Boon Huat (Second-year, Diploma in Banking and Finance – DBKF), President of the SPOT Club, and Chong Han Lyn (Second-year, Diploma in Media and Communication – DMC), Head of Publicity of the SPOT Club, share more with SPIRIT.**

WHAT'S THE SPOT CLUB ALL ABOUT?

Boon Huat: It's a club for students, by students. This is the second year we've been around, and the main aim of the programme is to bond students in the SP Outstanding Talent (SPOT) Programme. We have seven members in the management committee, all of us volunteers. SPOT students come from different diplomas and academic schools. The SPOT

Club is the common place for us to bond.

TELL US MORE ABOUT SPOT ACTIVITIES.

Boon Huat: For the Management Committee, we plan and discuss various events for the SPOT community throughout the year – of course with feedback and suggestions from our peers and lecturers.

Chong Han Lyn: The activities that we plan can be broadly separated into leadership, communication or community categories. For example, we help out as Conference Chairpersons and Service Staff at every Youth Model ASEAN Conference (YMAC). We've also represented SP at local and overseas conferences and seminars such as the Harvard World Model United Nations (WorldMUN) In Seoul, Korea, which is the most internationally

Nanyang Scholars



Nanyang Scholar James Ng.

SP graduate Herman Wee joined Nanyang Technological University (NTU) this year with a new title – Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP) Scholar. The former **Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE)** student won the prestigious scholarship awarded to outstanding undergraduates in the REP.

The REP is an integrated co-terminal programme that awards the Bachelor of Engineering Science (with specialisation in a specific engineering discipline) and the Master of Science (Technology Management) in 4.5 years. Offered by NTU, is a major inter-college collaborative effort with strong partnerships



DADP alumni receiving her top Mendaki Award from Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information and Minister-In-Charge of Muslim Affairs.



Renaissance Engineering Scholar Herman Wee.

with global universities and top ranking institutions. Students have an unmatched global experience via curriculum and internship. The programme attracts the brightest students to pursue engineering.

In addition, seven SP graduates were awarded the Nanyang Scholarship by NTU. The recipients include James Ng, who was the Gold Medallist for the **Diploma in Visual Effects and Motion Graphics (DVEMG)** and Tan Kay Yong Gold Medal winner when he graduated in 2013, and enrolled in NTU's School of Art, Media and Design.

Recipients of the Nanyang Scholarship also include Alvin Tan (**Diploma in Civil Engineering with Business – DCEB**), Gan Chen Cheng (**Diploma in Applied Chemistry with Pharmaceutical Science**), Helen Ho (**Diploma in Biotechnology – DBT**), Andrea Kee and Nicole Ong (both from **Diploma in Creative Writing for TV and New Media – DTVM**) and Roshelle Tan (**Diploma in Tourism and Resort Management - DTRM**). In addition, Filzah Bte Hamzah from the **Diploma in Media and Communication (DMC)** was awarded the NTU-NIE Teaching Scholarship.

Mendaki Winners

It's a year of double celebrations for Sofia Bte Mohd Khanafie. Besides topping her **Diploma in Applied Drama and Psychology (DADP)** course as Gold Medallist, she also clinched top honours with the Special Achievement Award for Excellence (Academic) from Mendaki, on top of the Anugerah Khas Mendaki 2015 Award, also from Mendaki.

Besides Sofia, another 31 SP Muslim alumni also received the Anugerah Khas Mendaki Award. These were given out by Mendaki to celebrate the success and achievements of Muslim students from primary school to university.

Congratulations!



Crowbar champs Melissa Phay, Chong Joo Xuan and Riq Harriz. Also in the team but not in the photo are Cheryl Pam and Vanessa Jane Seah.

Top Creative Wins

Creative minds are not lacking in SP for sure. Two teams from SP clinched top prizes at the Crowbar Awards 2015, organised by the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore (4As). It's an annual platform for emerging young creatives to showcase their best works and learn from their peers. Winners are much sought after by prospective employers.

The team of four from the **Diploma in Media and Communication (DMC)** won not one, but two awards – winner of the Crowbar 24 Hour Advertising Challenge as well as the HP Graphics Inspiration Award. The team comprising second year students



Vanessa Jane Seah, Melissa Phay, Cheryl Pam, Chong Joo Xuan and Riq Harriz won for the submission titled My Travel Buddy. They had to race against the clock to crack a real-world brief given by a client company within 24 to 48 hours.

In the Interactive category, final-year **Diploma in Visual Communication and Media Design (DVMD)** students Rebecca Ten and Lim Xinyi took the Silver Award for their "Give to Live" Campaign.

The students received their awards in the posh Crowbar Awards Show, the event finale where the winners were officially announced.



Destination marketing experts (front row from left) Vivian Seah, Zoey Koh, Florence Zee and Ferry Maulana, (back row from left) lecturer Fan Ay Deng and Kevin Goh.

Great MICE Team

Winning is sweet, and sweeter when in a foreign land! A group of second and final year students from the Diploma in Integrated Events and Project Management (DEPM) students

emerged as one of top winners at the MICE Destination Marketing Contest 2015 held in Taipei, Taiwan. Organised by the Taiwan External Trade Development Council, the event was held in conjunction with the 2015 Asian MICE Forum and saw 22 institutions from six countries taking part. SP was the only non-university institution among them.

The competition sought to test the skills of participants through promoting their selected city as an ideal destination for the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) industry.

The team comprising Kevin Goh, Florence Jee, Zoey Koh, Ferry Maulana Bin Achmad Chean, Vivian Seah, Denice Poon, were mentored by lecturer Mr Fan Ay Deng. They clinched awards in three categories: first place for their English Marketing Presentation, and third place for both Marketing Strategy and Exhibition Booth Design. SP was also the first overseas institution to clinch awards in three out of the six main categories.

Beaming Winners!

Final-year students from the **Diploma in Architecture (DARCH)** and the **Diploma in Civil Engineering with Business (DCEB)** joined hands to clinch the top prize at the International Building Information Modelling (BIM) Competition. Organised by the Building and Construction Authority, participating teams were required to provide innovative solutions to challenges in a virtual design and construction project within four days. BIM is a new three-dimensional modelling technology that allows building professionals of various backgrounds to explore the building project digitally before it's being built. This can foster greater integration and collaboration among the developers, designers, builders and fabricators across the construction value chain.



The competition this year was made tougher when it allowed international participation. Nevertheless, Team SP rose to the occasion and took home the top prize of \$5,000! Congratulations to our future builders Ding Zichen (also team leader), Ng Yu Lun, Hee Zhen Zhykn and Ng Wee Ping from DCEB, and Tan Sing Yi and Lim Meng Shen from DARCH.



Golden Youth

Forty-one SP current students and recent graduates recently received the National Youth Achievement Gold Award (NYAA) from the President of Singapore, Mr Tony Tan. That makes SP the educational institution with the most number of recipients for years running. In order to achieve this prestigious accolade, students have to complete five sections of the NYAA programme – Service, Adventurous Journey, Skills, Physical Recreation, and Residential Project – over a minimum period of 18 months. **SPiRiT** caught up with award recipients **Yap Xuan Yu, Cheryl Chan and Goh Wei Sheng**, who shared their NYAA experience and some important lessons they learned along the way.



NYAA winners (from top, clockwise) Yap Xuan Yu, Cheryl Chan and Goh Wei Sheng pose with their well-deserved award.

Forty-one SP students and recent graduates received the National Youth Achievement Gold Award (NYAA), the highest number among all education institutions here.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NYAA EXPERIENCE?

Xuan Yu: While I was an active member of SP Primers, I wanted to join something new and interesting. During SP's annual CCA Carnival, the NYAA booth caught my attention, and I felt that this was a good opportunity to try something different and develop my character at the same time.

Cheryl: Besides studying, I wanted to enrich my life in SP by participating in different co-curricular activities and be exposed to a variety of experiences. Completing the NYAA journey became a goal I wanted to achieve. It definitely motivated me to actively participate in meaningful events and challenging expeditions.

Wei Sheng: I signed up for NYAA as I believed that pursuing different activities would enrich my three years in SP and help me develop my character. Meeting the award requirements was harder than I expected, but eventually I got into the rhythm and was finally able to achieve the award.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE?

Xuan Yu: One of the most memorable activities in my NYAA journey was the residential project I undertook in Sri Lanka in 2011, where I spent three weeks teaching English to young children along with 20 other volunteers. My visit to a village in Eastern Sri Lanka, which was struck by the Tsunami in 2004, stood out as a life-changing experience for me. I discovered how cheerful and warm the villagers were despite facing natural disasters and civil war in the past decade. I could see the villagers' resilience and their hopes for a better future despite their simple way of life.

Wei Sheng got in touch with nature during his community involvement trip to Shangri-La, where he trekked mountains, harvested potatoes and attended a horse-racing festival.



As part of SP's Leadership Development Programme, Cheryl (third from right) was able to experience white-water rafting for the first time.

in this trip based on our talents and abilities to contribute. As I was trained in first-aid, I was put in charge of providing that. We also had fun activities such as mountain trekking, harvesting potatoes and attending a horse-racing festival.

Cheryl: The activity that I remember most fondly is the overseas trip to Ipoh under SP's Leadership Development Programme, where I tried white-water rafting for the first time. It was certainly an exhilarating experience along the rough and raging river, but my team displayed outstanding teamwork and perseverance. We even managed to surpass other boats and were one of the fastest teams to reach the end goal.

Wei Sheng: Definitely the community involvement trip to Shangri-La in China. Due to the lack of toilets in the region, we were tasked to build toilets and waste pits for the villagers. Apart from the group activities, almost everyone was given a specific role

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU LEARNT FROM THE NYAA EXPERIENCE?

Xuan Yu: While in Sri Lanka, I was struck by the diverse lifestyles and behaviours among the locals from different parts of the country. I had a hard time communicating with the locals in eastern Sri Lanka as their command of English was weak, but I could converse easily with those from the western side as they were better in English. Through

this experience, I learned to be more patient and understanding, as not everyone was born in the same environment and had the same educational opportunities.

Cheryl: NYAA helped me to grow tremendously and made me more independent and mature. Some events put me through physical and mental challenges, and I'm happy that I was able to step out of my comfort zone to overcome these obstacles.

Wei Sheng: By participating in all these activities, I realised that learning about an experience is totally different from participating in it yourself. I learned that life is not a straight path – if our days are always mundane and smooth-sailing, we have not truly experienced life.



Xuan Yu (top row, seventh from left) spent three weeks in Sri Lanka, where he and 20 other volunteers taught English to local children.



Being Mentally Prepared

The stigma of mental illnesses can be devastating. Not too long ago, Today newspaper published an article on an Institute of Mental Health study that many perceive mental illnesses to be a sign of personal weakness, and that sufferers can get better if they wanted to. After reading that article, final-year Diploma-Plus Certificate in Applied Psychology student Amir Mirza Bin Johari steps in.

Taking the **Diploma in Accountancy (DAC)** and his Diploma-Plus Programme, Amir wrote to Today, responding to the original article, 'Considerable stigma against mental illness: Study (7 Oct)', which was published (Educate society to better understand mental illness: 9 Oct).

The original article described the vicious cycle of mental illness, where sufferers would rather avoid than seek treatment, for fear of being stigmatised. This in turn worsens their condition. More sobering was the lack of public awareness of mental disorders, where at least half of the sample group surveyed could not identify or name the mental illness based on symptom descriptions.

SPIRIT had a word with Amir to understand more about his opinion on helping those with mental disorders.

WHY THE CERTIFICATE IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY AND DIPLOMA IN ACCOUNTANCY?

I was always interested in knowing more about human behaviour. While resources are available online, it's not the same as participating in class discussions and learning from lecturers and classmates. The day I joined SP, I knew I wanted to take this certificate. I also chose to study accountancy because I'm a meticulous person and I took Principles of Accounts (POA) while in Hillgrove Secondary.

WHY MADE YOU RESPOND TO THE ARTICLE? DO YOU THINK IT'LL GIVE GREATER RECOGNITION TO THE SITUATION?

(Editor's note: In his response, Amir suggested that greater education of mental illnesses is needed, with bodies such as the Health Promotion Board, the Institute of Mental Health or even the Singapore Psychological Society having greater roles to play. He suggests starting education early for schooling children with the hope that it can lead to long term results.)

It was just a sudden urge to write in. Mental illness is close to my heart as I taught a student

with several mental illnesses before. So the article on the increasing stigma against mental illnesses just spurred me to write in. With Today being the second-most-read newspaper in Singapore, it's a wide platform for issues like this to gain greater attention. Mental illness is not widely discussed, and I hope by speaking up, it will make readers ponder more over this issue. In fact, a reader submitted a response to my letter, stating that the awareness and education have to be extended to working adults too, citing work stress as an example.

WHAT'S A GOOD BABY STEP TOWARD BECOMING MORE AWARE OF MENTAL ILLNESSES?

The misconception is that mental illness is uncommon. In my letter, I mentioned that the 2010 Singapore National Mental Health Survey reported a 6.3 per cent lifetime prevalence of depression in the Singapore adult population. There's many other cases that go unreported and undetected, especially in schools and workplaces. In any ordinary classroom environment, you might find someone with family issues and or slight depression.

The fundamental step for society is to just look out for one another more. If we pay enough attention to someone, we might be able to tell earlier when something's off, and the person could get treatment earlier.

A LITTLE BIRDY SAID THAT YOU'LL WANT TO BE IN THE TEACHING LINE?

Yup, my inspiration was due to my Secondary Four POA teacher. He was great fun, and a great teacher – simplifying accounting concepts for us to grasp and sharing life stories. That's not all, though. Even after leaving Secondary School, I still go back to serve as a Student Leadership Mentor and a relief teacher. I find myself having a natural connection with students and teaching.

I've taught POA to many students and one has slight dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). It was challenging teaching him but he tried his best and that's what I like: witnessing a student achieve success in their own way, knowing that you have played a part in it.

Amir (first row, third from left) and his psychology classmates! This particular module, Work Group Dynamics and Social Psychology, is one of three modules they study.



DIPLOMA-PLUS PROGRAMME

WHAT IS IT?

Want to learn beyond your main diploma? The Diploma-Plus Programme are for students who can cope with their diploma and want to pursue an additional qualification via a certificate or a specialist diploma course. The programme you can enrol in depends on your diploma course.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

It's by invitation only. The Programme only allows entries for students who are coping well with their main diplomas. It typically runs for two to three semesters, depending on the programme enrolled. You can apply for two eligible programmes, but each student can only enrol in one, where at the end, they will earn a certificate.

The Unknown Truths of Award Winning Lecturers



Clarice Sim
LECTURER, SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Outstanding Personal Tutor Award;
Journal of Teaching Practice Award

SHE'S ALWAYS UP FOR A QUICK GAB:

During holidays as a final-year university student, I waitressed at Penny Black, a British pub at Boat Quay. I met people from different walks of life, from businessmen taking breaks from their busy routines, to office ladies skipping lunch and having a drink instead. I really enjoyed it!

STUDENTS ARE CUSTOMERS TOO!

I would probably be more hesitant about speaking to people if I hadn't waitressed. Students come from diverse backgrounds, after all. Waitressing gave me the skills to speak to and connect with people from different walks of life.

Lecturers: we adore you; we also hate you. It's an age-old, love-hate relationship between educators and students, no matter what education level we're at! But once upon a time, lecturers were just like us students: rushing out essays and sneaking naps in class. In honour of SP's annual Excellence in Education and Training Convention that honours SP educators for jobs well done, SPIRIT captures lecturers' secrets to teaching students...with some blackmail material in the mix.

Sim Kian Ho
SENIOR LECTURER, SP BUSINESS SCHOOL
Excellence in Teaching Award Winner

HE WAS THE...

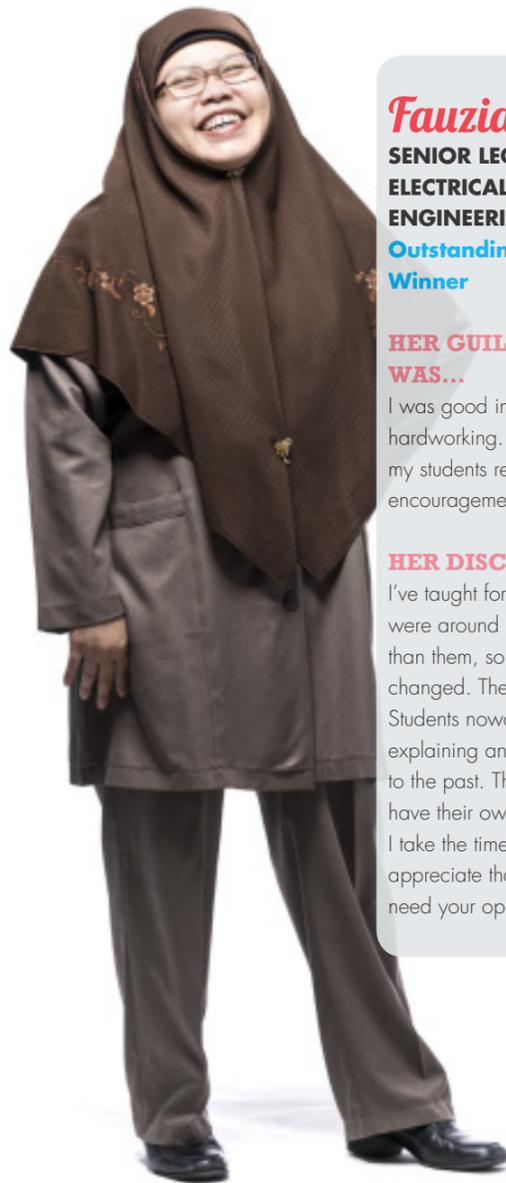
Good student. The perfect student. The model student (laughs). Well, I was pretty well-behaved (self-proclaimed). I enjoyed studying; I wish there's a thing as life-time full-time student!

DID HE EVER FALL ASLEEP IN CLASS?

Shhh... such things aren't allowed for model students.

STUDENTS, THEN AND NOW

Students are more exam-smart today. During my school days, there was no 10-year series. We just studied everything from textbooks, learned everything and enjoyed learning. In teaching, I do my best to ensure each and every student advances at the same rate...I believe in a "No Child Left Behind" policy.



Fauziah Bte Othman
SENIOR LECTURER, SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

Outstanding Personal Tutor Award Winner

HER GUILTY STUDENT SECRET WAS...

I was good in my studies, but not extremely hardworking. Yes, I procrastinated at times – my students reading this shouldn't take that as encouragement!

HER DISCOVERY OF STUDENTS

I've taught for 26 years. When I started, students were around my age. Now I'm much older than them, so the way I interact with them has changed. They say I'm very motherly (laughs). Students nowadays are more eloquent in explaining and sharing their opinions, compared to the past. They can be rowdy, but they each have their own aspirations, dreams and goals. I take the time to listen to them, and I think they appreciate that. Sometimes, they don't really need your opinion. Just a listening ear.



Jenny Tran
LECTURER, SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

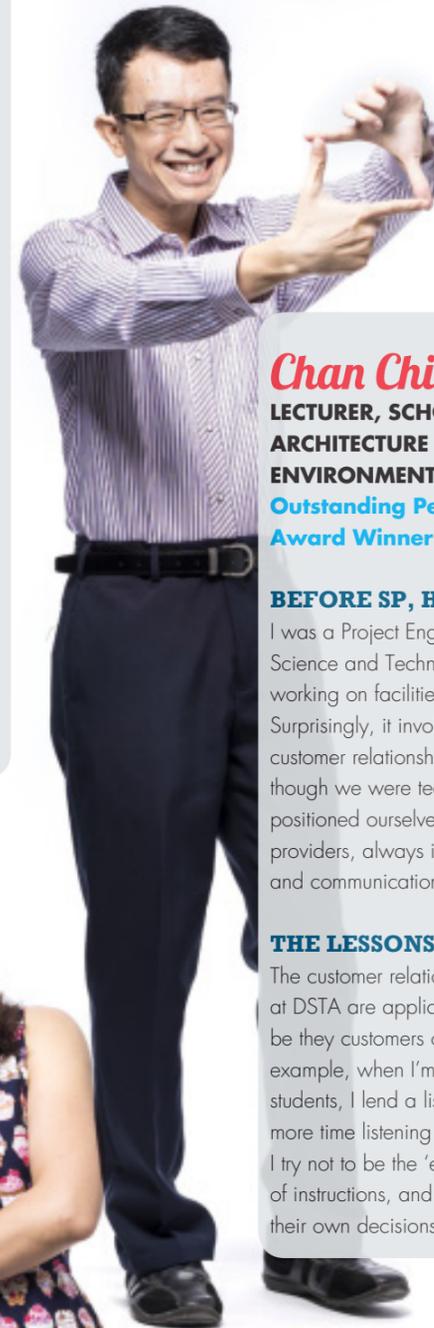
Excellence in Teaching Award Winner

DIGITAL DEVICES ARE HER FRIENDS

I didn't like to attend lectures as a student. So sometimes, I would play games on my PDA (Personal Digital Assistant - an ancient relic of the past, before the age of tablets) instead of listening to the lecturer. In my defence, I did read the textbooks on my own!

HOW SHE ADAPTS TO TODAY'S STUDENTS

There are more distractions today, like digital devices. If it's a lecture, I try to avoid speaking for long lengths. No one likes a droning voice. I try to catch their attention every 10 minutes or so; I'll pause the lecture and do a short quiz or survey online. It's usually an online survey, because this lets them hold onto their phones. We have to adapt to them, to keep them engaged.



Chan Chin Loong
LECTURER, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Outstanding Personal Tutor Award Winner

BEFORE SP, HE WAS...

I was a Project Engineer with the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA), working on facilities and infrastructures. Surprisingly, it involved a fair bit of customer relationship management. Even though we were technical project staff, we positioned ourselves as customer service providers, always improving our service and communication.

THE LESSONS HE LEARNED

The customer relationship skills I acquired at DSTA are applicable to many people, be they customers or students. For example, when I'm with parents and students, I lend a listening ear; I spend more time listening than providing advice. I try not to be the 'expert' with long lists of instructions, and instead let them make their own decisions.

Introducing Iran



Sandboarding in the Khara Desert! Don't try this at home!

Fresh off his adventures in Pakistan (read more about it in SPIRIT, Vol 2 2015), Benjamin Aw is back with more tales from another unlikely destination: Iran. Reserve your preconceptions about the nation and prepare to rediscover it, first-hand, as this second-year Diploma in Nautical Studies (DNS) student shares. If travel is more rewarding when it's surprising, then Iran might just be the place for you.

"Nose jobs," Benjamin announced.

We at SPIRIT blinked owlishly at him.

"Excuse us?" we asked, warily and suddenly very aware of the sprouting pimple on our own snouts.

"That's the most unexpected thing about Iran; almost everyone has had a nose job." We rolled our eyes but dutifully consulted Master Google. It pulled out a 2013 article naming Iran as the rhinoplasty capital of the world, performing the operation seven times more than

in the United States. It's a stunning revelation about Iran, juxtaposing against the many notions that we've had about its perceived nanny state and sometimes dangerous circumstances.

It's this discovering of hidden gems that pulls Benjamin – or Ben, as he prefers – to destinations less sought after. Iran isn't usually anywhere near the top – or even middle – of one's travel wishes. While many might have choice words about Iran, Ben uses beatific adjectives: exotic, fascinating and welcoming, to describe the Persian land.

It's hardly the first such outlandish trip for Ben. To date, he's travelled to almost 35 countries, on strict, self-funded budgets and with the barest of necessities, including roughing it out in the Himalayas with nothing but duct-tape holding his sandals together. Small wonder that he's a current second-year at SP's DNS course, which would prep him for a sailing career that usually takes graduates on sailing trips around the world with contracted companies.

Although Iran was already on his to-visit list, he was spurred by his trip to Pakistan. "When I was in Pakistan, I met this Iranian couple, and meeting them in person made me want to visit Iran even more," he said. He went for the month-long trip over the semester break: a whirlwind adventure, as he returned from Indonesia, packed, and left the next day for Iran.

Ben came back armed with photos. He'd captured images of mosques, ancient Persian ruins, teahouses galore and rugged mountain ranges. Many photos were of fellow travellers and locals he had met along the way, each telling their own story. We paid close attention to their noses.

"The Iranians are fascinating," he says, cheerfully. "They're quite liberal. Friday prayers are encouraged, but not a necessity. I could count the number of people attending on one hand when I visited the mosque." He remarks on their accepting mind-set – an open-mindedness that Ben says we could all learn from. "A local family lawyer asked me to share about the family laws in Singapore, simply because he wanted to know more about the different law systems around the world."

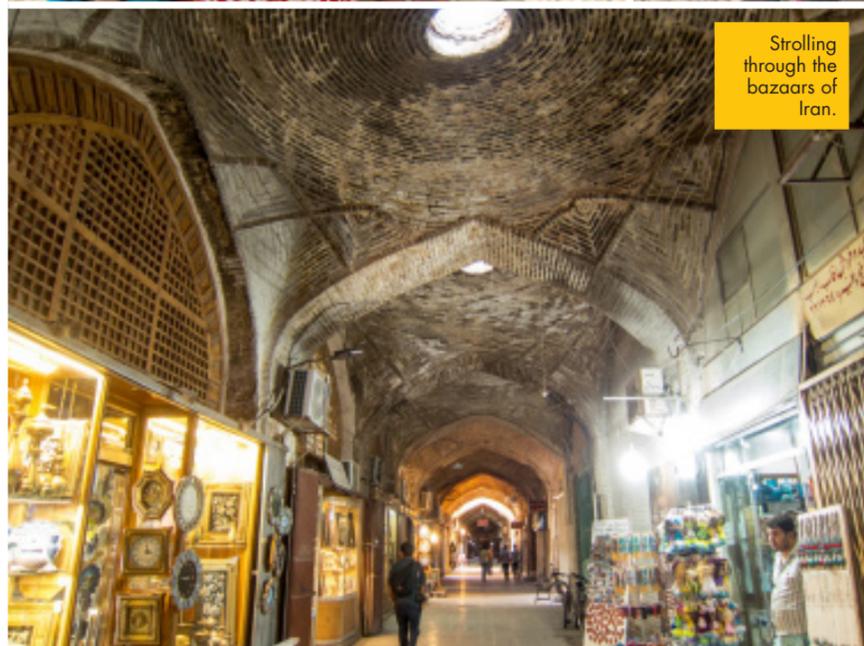
Hospitality and goodwill abounds in Iran – Ben met up with the Iranian couple from his Pakistan



Smiles from the kids that make a warm day even warmer.



Channelling a Mohawk for the kids.



Strolling through the bazaars of Iran.



Sometimes you don't even need to spend money in Iran because strangers would invite you for lunch, as they did with me.

travels, who opened their home to him, and even offered supplies for the rest of his journey in Iran. When he attended the Day of Ashura, an Islamic public holiday, an Iranian lady invited Ben's companions and himself for a meal. "There's a saying in Iran – which I won't embarrass myself attempting – but it translates to 'May your footsteps fall on my eyes', literally 'you are so welcomed that you can step on my eyes'."

But sometimes too welcoming! At one stage, he was almost arrested. Couch-surfing, the practice of moving from one friend's house to another, sleeping in whatever available spare space, is a common practice for a budget traveller like Ben. But it's illegal in Iran.

He recounts, "My companions and us were on our way to couch-surf at a friend's house when this man thought we were lost or in danger. We couldn't tell him that we were couch-surfing! It's obvious we're foreigners. So we said that we were looking for a good restaurant and then were travelling out of town. Eventually, even the Chief of Police appeared! They got us a meal, and then escorted us to the



It's easy to make friends with strangers in Iran. Almost too easy.

bus terminal. To avoid suspicion, we ended up buying tickets and travelling to Yazd (another city in Iran), way ahead of schedule."

In honour of his trip, SPIRIT brings a feast of visual delights, all personally captioned by Ben. So what's next on your travel itinerary?

TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE WARY

Ben acknowledges that such travels aren't suited for everyone's taste. "You need to be a bit of a rebel to visit these places," he says. In a way, his desire to explore beyond his comfort zone is similar to his chosen path of a sea career, where sound judgement when facing the unknown is valued.

With all his experience, what advice does he have for people who want to try roughing it out?

- Get used to squat toilets. Train those thigh muscles. For some rural villages, the porcelain throne is unheard of.
- Wet wipes will be your best friend when showers are unavailable.
- Invest in good underwear – no elaboration needed, right?
- Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. Trips are investments and that means that it costs time and money.
- Check your visas properly! Ben had a terrible scare, thinking that his visa was expiring earlier than expected and went into full panic mode. Luckily, it was just a scare, but there can be legal consequences if you're not careful.

Never Be Late For School, Again

Tired of being tired every morning? Finding it hard to fall asleep at night? We totally understand, it's tough being a night owl in an early riser's world. This wouldn't be so bad if there weren't those darn public transport delays or the cold-hearted SP attendance system that gives no mercy past the 15-minute grace period (fine, fine, we know that's generous enough).

Don't worry, you're not alone tossing and turning late at night, wondering about waking up on time the next morning if you just can't sleep! Earlier this year, the Singapore General Hospital shares that insomnia is the most common sleeping problem in Asia, affecting 10 to 30 percent of Singaporeans. The good news is that there's hope for us night owls to salvage our sleeping schedules and class attendance records.

Here's seven tips and tricks to beat the sleepless monster and get on the early bird track!

Story by **Jacqueline Ho**, final-year, **Diploma in Media and Communication (DMC)**, Class of 2015. Illustrations by **Melodie Edith James**, second-year, DMC.

KNOW YOUR REWARD AND PSYCHOLOGY

Let's be honest, sleep is waaaay more appealing than morning plans. The psychology behind waking up early is important. The mindset of "having to wake up early" isn't enough, you have to want it too.

Ask yourself, "What do I get if I wake up early?" For example, if you want a fitter body, waking up early gives time to exercise. If you're struggling to make it for school, think of the spotless attendance record and extra class participation marks you'll get, which translates to a possibly higher GPA! If that doesn't work, think food. Milo, kaya toast; the works.

MANIPULATE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Make your sleeping area as cosy as possible. Bright light inhibits sleep, so try to block out sources of light or use dim night lights if preferred. Lower the thermostat as comfortable temperatures make you drowsy. There's nothing better than snuggling under the warm covers! If your environment is noisy, invest in soundproof windows (if you can) or play soothing music to drown out the noise.



CREATE A WIND-DOWN ROUTINE

The process of falling asleep starts hours before bedtime. Get yourself in the mood for bedtime by having a warm bath, a cup of hot chocolate, reading or planning ahead for the next day. Find a wind-down routine that works for you, and stick to it every night at roughly the same time. Over time, this routine will act as a sleep trigger for your body.

Extra tip: Download free digital helpers like Sleep as Android on Google Play, or Sleep Pillow from the Apple App Store which plays soothing tones that lures even the worst insomniac to sleep!

PREPARE EVERYTHING THE NIGHT BEFORE

No one likes the half-asleep, frantic early morning rush searching for essentials you know you left around...somewhere. Plan the night before! Lay out your clothes, pack your bag and prepare your breakfast before snoozing for a relaxed, auto-mode morning.

Extra tip: place your essentials (keys, wallet, travel card, etc.) in a designated area. That way, you know where to look for first.



GET UP, SNOOZER!

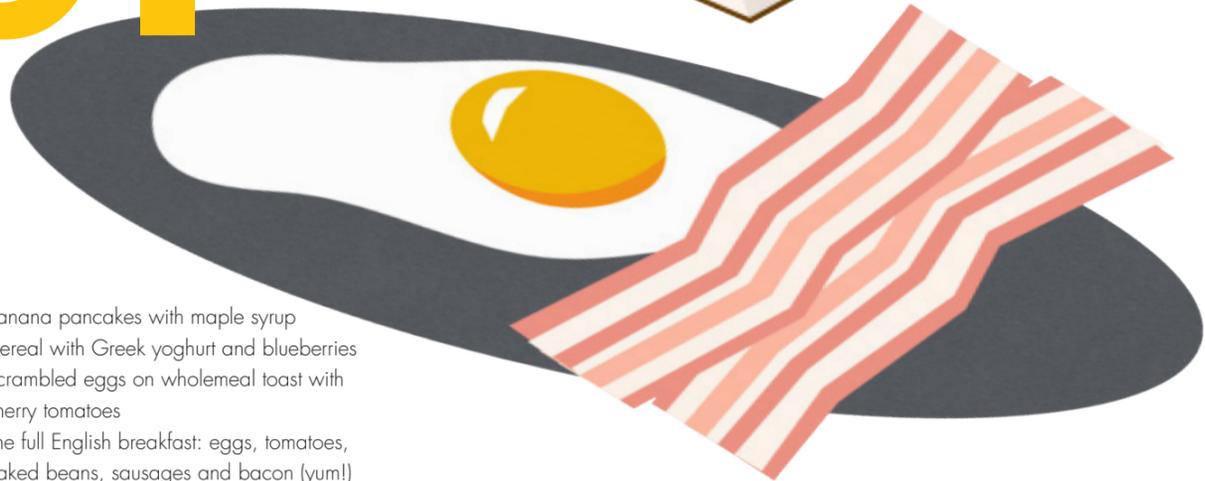
Hitting the snooze button again, are we? Wrong move! Going back to bed puts you in a deeper sleep cycle, making it harder to wake up for real—if at all. Get moving immediately when your alarm rings, don't reach for that button! If it's not in you to wake up after one alarm, either set your alarm half an hour earlier for extra buffer time, or set multiple alarms for cannon force. You could also do both for maximum impact!



BREAKFAST DELIGHTS

Breakfast is called the most important meal of the day but that doesn't mean hitting the candy bars. Load up on protein and complex carbohydrates for lasting energy. It'll set your mood and metabolic rate for the day. Here are some yummy and nutritious breakfast ideas:

- Banana pancakes with maple syrup
- Cereal with Greek yoghurt and blueberries
- Scrambled eggs on wholemeal toast with cherry tomatoes
- The full English breakfast: eggs, tomatoes, baked beans, sausages and bacon (yum!)
- Toast with strawberry jam



Serve these with milk, juice, coffee or tea and this breakfast will keep you going strong till lunch.

KNOW YOUR DON'TS

You've probably heard this: restrict caffeine intake six hours before bedtime and avoid long naps in the day. Do you also know that not using electronic devices an hour before bed has been proven to help with sleep? That means no pillow scrolling of emails, games, social media or shows. The illumination from electronic

devices sends brain signals to delay the release of the sleep-inducing hormone, melatonin. Put the gadgets down and pick up a book instead. Yes, that relic from the past when people used to read.

There we go: 7 tips and tricks to help say goodbye to puffy eyes, rushed mornings and that dreaded attendance warning letter in your mailbox. You're welcome.



Fashion Tips

(For the lazy, by the lazy)

To fashion mavens, caged for years in their school uniforms, poly life is the perfect runway. The rest of us lazy commoners? Let someone else pick our clothes! Worry not, here are some tips on handling your own fashion choices by **Kimberlyn Kiew** from the **Diploma in Creative Writing for TV and New Media (DTVM)**.

Story by **Kimberlyn Kiew**, **Diploma in Creative Writing for TV and New Media (DTVM)**. Class of 2017.

❖ LEAVE THE BEST TO LAST

Don't wear your best outfits all at once! Pace your fashion pieces. There's usually nothing much happening in the beginning of semester. You'll feel more pressurised to keep up with the effort for the rest of the school term. Chill! Reserve your best combinations for presentations or class outings.

❖ ONE CLOTH TO RULE THEM ALL

Ladies, if you're a dressy kinda gal, basic ones go on sale often. One nicely-cut piece of cloth can make it look like you've put in some thought into your outfit. Shhh, don't tell anyone. Most are pretty comfortable, and easy to pair with jackets and cardigans for that extra touch. Boys can try this out too! #genderequality

❖ IN DA HOOD

Hoodies: everyone should have one. They're essential for school. The lecturers will already be freezing your souls with their glares. Don't let your bodies freeze in the lecture theatres as well. Great for rainy days and to hide that you're wearing the crumpled shirt you rolled out of bed in! It'll also score you points for when you want to look mysterious and brooding. And makes for a darn good pillow during in-between lecture naps.



❖ SCHOOL SHIRTS ARE ALWAYS AN OPTION

Shameless plug, but they're basic, timeless, affordable and come in cotton and dry-fit. They pair well with most outfits and occasions. No more dressing drama!

❖ PREPARE EVERYTHING THE NIGHT BEFORE

A prepped outfit is a good outfit. It'll save you time in the morning for when the cerebral capacity is still in start-up mode. Even better if you happen to be late! Who wants to rush to school only to realise your shirt is inside out? Or different socks?

❖ COLOUR CODING

A prep for any situation: try to make sure your clothes match each other, so even if your eyes are closed, you can still pick out a working outfit. For example, if you like blue, some colours that go well with it would be grey, khaki and brown. So you can decide that your shirts will be either grey or blue, and all your bottoms to be khaki and brown. If anyone points it out, just tell them you're practicing your organisational skills. Remember, don't ever match a check top with a check bottom. You'll look so criss-crossed!

❖ WEAR SOMETHING RELEVANT TO YOUR INTERESTS

A great way to start any conversation, but especially great as an icebreaker to the start of the school year! Go approach someone who's wearing the same High School Musical graphic shirt as you. It could be the start of something new. Or the same Fullmetal Alchemist tee. You guys could become best buds!



❖ BUT MOST OF ALL, WEAR WHAT YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WITH

Because honestly, how you dress is up to you. Fashion is an outlet of self-expression, and we all express it in different ways. So pull on your (clean) school shirts and worn out jeans.

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