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
20: A Dragon-boater’s Business
Hey Gorgeous winner Gan Zhijian shares how he balances his business modules with dragonboat training.

08: Solar-Powered Phoenix
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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+U
With SP, it’s So Possible
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 inside look at the awesome learning environment here. And for the first time, visitors set foot into the sparkling 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 favorites 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.
"Ok, I'm officially lost. What to do at SP?"

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

"What Super Heroes? How come I'm not one of them?"

(In Ironman huffing and puffing…)

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

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

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

"Ironman hungry. Ironman eat."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Welcome to Design School"

Step up here for your goodie bags!

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

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

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

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"Welcome to Design School"

Step up here for your goodie bags!
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, third-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 unscarred.
Feature Story

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 Outback, we were treated to uniquely beautiful sights and sounds. I also remember passing through quiet ‘twilight’ towns.

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. I was very happy that the car achieved this together. You know, with SP, really sense of accomplishment that team SunSpec has across an entire continent – it gives me a great drive to work harder.

**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:** 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.

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

**Darryl:** I was 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 fans working at the campsite. I remember sleeping under a sky full of stars and the moonlight, such a beautiful sight.

TESTING + SCRUTINEERING

At least 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. The 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 once more, but to no avail. The team had to plan, till disaster struck – the car couldn’t pass a breaking distance test! It exceeded the stipulated distance by a mere three metres. The 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 once more, but to no avail.

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, pulled 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.
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.
Kosin’s name is the perfect icebreaker in any conversation. Ask about the origin and it all makes logical 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 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 and 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 — sabotaged 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!”

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.”

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, skateboarding 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.

Engineering • Curiosity

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

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.”

15
Engineering • Curiosity

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 aircrafts – 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 turbofan 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.

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.
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?**

Even 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) went on a learning experience. 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 company in the Asia Pacific. Of course, these were not the only perks of the trip. How can one observe the whole food process without trying the food products? The task was indeed fulfilling – for both their minds and their stomachs!

“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 areas and we had to walk some distance to reach the venues,” added course mate Nicole 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 Yyshaw with a chuckle.

The trip was indeed fulfilling – for both their minds and their stomachs! 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 healthcare-related jobs. How she realised food corporations also hire nutritionists.

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“The trip to Bangkok is nothing new. But I was impressed in visiting CP Foods. I always have the CP wantons 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.

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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, 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," gushes 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 salesperson in IT fairs. Selling banking products, therefore, poses a challenge he can’t refuse. Seems like a job cut out for this adventourous guy who can’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 lectures. 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 Tan, Ms David Tan and Ms Angela Koh, Zhi Jian says, "Thank you!"

With the intense training frequency, it’s no surprise that dragonboating is not for the faint-hearted. "Dragonboat is not for the faint-hearted. It’s the race of our lives!" says Zhi Jian.

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.

The toughest thing about dragonboating is of course the training. We train under very harsh conditions and sometimes we feel like skipping. 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 dragonboat members makes achieved the highest honours a poly dragonboat team can possibly get. They won the championship at the POL-ITE 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 abstrackfor 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?

Stay 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 get chance to go on TV." He swears 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 seen as tempting as a banking one. But whatever it is, he surely wants to gain 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 workready, lifeready and worldready.
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!

SCÜP is an abbreviation of Soup in a Cup – complete with typographical Earl! It's the start-up brainchild of four final-year 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 honours the skills needed to start and – more importantly – sustain a business. Students are educated on business aspects from accounting, market research, to the intricacies of supplier sourcing and logistical arrangements. In their final years, students will put the theory into practice as they develop their own startups for six months or more. Investments are from their own pockets, as are the profits and losses.

The startup 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 these are served in conventional bowl packages that need 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 branding is visible across SP, with flyers on walls and an enormously space-occupying standalone that advertises SCÜP at Foodcourt 3. But they’re not stopping there. The team is currently scheduled for talks to supply soups to local cafes. In general, soup suppliers have a minimum order, which smaller, local cafes 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 Chew Ren Jian, who’s in charge of design.

For them, there might even be an unexpected benefit. With a business model based on sourcing, 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 @scupacup.

SCÜP members Chua Ren Jia, Ryan Rah, Chua De Han and 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).

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 conceptualization 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 fitter skin to find!

• Sometimes, add a little white lie. We just lied our asses 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 approaching the supplier, we had to sign a contract and the entire process was even adding a single extra ingredient to the mix could bust the budget completely. We’ve sunk a lot of cast 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.
Entrepreneurship Living Lab (SPELL) is anything but an experience, the Singapore Polytechnic Business School’s unique Entrepreneurship Programme allows students to conceptualise and build their own start-ups where they are free to pursue any business idea. As part of the school’s Entrepreneurial mindset and skill-building 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,” shine 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. They are arranged neatly on a table for your choosing. You pick a chic item and pay for it, noting down its details in your notebook. The store is 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 to SPELL and how we will 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 new 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 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 final-year students taking the DBA course. Before 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 startups range from selling faux leather accessories to forming Japanese-themed convenience stores that sells affordable and uncommon products for students on-the-go.

Final-year DBA student Bryan Lee runs a business called Mossoy 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 Barookhd Bakery. Explaining his team’s business idea, he says, “Mossoy is targeted at students. My group mates and I found that laptop 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 startup, for sure. Running a business is never smooth and the students encounter challenges at 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 startup and we have little capital. As a result, we couldn’t carry a lot of stock for our designs. 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 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 problems ourselves.” Despite occasional setbacks, the girls are doing well. Mentioned by Beatrice Fan, Singapore fashion icon and owner of popular clothing label KARMA, T.A.M.’s bags and handmade 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 spellingco.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 mosquito control look of 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: 62143838

4 Years On and Going Strong
**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.

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

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.

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’S THE MOST EYE-OPENING THINGS YOU’VE LEARNED 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.

WHAT DO YOU DECIDE TO JOIN SPARKY IMMEDIATELY UPON GRADUATION?

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 work 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.

Sparky Animation has been working with SP’s School of Digital Media and Infocom 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.

SPARKLING OPPORTUNITIES

Adequate training was the reason. Mr Nguyen Manh Ho, 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 skills 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.
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 my Diploma in Multimedia Technology, which I excelled in. However, I scored mainly ‘C’s and ‘D’s in my Diploma in Multimedia Technology. The key reason I took this job was the chance to work on computer-generated special effects for 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 key reason I took this job was the chance to work on computer-generated special effects for 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.

Now, I am working full-time at Double Negative Visual Effects, a multinational company. My job involves managing the school’s computer 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 chances to work on computer-generated special effects for a multitude of projects, and been exposed to a multitude of design platforms meant that I was able to pick up new skills and knowledge quickly.

LIVING IN LONDON SPARKED A PASSION FOR PROGRAMMING IN ME. One of Double Negative’s many projects is to run a club related to my interests. One of the key reasons I took this job was the chance to work on computer-generated special effects for a multitude of projects, and been exposed to a multitude of design platforms meant that I was able to pick up new skills and knowledge quickly.

TIME MANAGEMENT IS REALLY IMPORTANT AS MANY MODULES ARE OFTEN DUE AT THE SAME 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 initially torn between being in SP or pursuing maths and science. Her elder sister, an SP alumnus, then introduced her to the 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 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 which impart design, illustration and writing skills 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 (yes!) – 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 symbolizes 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."

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 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 lucky, 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.
During the four-day event, the participants of an ASEAN Conference, and is supported by the SP WAY. It was the second year running to 200 local polytechnic students and foreign members 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.

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 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Prime Minister’s Office.

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

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 slew 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 multimedia 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 hand to document the YMAC conference, covering it from start to finish. They spoke to participants, guests and organisers, producing little snapshots of the event.

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 122 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 ($13,900) cash grant to encourage the awardee to continue with their activities. The award ceremony was held recently in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with Prime Minister 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 Programmes (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 1,000 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.

A bittersweet moment for participants at YMAC 2015. Laura Ann Lau (left) facilitated a dialogue session between participants and Mrs Josephine Teo.

Welcome one and all to YMAC! Participants from all ten ASEAN nations are coming together. Singapore Polytechnic receives the ASEAN People’s Award from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during the 27th Asean Summit held in Kuala Lumpur.

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.
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 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 on the safety gear used by Al Jazeera journalists working in dangerous locations.

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

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 the different types 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 on the safety gear used by Al Jazeera journalists working in dangerous locations.

To learn more about filmmaking, 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 local company hoping to take its ideas to an international audience. Student Rachel Wong says: “They were so passionate about creating animation and so willing to share with us all their experiences. They were extremely welcoming and very open. They really inspired me with their passion and enthusiasm.”

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 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 too.”

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Learning from the pros: DTVM students learn how to create and write for animation characters from Keeta Brennan, the Creative Director of Avant Garde Studios.
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.
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.
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 Town? 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 pedestrian bridge). “It is surely impressive! There was a diagram nearby that roughly explained about the structure of the bridge. The views from the bridge was also sturdy. 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 accessible and low cost materials.”

**IN TAIWAN**
Where else can students learn about building structures that can withstand earthquakes? The places that have experience 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.

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. 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 presented, 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 (DHLFM) students embarked on a four-day/three-night study trip onboard 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 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 visited local specialties such as Penang char kway teow and laksa at the Red Garden hawker centre.

For DHLFM student Melissa Ang, the trip was 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.
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 delightedly tucked into. At the university, they also got a crash course on the company’s well-structured community service programme which hires students as Disney cast members, exposing them to the unique business culture.

Far East Organization and Yeo’s. The students also visited Courtyard Marriott Hong Kong Sha Tin – in their second stop. Here’s a fun fact: The hotel also remains attractive to employees by providing many opportunities for internal transfers, as well as career progression for workers.

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 was 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.

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. 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 ageing 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.

The students were given the rare, eye-opening opportunity to tour around one of Hong Kong’s few power stations. 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.
Cities partnered with Procter and Gamble (P&G) to Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, where the programme brought 20 business students to live, study and conduct ethnographic experiential study trip that allows SP students to gain insights of medicines locally 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 Diplomas in Business Administration (DBA) student See Chi Kiat says, “It was difficult to convey certain information, such as medical terms like ‘phlegm’.”

The Tri City Study Mission is a 15-week learning journey overseas where you’ll get to live, study and experience different cultures? Who can say no? Twenty students from SP’s Business School did just that – between September and December last year, they journeyed to Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand.

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

Throughout the 20-day journey, the students conducted research on cough, cold and flu purchasing patterns for the cough, cold and flu industry in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. The students, with their accompanying lecturers, interviewed around 60 households and 180 pharmacy stores across the three countries to gain insights of medicines locally used when they develop a cold or cough.

Despite the challenges, being able to conduct market research for a real client and gain firsthand 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.

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.

One of the main objectives of the programme was to investigate consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns for the cough, cold and flu industry in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. As rapid consumers of pharmaceuticals, the students needed to reveal their true identities, in an attempt to sniff out sensitive information on the city’s pharmaceutical industry without revealing their true identities, in an attempt to sniff out sensitive information.
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 SPOT.

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 diverse college-level Model United Nations conference.

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.

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 (CASES). 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.

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.

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 members handle a different aspect of running the club!
Spectacular Performance

**Nanyang Scholars**

SP graduate Herman Wee joined Nanyang Technological University (NTU) this year with a new title – Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP) Scholar. The former winner of the Nanyang Scholarship by NTU, is a major inter-college collaborative effort with strong partnerships and the Master of Science (Technology Management) in 4.5 years. Offered by the Engineering Science (with specialisation in a specific engineering discipline), the REP is an integrated co-terminal programme that awards the Bachelor of Engineering Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE). 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 Scholarships 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 Medallist 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 Koo and Nicole Ong (both from Diploma in Creative Writing for TV and New Media – DTVM) and Raffiee Tan (Diploma in Tourism and Restaurant Management – DTRM). In addition, Filzah Bte Hamzah from the Diploma in Media and Communication (DMC) was awarded the NUS-HK Leung Teaching Scholarship.

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.

**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 Anggerah Khas Mendaki 2015 Award, also from Mendaki. Besides Sofia, another 31 SP Muslim alumni also received the Anggerah Khas Mendaki Award. These were given out by Mendaki to celebrate the success and achievements of Muslim students from primary school to university.

**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, Chong Joo Xuan and Rij Hazmi 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 Tan and Lim Ting took the Silver Award for their “Give to Live” Campaign.

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

**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 Management and Project Management (DEPM) won as one of the 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 Kee, Zee Yi and Lim Meng Shen from DARCH clinched awards in three categories: first place for their English Marketing Presentation, second place for the Pitch and Exhibition Booth Design. The team comprised by lecturer Mr Fan Ay Deng. They 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 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 Lim, Hwe Zhen Zhi and Ng Wei Ping from DCEB, and Tan Sing Yi, and Lim Meng Shen from DARCH.

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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: Despite my initial-held fear of white-water rafting, I tried it for the first time. As part of SP’s Leadership Development Programme, Cheryl (in front) was able to experience white-water rafting for the first time. As part of SP’s Leadership Development Programme, Cheryl (in front) was able to experience white-water rafting for the first time. It was certainly an exhilarating experience and some events put me through physical and mental challenges, but I’m happy that I was able to step out of my comfort zone to overcome these obstacles.

Cheryl: The activity that I remember most fondly is the overseas trip to Ipoh under SP’s Leadership Development Programme, where I had white-water rafting for the first time. I tried white-water rafting for the first time. It was certainly an exhilarating experience that truly experienced life.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU LEARNED 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, a lot of things came to light. I learned to be more patient and understanding, as not everyone was born in the same environment and had the same educational opportunities.

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

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NYAA EXPERIENCE?

Xuan Yu: While an active member of SP Primus, 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.

Cheryl: The activity that I remember most fondly is the overseas trip to Ipoh under SP’s Leadership Development Programme, where I had 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 wash basins for the villagers. Apart from the group activities, almost everyone was given a specific role 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.

NYAA winners, from top, clockwise: Yap Xuan Yu, Cheryl Chan and Goh Wei Sheng pose with their well-deserved award.
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 illnesses: 9 Oct).

The original article described the vicious cycle of mental illness, where suffers would rather avoid than seek treatment, for fear of being stigmatised. This in turns 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.

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 are stigmatised. This in turns 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.

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The Unknown Truths of Award Winning Lecturers

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.

Clarice Sim
LECTURER, SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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, speaking to people if I hadn’t waitressed. I would probably be more hesitant about

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 lifetime 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 25 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.

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 patients 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.

Jenny Tran
LECTURER, SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Excellence in Teaching Award Winner

DIGITAL DEVICES ARE HER FRIENDS
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 that lets them hold onto their phones. We have to adapt to them, to keep them engaged.

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 that lets them hold onto their phones. We have to adapt to them, to keep them engaged.
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 touring 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 break wind adverse, 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, tea-houses 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 usually taken around the world.”

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 I were on our way to couchsurf at a friend’s house when this man thought we were lost or in danger. We couldn’t tell him that we were couchsurfing! 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 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, SPRiNG brings a feast of visual delights, all personally captioned by Ben. So what’s next on your travel itinerary?

**TRAVEL TIPS FOR THE WARY**

- 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.

- Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. Trips are investments and that means that it costs time and money.

- Wet wipes will be your best friend when showers are unavailable.

Fresh off his adventures in Pakistan (read more about it in SPRiNG, 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 SPRiNG blinked owlishly at him. “Excuse me?” we asked, warily and suddenly.

“Nose jobs,” Benjamin announced.

“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
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.

1. 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 the night. Automatic morning.

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

2. 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.

3. KNOW YOUR REWARD AND PSYCHOLOGY
Let’s be honest, sleep is way more appeasing 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 how this breakfast will keep you going strong till lunch.

4. MANIPULATE YOUR ENVIRONMENT
Make your sleeping area as cozy as possible. Bright light will wake you up, try to block out sunlight and 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.

5. GET UP, SNOOZER!
Waking up is hard to do, am I right? Wrong move! Going back to bed puts you in a deeper sleep cycle, making it harder to wake up for, you know, all the rest. Get moving immediately when your alarm rings (don’t reach for that snooze button! It’s not in your best interest 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!

6. KNOW YOUR DON’TS
You’ve probably heard this: restrict caffeine intake six hours before bedtime and avoid heavy naps in the day. Do you also know that 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.

7. BREAKFAST DELIGHTS
Breakfast is called the most important meal of the day, but that doesn’t mean hitting the candy bar loading 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.

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!
Chill Out

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).

❖ 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. Shh, 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 when you want to look mysterious and brooding. And makes for a darn good pillow during in-between lecture naps.

❖ 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!

❖ 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!

❖ 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.
I can expand my horizon

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