

# SCHOLARS' CONNECT

## 06 SCHOLARSHIP SPECIALS

A series of insightful sharing for aspiring scholars.

## 08 2022 EDGE ORIENTATION

Understanding green tech's role in food security.

# FORGING A GREENER FUTURE

## 11 SP SCHOLARSHIPS AWARD CEREMONY

Congratulations to the recipients!

## 15 SP UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting our graduates beyond SP.

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# Director's Message



Singapore has been actively pursuing sustainability initiatives to address environmental challenges so as to ensure a greener and more sustainable future. Singapore's commitment to sustainability is driven by recognising the environmental challenges it faces and the importance of securing a sustainable future for its citizens.

To realise Singapore's vision of the "City in a Garden," various scholarship providers including the Public Service Commission (PSC) have introduced sustainability scholarships with the aim to develop talent and leadership in the green industry. The renewable energy and clean technology sector is expected to play a significant role in Singapore's future as we strive to address climate change and transit towards sustainable practices.

At SP, we are committed to going green too. An educational institution entrusted with shaping the minds of our youth, we are committed to cultivating mind-set and behavioural changes that will contribute to our government's target of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. For a start, we have incorporated sustainability into our SP curriculum and as change agents, each of us at SP are encouraged to make personal changes towards a more sustainable lifestyle and act as green role models.

To deepen our students' awareness in this area, the EDGE team brought the new batch of Year 1 students to Agritisan, a high-tech urban farming solutions company, during the EDGE Orientation. Founded by our very own outstanding alumni and ex-SP Engineering Scholar, Mr Alexander Tan, the company exemplifies how green, sustainable, and high-tech urban farming practices can contribute to local food production, reduce our reliance on imports, and promote

a more resilient and sustainable food system. They also serve as testbeds for innovation and knowledge sharing, positioning Singapore as a leader in urban agriculture technologies.

Besides prioritizing sustainability, we believe in providing our students the best learning experience and infrastructure support to help develop them into valuable members of the society. To support deserving and talented students beyond their education in SP, we are introducing the new SP Undergraduate Scholarship this year. It is open for application to SP Graduates who will be pursuing their undergraduate studies in any of the local autonomous universities.

In this issue, our newly graduated students share their experiences of applying for scholarships. Take the opportunity to carefully consider their advice and give yourself sufficient time to prepare for your scholarship journey. To begin, start reading or listening to the news because having a good grasp of current affairs can stand you in good stead. The EDGE team has put together a series of workshops ranging from futures thinking to socio-emotional resilience, which are aimed at helping you stand out in your scholarship applications. Do make full use of these resources!

Finally, I hope that each of you will contribute in your capacity, to reducing environmental impacts, promote resource efficiency, and cultivate a culture of sustainability wherever you go. I hope that you will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to become responsible and environmentally conscious professionals in the future, championing and driving more green initiatives.

**Mr Clarence Chua, Department of Student Services**



# The importance of current affairs in Scholarship Applications



Scholarships are awarded based on merit, rewarding well-rounded, talented and accomplished individuals. Naturally, scholarship placements are limited and competitive since only those who have demonstrated academic excellence and displayed leadership traits and active participation in their co-curricular activities, amongst other stringent criteria, will make the cut. How then can the scholarship applicant stand out among the other distinguished candidates during the scholarship interview?

**Overall, knowing about current affairs is an important aspect of scholarship applications because it shows that you are a well-rounded, engaged, and informed individual.**

One way is to display a good breadth of general knowledge and demonstrate how well-read and informed you are on current trends and global matters. While there is no need to pore tirelessly over news articles and memorise quotes, it is necessary in this well-connected world where information is so easily available that applicants be familiar with major happenings around us, particularly those in our own backyard. Being knowledgeable in current affairs shows the scholarship committee that the applicant is an engaged learner and informed individual who conscientiously carves out time to keep abreast of the latest events and issues happening in the world today.

Keeping up with current affairs develops critical thinking skills as it requires analysis and interpretation of information from a variety of sources. An informed applicant is likely to have a stronger ability to seek out information, process it, and use logic to form well-reasoned arguments and opinions. This skill can help applicants see patterns and connections between different issues, which can help form nuanced understanding of complex topics. This can be very useful especially during interviews as applicants can provide deeper insights into topics of discussion and help the scholarship committee situate the applicant's world views in the larger scheme of things, making conversations more memorable and engaging during interviews.

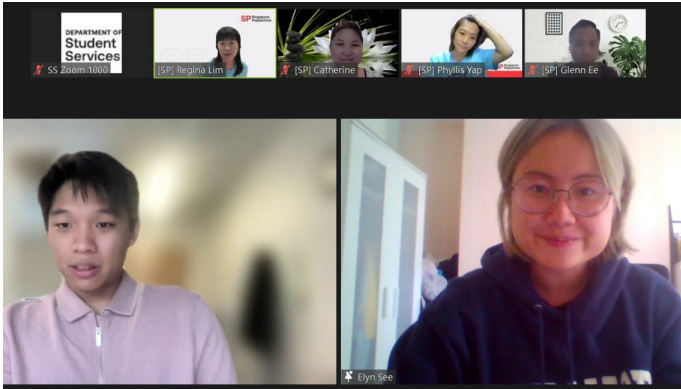


Many scholarships are specific to certain fields of study, such as science, technology, engineering, social sciences, or the arts. If you are applying for scholarship in a particular field, it is important to show that you have a deep understanding of the field and are up-to-date with the latest research, innovation, and trends. For example, if you are applying for a scholarship in science, reading about current research in your field can give valuable insights into the cutting-edge work that is being done and the potential applications of that work. Similarly, if you are applying for a scholarship in the arts, keeping up with current exhibitions or performances can help you understand the latest trends and movements in your field. This can be important for demonstrating your qualifications and potential as a candidate, that you are a dedicated and committed individual looking to make a positive impact in the field of study and in the world.

Overall, knowing about current affairs is an important aspect of scholarship applications because it shows that you are a well-rounded, engaged, and informed individual. A word of caution – being well-informed is not about regurgitating facts and using sophisticated terminologies or complex concepts that are difficult to unpack within a limited time. It is about showing a healthy interest in the world around you and perspective-taking. In fact, a good dose of scepticism of available information rather than an unquestioning acceptance of everything you read in the media can show that you are a discerning, sensible reader – someone who really appreciates the purpose of what a scholarship is all about!



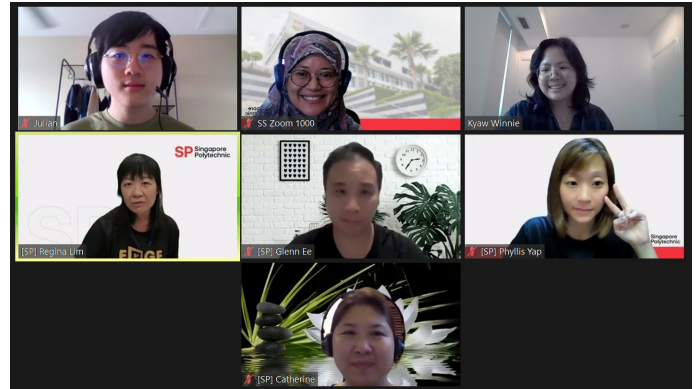
# Scholarship Specials



Aston Chia and Elyn See

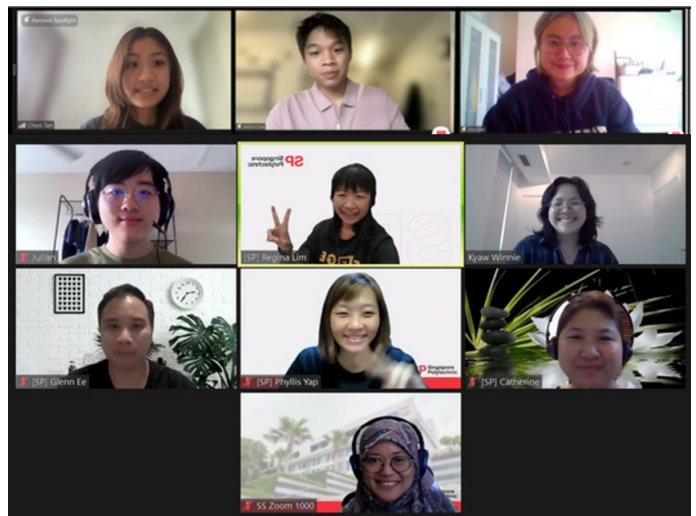
The annual Scholarship Specials for 2022 took place over a period of 3 days from 6th to 9th September where a series of useful and insightful virtual sharing sessions from both industry experts and our own alumni took place. The fair brought together well-known names such as the British Council, the Australian Trade and Investment Commission, EducationUSA, MOE, BrightSparks and Graduates First whose insights helped our students gain a better understanding of how to prepare for both local and overseas scholarship applications students gain a better understanding of how to prepare for both local and overseas scholarship applications.

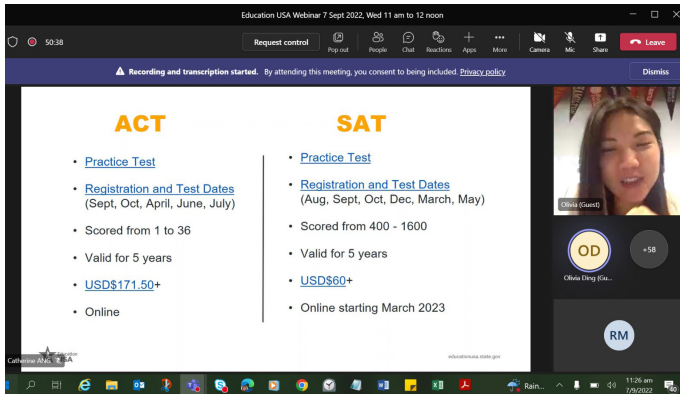
In particular, our alumni who are currently furthering their studies in the United Kingdom, Aston Chia from the University of Warwick, Elyn See from the University of College London and Chiyo Tan from the University of Edinburgh shared their personal, first-hand experiences of studying overseas, as well as how they secured their scholarships and the challenges they faced settling in, away from home. Their sincere and honest sharing helped put the journey of travelling overseas alone to pursue a degree in perspective for students who are deliberating whether to embark on an overseas scholarship but are worried about many of the unknowns.



Winna Kyaw and Julian Kang

Our alumni who are currently studying in the United States, Julian Kang from Purdue University and Winnie Kyaw from NUS Overseas College (NOC) in Toronto also informed their juniors of the estimated finances involved and the employment prospects and possible part-time vacation jobs available for foreign students, in addition to how they can secure scholarships to finance their studies. For instance, attendees were advised to curate a specific portfolio and be clear about their long-term career goals as they sieve through the sponsorships open to them. They were also advised to adopt a long-term vision of the market ahead, and not only woo industries which seem fashionable or cool at the moment. It is also important to weigh the pros and cons of a brand name university to the advantages of opting for a lesser known university whose forte is in the specialisation one is seriously keen in establishing one's career in.





And finally, one of our lucky students who attended the BrightSparks webinar on 7th September won herself a Google Nest Mini by creating an account on BrightSparks portal! Congratulations! As covered in our previous issue, BrightSparks is a one-stop portal for students to explore and apply for scholarships. Students can subscribe to alerts when the particular scholarship they are eyeing is open for applications; they can also better understand what scholarship providers are looking for and work in a more targeted fashion towards the scholarship they aspire to clinch. Furthermore, students have the chance to participate in panel or roundtable discussions with scholarship providers during fairs, which Brightsparks organises from time to time.

All in all, it was an extremely intense and informative affair where, notwithstanding all that has been said, students also learnt the relevance of psychometric tests, the latest test formats, the test objectives, be introduced to the various representatives for overseas studies and their contact information, so that students may have a convenient resource to fall back on should the need for more personalise consultations arise.



# 2022 EDGE Orientation



Contributed by:  
Lim Jing Xuan Sheryl, School of Business, DAC  
Kayla Tham Ke Yi, School of Architecture & the Built Environment, DARCH

**After two years of holding the EDGE Orientation virtually, the EDGE team could finally organise an in-person orientation and we, the new batch of EDGE students were really looking forward to meeting other fellow EDGE students in the programme, as well as to be introduced to the EDGE Scholar Mentors team.**

The orientation venue was a mystery as the students were not told where we were heading to until we assembled in school to board the buses. We were dropped off at Besco Building in Ubi, where a company called Agritisan was located. Agritisan, an urban farming start-up, was founded by Mr Alexander Tan, who has the belief that it is possible to change the current agricultural methods so as to achieve a more sustainable food supply in the future. Alex, a passionate urban farming advocate, an alumni of SP, and former SP Engineering Scholar, gave an engaging presentation on the agricultural sector and its prospects and challenges. We







flowering plants. These hydroponically grown saplings are suitable for Agritisan’s “Food-Pod” Growing Tower. This “Food-Pod” Growing Tower is an agriculture-grade system that yields up to three times that of comparative outdoor planting systems. Utilising a nutrient film technique (NFT) to grow plants, each tower consists of six sides and a total of 432 plant holes per tower. The panels can be taken down easily with the release of a catch for transplanting and harvesting work to be done easily.

Besides using solar power and rainwater to germinate a variety of seeds from microgreens, Asian leafy greens, herbs and edible flowers, the tower is a scalable, sustainable, low maintenance solution to enable saplings to flourish into mature crops. It was truly an eye-opening experience to see how innovation and creativity can overcome land constraints by taking advantage of urban spaces such as the rooftops for activities which are meaningful and practical. As I harvested

learnt about the urgency of putting in place sustainability programmes, the far-reaching impact of urban farming, agri-technology and its potential importance in the future. We also grew more aware of Singapore’s supply chain vulnerabilities and thus, gained a deeper understanding of the relevance of the Green Plan 2030, which Singapore has embarked on.

With the help of Agritisan’s Farm Operations Manager, Mr Ruhelmy, our EDGE students also had the opportunity to learn more about rooftop farming and how nutrient rich ebb flow grow beds can harvest an interesting and colourful variety of seedlings and saplings of herbs, vegetables and



two plants of my choice – a souvenir Agritisan offers to all the students – I was momentarily transformed into a high-tech urban farmer and marvelled at the cleverness of harnessing the right technology to confront wicked problems.

To further inspire us to think more deeply about the food we eat and sometimes take for granted, the EDGE students were also taught how to use every day mundane items such as disposable chopsticks, plastic bottles and twine to design and create their very own sustainable plant pots. At the end of the session, a spinach sapling was given to



each student to grow in his new, individualised sustainable pot. The session set me thinking that sometimes useful solutions need not be complex.

In conclusion, the session was fruitful and memorable as we interacted more closely with the EDGE mentors and our fellow EDGE counterparts. A bingo ice-breaker game at the beginning, in particular, offered me the opportunity to interact on a more personal level with my counterparts from different schools and prompted me to step out of my comfort zone to proactively approach and speak to other students whom I do not know. All in all, besides edible green leaves, I have also gained new friendships, environmental awareness and insights into what it meant to be innovative and creative problem-solvers.



# SP Scholarships Award Ceremony



**Contributed by:**  
**Wong Shao Rong Joel,**  
**School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, DEEE**

I am honored and delighted to be selected as a recipient of the 2023 SP Engineering Scholarship. The process began with a nomination from my teacher for the scholarship and I was invited to attend an interview with other students who have similarly worked hard and done well in their Year 1 examinations. While I was nervous before the selection interview, it was fortunate when I found out how warm and friendly my fellow students were when I met them during the interview session.

Even luckier, I was invited to perform during the scholarship award ceremony with a few other scholarship recipients but the rehearsals were not entirely smooth-sailing. As we were from different courses, we had to grapple with pinning down common rehearsal dates even as the day of the ceremony continued to press nearer after each rehearsal. The final songs selection also took some deliberations and discussions – we decided that we would do a unique, original re-mix of two songs – “A Million Dreams” and “Rewrite the Stars” – both from the movie, *The Greatest Showman*. While we like our idea, realizing it was not easy. Transiting from one song to the other was the biggest challenge we faced as the tempo and key to the two songs were rather different. To overcome this, we had to be very accurate in coordinating our timings during the transition, and that requires conscientious practice, teamwork and patience with one another.



The much anticipated day finally arrived! Contrary to what I had expected, I was unusually calm during the performance and could even help distil my team members’ anxiety. I think this was mainly due to the lively and positive vibes the other awardees brought with them. Their pleasant and joyous moods uplifted the performers’ spirits and dissolve our anxieties and nervousness. More than the conferment of the scholarship, through this entire experience, I learnt that when we work in a team, we need to be flexible in order to reach the final shared goal. For instance, seemingly simple things like learning to accommodate one another’s busy schedules, taking unforeseen hiccups in our strides instead of sinking into the feelings of helplessness and frustration are very important in propelling the team forward, and moving us in unity towards our final goal – to deliver a flawless and heartfelt performance that would be memorable, inspiring and the highlight of the entire ceremony.

Last but not least, I also learnt that it is more important for the team to talk through their differences and allow each member to be heard than to pray that everyone will agree all the time. Sometimes, different views and perspectives can lead to a more dynamic outcome and just as it took courage for me to go for this scholarship, it took a leap of faith for me to embrace the new experiences which came with this conferment, which thankfully, up to this point, have all eventually turned out fine. I am grateful that I have been conferred this coveted scholarship and I feel more

motivated and confident now than ever, in taking up more school activities because I believe that no matter what the outcome might be, the willingness to take a bold step forward and to try is already a kind of winning mindset. In seizing opportunities that come my way, even accepting the invite by the editorial team to share my thoughts here in this newsletter, I hope that I can continue to participate actively in school events, to adapt to changing circumstances and to apply innovation to challenging situations.



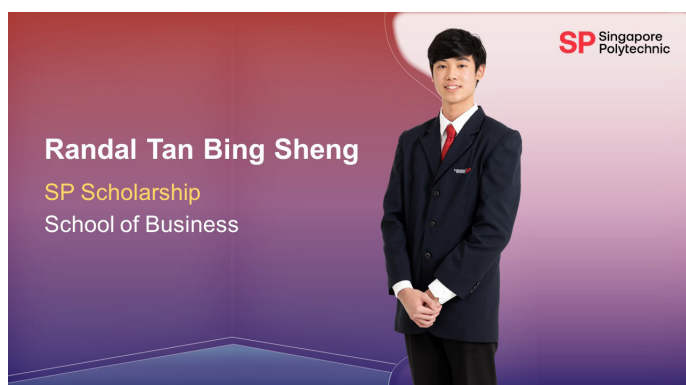
**Contributed by:**  
**Tan Bing Sheng Randal,**  
**School of Business, DBKF**

I was ecstatic when my course chair, Mr Mark Johnson, informed me that I had been nominated for the SP Scholarship interview. As a fresh-eyed Year 1 student in the School of Business (SB), I did not imagine that I would do well enough to qualify for the scholarship but I worked hard nevertheless, and this conscientiousness has paid off, opening an opportunity for me.

I paid close attention to the advice given by Ms Sylvia, SB's Scholar Mentor, when I attended her mock interview to prepare me for the actual interview. Yet, when I turned up on the actual day, I still felt butterflies in my stomach as the other candidates were all smartly dressed and looked well-prepared too. I recalled the preparations I had invested before turning up for the interview and felt a little more assured as I walked myself mentally through the steps again. It was a group interview and there were five of us being interviewed by a panel of four senior Singapore Polytechnic (SP) staff and everyone seemed to answer brilliantly. Even as I tried to make myself stand out, I felt that I had learnt quite a fair bit just by listening to the answers that the others gave. Hence, to me, the interview itself was an invaluable lesson and experience.

Thankfully, I was selected and on the 18th January 2023, I attended the award ceremony held at the SP auditorium. I was a little curious as to who else were selected and felt both performance pressure and an odd sense of motivation when I saw all my counterparts confidently seated to await the start of the ceremony. However, the nervousness dissipated when I started chatting to a new friend I made during the scholarship interview. She had a wonderful sense of humour which lightened the tense atmosphere.

Just as I was beginning to settle in, Mr Soh, our principal mentioned my project – developing an energy-harvesting T-shirt. I was delightfully surprised that my principal actually liked the idea. Another highlight of the ceremony was the speech by an SP Alumni, Mr Alexander Tan, who is also the founder of Agritisan, a high-tech urban farming company. Exuding confidence and sounding practiced, he advised the audience to seize opportunities in crisis. I find that particularly apt as Singapore emerged more unified and stronger after three years of COVID-19. A pandemic that has claimed numerous lives have also distilled what is truly important and valuable in life to many. It has also dramatically transformed the way we study and work.



All in all, clinching this scholarship helped me better appreciate the importance of good leadership and spurred me on to strive harder to do better, not just academically but also cultivating an exemplary character. Listening to Mr Soh and Mr Tan, I have come to realise the value of community service and how the willingness to serve can open my mind to a broader horizon and help me gain new perspectives. On my way home that evening, I decided that I was going to invest my time and energy in the next two years to build an outstanding portfolio that consists of good grades, strong leadership and active service learning. I hope that moving forward, I will pick up the ropes in the area of financial planning and risk management, and ultimately draw up a successfully investment portfolio for myself and my loved ones. With that vision in mind, I look forward to enrolling in more interesting modules come Year 2 and 3.



# Advice from Seniors on PSC Scholarship Application



**Contributed by:**  
**Teo Kuan Wee James,**  
**School of Computing, DISM**

Applying for the PSC Scholarship has been an eye-opening and fulfilling experience. I have developed a more holistic understanding of Singapore's Public Service and had the opportunity to reflect on my passions, interests, university choices, and career aspirations with greater clarity. Preparing for the application has made me more aware of global and local current affairs, widening my worldview. One of the challenges I faced during the PSC application process was being unsure of my university choices and unfamiliar with the Public Service structure. With the assistance of the EDGE team, I clarified my doubts and cleared the application and interview process smoothly and confidently.

As part of the PSC application process, selected applicants will attend a psychological interview. Throughout this interview, it is important to stay calm and speak candidly. This will allow the psychologist to assess the candidate's suitability for a public service career more effectively. After the psychological interview, applicants will attend a panel interview with the PSC board members. The EDGE team and my course chair Mr. Samson Yeow, conducted a mock interview session with me to identify my strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. It was a humbling and enlightening process that allowed me to gain valuable insights into interview skills and approaches. I felt more confident and prepared for the PSC panel interview. To further prepare for the interview, I read my summarized notes diligently and kept up-to-date with the news. The PSC Board panel interview was a memorable experience – the panelists were kind and cordial, and the questions were tough but fair.

I am grateful to the EDGE scholarship team and everyone who supported me for their invaluable guidance. I hope to make a positive impact on Singapore and the public service. I am a work-in-progress, and the road ahead will be challenging but filled with opportunities for learning and improvement. I look forward to the future and am determined to work hard and make my family proud.

To all my juniors considering applying for the PSC, please read widely. Preparation takes effort and cannot be done overnight. During the preparation process, trust your mentor for advice and feedback. During interviews, be clear, confident, honest, and genuine. Embrace a long-term view – the PSC scholarship is an opportunity to further your education and the first step to a public service career, so always hold yourself to the highest conduct and behavior. Understand your passion and what drives you. Stay humble and seek improvements, do not be afraid to make mistakes. Only then will you gain insights, learn and improve. All the best, and good luck with your application!





**Contributed by:**  
**Sarah Nahar Azmi,**  
**Media, Arts & Design School, DMC**

I applied for the PSC scholarship because I wanted job security and career stability. The structured leadership program and varied ministry experiences that a PSC scholarship offer would hone my leadership skills and enrich my public service career. I have learnt a lot through the application process, one of which is that I have really great mentors in SP. For instance, my lecturers would notify their students about various scholarships openings and they were excited to nominate deserving students for various scholarships.

The EDGE team from the Department of Student Services also worked tirelessly to support all scholarship applicants. I realised that other scholarship applicants from other higher institutions do not have such ready support networks when I spoke to them. I feel so thankful for the resources that SP has made available to all its aspiring scholars. The structured process that the EDGE team has put in place to guide all PSC scholarship applicants help clarifies the entire process and allow applicants to better pace themselves. The coaching sessions introduced to my mind new perspectives and new knowledge, which were useful.

My advice to my fellow juniors who may be interested to apply for not just the PSC but any scholarships, is to initiate the conversation with your lecturers early because they can give insights into your strengths and weaknesses and help clarify your goals and aspirations. By listening to their perspectives, you will also re-assess what is most suitable for you. They also give invaluable suggestions on how else you can substantiate your application and thus increase your chances of success. Be proactive in participating in the activities that the EDGE team organizes as they share handy resources that point you to available opportunities.

Finally, be conscientious in reading up on the organisation that you hope to join and be sure that you really like the industry you are applying for. Embarking on a career is a long-term decision that you do not want to take lightly. Do cultivate a healthy social network and ask for lecturer's references early because they are very busy during the peak period towards graduation. With that, I wish you the very best in your scholarship journey!





# SP Undergraduate Scholarship



## NEW SP UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

*Supporting our Graduates beyond SP*

**Application opens: 18 - 30 Sep 2023**

### About the Scholarship

The Scholarship aims to support deserving and talented SP students in their undergraduate studies. We hope to encourage our academically strong graduates to further their achievements in SP and to make a positive impact on Singapore in the future.

### Scholarship Benefits

- Bond-free scholarship
- Full scholarship award of \$30,000 will be given out in three tranches of \$10,000 across three academic years of undergraduate studies.

### Eligibility

- Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents
- Graduated from SP with a Diploma with Merit
- Demonstrate good leadership qualities and conduct
- Possess strong portfolio and CCA records
- Freshly matriculated at any of the local autonomous universities

Scan the QR Code for more information.



**Stay tuned to SP's website for more updates!**

**For enquiries, please email [scholarships@sp.edu.sg](mailto:scholarships@sp.edu.sg).**



# WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have any comments, contributions, or questions or if you would like us to feature specific scholarship-related topics, please write to us at [scholarships@sp.edu.sg](mailto:scholarships@sp.edu.sg) or scan the QR code below.



## SPECIAL THANKS

The Scholars' Connect team would like to thank the following for their invaluable help in realising this issue of Scholars' Connect: Current students, EDGE student writers, as well as alumni for sharing their stories, experiences and photos, and to those for taking the time off their busy schedules to be interviewed.

