

Embracing passion, experiencing vibrancy

The National University of Singapore provides an environment conducive for students to pursue academic excellence and extra-curricular passions, as told to **Theresa Cheow**

SIKHANDAR SINGH

The pursuit of sporting excellence exacts time and effort, and often calls for academic sacrifice. But Mr Sikhandar Singh, 24, a third-year undergraduate majoring in Political Science at NUS' Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, excels in both sports and studies.

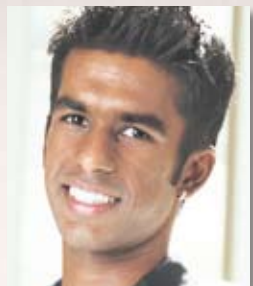
"What really helps me is that NUS believes in investing in and producing well-rounded students who do well in studies and also in sporting activities," says the former NUS Sportsman of the Year who had represented Singapore in Duathlon at the Asian Games and South-east Asian Games in 2007. Duathlon is a grueling race which consists of three legs: a 10-km run, a 40-km bike race and another five kilometre run.

He has a daily schedule which he sticks strictly to. And his secret is working his training programme around his classes. He wakes up at 7.30am and is in bed by 12 midnight.

NUS' extensive sporting facilities, which include gyms, multi-purpose sports halls and an Olympic-sized swimming pool, create logistical ease in Sikhandar's training. The NUS Sports Excellence Programme is also a boon, he says of the initiative which aims to bring out the best in student athletes through technical expertise, overseas competitions and financial aid, among others.

Says Sikhandar: "This programme and the supportive nature of the NUS administration have helped me immensely, in that NUS recognises that athletes need time off from school for competitions that are in the middle of the semester, and that sports is an essential component in character building.

"I'm really pleased that I'm able to plan my race calendar and school schedule, and focus on getting a quality education while achieving sporting excellence for the country."



SAMUEL LIM

Law undergraduate Samuel Lim, 25, makes the most of his time at the NUS Law School with a travel log that is the envy of most university students. Samuel spent one year in Denmark on an exchange programme at the University of Copenhagen and even ventured to Cambodia on a Youth Expedition project where he helped build a classroom in a village.

He says of his Denmark stint: "Being able to interact with students from all over the world was something I greatly enjoyed and benefited from. Spending a year there also presented me with the fantastic opportunity to travel widely across Europe."

The trip was made possible because of the wide range of opportunities offered by the NUS Law School for students to take part in exchange programmes and international competitions.

A former Law Club president, Samuel led the organising of a wealth of student activities ranging from debating, mooted, advocacy and paper writing competitions to movie outings, artistic performances, concerts, sports and games. These activities enhanced the vibrant student environment at NUS' Bukit Timah Campus.

In Samuel's second year, he participated in the NUS Advocacy Cup and represented NUS Law School at the Australian Law Students' Association Witness Examination Competition in 2006.

He says: "I had a brilliant experience sparring with some of the best law students. I was one of two Singaporeans among 400 Australian law students. It drove me to do my best to pit my skills against the others."

He chose to study at NUS because he had the option to choose electives taught by globally renowned professors.

"My classmates in these courses hail from all over the world. I'm enjoying a truly holistic and international educational experience at the NUS Law School. It's like getting an overseas education locally."



TAY E TENG

The annual Rag & Flag is one of NUS' proud traditions and is also one of the most exciting events. Through the thick of fundraising activities and performances, NUS undergrads are given opportunities to discover and hone their leadership skills.

Tay E Teng, 24, is one such student who seized the opportunity to take on a leadership role and ran for president of the Students' Union.

A 2007 graduate of the NUS Business School and the University Scholars Programme, E Teng was recognised for her leadership qualities and is currently a management associate with DBS.

She says: "The time I spent in the non-academic activities in NUS offered me a wider perspective on life — that being fulfilled also comes from giving back to the community."



E Teng, together with her team, took the NUS Students' Union (NUSSU) Rag & Flag to the Padang where the NUS students showcased their energetic and colourful performances to Singaporeans and visitors in appreciation of their generous Flag Day donations. Under her charge, a record amount of over half a million dollars in donations was raised for 20 adopted charities.

"It is one of the key events in NUS that brings together the students from all faculties and

halls of residences. It is a display of the passion and creativity of our students, the vibrancy of campus life and the esprit de corps of NUS," she says.

In recognition of her efforts, E Teng received the NUSSU Colours Award for significant contributions to the union, and the Students' Achievement Award 2007 from NUS for Distinguished Leadership.

Says E Teng: "I will not be who I am today if not for all the enriching experiences I gained at NUS."

LERON TAN

Chemistry, economics, dance and music have little in common, but undergraduate Leron Tan, 22, has successfully fused all these passions into her undergraduate life at NUS. That NUS offers her the unique opportunity to fully immerse herself in her interests is what made Leron decide to pursue her education there.

The flexibility of the NUS education also gave the third-year Science undergraduate the opportunity to major in Chemistry, and minor in Economics at the Faculty of Arts and Social Science.

Says Leron: "I enjoy the energy of dance and music, and with proper planning, I am able to balance my studies with the pursuit of my passion." The long hours in the laboratory as well as intensive lectures and tutorials do not deter her from performing in the NUS Dance Ensemble, the NUS Wind Symphony, and the NUS Dance Blast!, all performing groups under the NUS Centre for the Arts(CFA).

Members of the NUS Wind Symphony are exposed to various types of repertoire ranging from orchestral transcriptions to modern band music. Leron was a percussionist with the symphony, and has more recently been given the opportunity to get involved in backstage production as well.

With the NUS Dance Ensemble, Leron hones her dance techniques such as jazz and ballet, while NUS Dance Blast! allows her to indulge in Hip-Hop and Funk. She has also helped imbue vibrancy on campus by participating in the annual NUS Arts Festival, the University's flagship arts season that showcases the performances of NUS students, staff and alumni.

Says Leron: "At NUS, I get to pursue my interests and soak in the vibrancy of student life here on campus. The quality of university life is not just about how well I do academically, but how and what I gain from the entire experience."



COME DISCOVER THE NUS DIFFERENCE

A leading university, the National University of Singapore (NUS) offers the widest range of undergraduate courses among the local universities. There are vast opportunities for students to pursue more than 60 different majors from its 14 faculties and schools.

Faculties / Schools:

● Arts and Social Sciences ● Business ● Computing ● Dentistry ● Design and Environment ● Engineering ● Law ● Medicine (including Nursing) ● Music ● Science ● University Scholars Programme ● Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy ● NUS Graduate School for Integrative Sciences and Engineering ● Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore

Most extensive offering of concurrent degree, double degree, double major programmes in Singapore.

A globally-oriented educational experience at NUS

is complemented by innovative double degree and joint degree programmes with leading partner universities like Australian National University, Carnegie Mellon University, Columbia University, New York University, Peking University, University of Melbourne, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and many more. More information can be found at <http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/course/>.

There are also overseas exposure and entrepreneurship opportunities, such as student exchange programmes and NUS Overseas Colleges in partnership with leading universities. More than 10,000 undergraduates go overseas for such programmes while at NUS.

Special Programmes:

● University Scholars Programme ● Student Exchange Programme in partnership with 200 leading partner universities ● NUS Overseas Colleges in Silicon Valley, Bio Valley, Stockholm, Shanghai and Bangalore ● University Research Opportunities Programme ● Special Programme in Science

A diverse and cosmopolitan community

of 24,000 undergraduate and 7,000 graduate students from 100 countries contribute to a rich learning and living environment across three-state-of-the-art campuses at Kent Ridge, Bukit Timah and Outram. By 2010, University Town will be NUS' fourth campus with the pioneer development of 10 residential colleges, achieving yet another first for NUS and Singapore.

A research-intensive university with an entrepreneurial environment

complements the globally-oriented, multi-disciplinary education to nurture innovators and leaders of tomorrow. NUS is committed to advancing knowledge, nurturing talent and promoting innovation at all levels in society.

The university stands out in its holistic development of graduates because it offers space, opportunities and challenges to its students to discover their talents, pursue their passions and realise their potential.