Learning from the best

Ngee Ann-Aelaide offers degrees awarded by the University of Adelaide and taught by experienced academics

Douglas Chew

ALREADY a registered nurse at the National University Cancer Institute (NCI) in Singapore, Ms Yelly, 28, wanted to deepen her professional knowledge and further her career.

So she enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing degree programme at the University of Adelaide (UOA), offered by the Ngee Ann-Aelaide Education Centre (NAA) here in Singapore.

“The qualifications, clinical familiarities and knowledge as well as nurturing and enthusiastic attitudes of all the lecturers and tutors for the programme helped to align and contribute towards the depth of the understanding of the modules taught,” says Ms Yelly.

UOA’s Joanna Briggs Institute, the research and development arm of the university’s School of Translational Science, promotes and supports the synthesis, transfer and utilisation of evidence through identifying feasible and effective health-care practices to improve health-care outcomes. This strong foundation is incorporated into two Knowledge Translation in Nursing modules.

With a focus on experiential education, academic rigour and the integration of theory and practice, topics such as Nursing in Global Community, Nursing Law and Ethics, and Contemporary Nursing bring students up to date with international practices relevant for the Singapore health-care industry.

The part-time course allowed Ms Yelly to continue her full-time job as a senior staff nurse in the Department of Haematology-Oncology at NCI. Her employer, National University Hospital, gave her the Talent Development Award, which helped to pay her course fees of $24,000. Some of her other classmates had financial support from NAA, through the Ngee Ann Education Scholarship.

Learning objectives

Another NAA student, Ms Jesslyn Kwong, 22, pursued UOA’s Bachelor of Commerce programme on a full-time basis.

“I wanted a degree that is recognised in Singapore, allows flexibility in the choices of modules and has a shorter duration to completion so that I can enter the working world faster and gain more work experience,” says Ms Kwong.

Both Ms Kwong and Ms Yelly held diplomas before they enrolled in NAA, which gave them exemption from certain modules. Ms Kwong was able to complete her degree in one-and-a-half years.

Lecturers are flown in from Adelaide and lessons are conducted at NAA’s premises at Jink Road.

Ms Kwong majored in marketing and international business, and enjoyed the Market Research module, where she developed a questionnaire targeted at a real company, and later collated and analysed the data collected to provide recommendations for improvement. She also learnt how to value companies in the International Financial Market module.

UOA has overseas exchange opportunities for its students and Ms Kwong headed for summer school at its Adelaide campus.

Beyond the high quality of teaching, students can benefit from the career services at NAA. Ms Kwong, who graduated last year, took less than two weeks to find a job, and is now a media research executive with StarHub.

Both Ms Yelly (left) and Ms Kwong held diplomas before enrolling in NAA.

Switching to business

Studying at the SMF Institute of Higher Learning will enable Ms Peggy Poh to fulfill her dream

Wong Sher Maine

TRAINED in chemical engineering, diploma holder Ms Peggy Poh (above) knew next to nothing about business and economics. But the 28-year-old was determined to change that.

“I wasn’t sure of what I wanted to do after my O levels, which is why I did chemical engineering at Temasek Polytechnic. I now feel that a business degree is more practical,” she says.

She searched for a private school and found that the SMF Institute of Higher Learning allowed her to switch to a completely different field.

“It’s like they offered me a second chance,” she says. “I think that one should not hesitate to invest in further education because it is the key for a better future and professional advancement. Education is one of the best investments one can make as it comes with great returns.”

She is now studying for a Bachelor of Commerce in Banking and Human Resource Management offered by Murdoch University via the SMF Institute, and she intends to get a job in the banking sector once she graduates at the end of 2015.

“As I am majoring in two areas, this programme will open up opportunities for me to explore career options in different industries, offering job openings with greater financial rewards,” she says.

Ms Poh was also drawn to the good reputation of Murdoch University.

She says: “Murdoch University offers a wide range of double major combinations available to choose from and its degrees are recognised in Singapore. Besides that, polytechnic students can gain direct entry into the second year of the degree programme. Hence, it will only take two years for me to graduate with a double major degree.”

But what really sealed the deal was the scholarship she was awarded from the SMF Institute and the Murdoch University, together with Temasek Polytechnic.

The scholarship covers her $25,000 course fee. Ms Poh, whose taxi driving father supports her housewife mother, an elder sister who is still studying and a brother with Down Syndrome, says: “Without the scholarship, I think it would have been very difficult for me to embark on a degree course.”

Her biggest challenge was tackling a completely new field of study. She had to complete seven bridging modules — which students with business-related diplomas do not have to do — in subjects like economics, accounting, law, management and marketing.

She says: “Each bridging module was only two weeks long, but I learnt so much. Not only did I receive a good foundation for my university-level studies, I also made many friends. The lecturers were very approachable and available even after school hours. With their help, I passed all my bridging modules with good grades, even scoring high distinctions.”

Typically, the full-time student attends one lesson a week and does self-study, group work and research the rest of the time. “A lot of self-study and research is required as the assessment components include projects, assignments and examination,” she says.

Classes are kept small at about 15 students per class. They comprise a mix of working adults and full-time students, who help each other.