Paying it forward

Diploma holder Tan Shao Tang aims to become a social entrepreneur and give back to society

Mary Lim

A UNIVERSITY education should not only impart theory-based knowledge but also practical skills. For Mr Tan Shao Tang, 23, this was the key consideration when he decided to enrol for a Bachelor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship programme at the Ngee Ann-Polytechnic in July last year.

Designed to develop and inspire students to set up their own businesses, or help others to do so, the course offers insights into processes, risks, rewards, motivations and societal impact of innovation and entrepreneurship with a regional, national and global perspective.

Says Mr Tan, who has a diploma in real estate business from Ngee Ann Polytechnic, says: "It has broadened my perspective on entrepreneurship. "As I come from a non-business background, I believe that the comprehensive curriculum of aspects, trends and topics will allow me to better understand the concept of successful entrepreneurship."

Lecturers from Australia and Singapore use their extensive industry knowledge to bring textbook theories to real-life experiences.

Enriching experience

Having classmates from various walks of life, age groups and backgrounds also enriched Mr Tan's learning experience.

"It inspires me to expand my perspective and understand that different people have different working styles. "Learning to counterbalance one another in a team is an important skill for my generation, given Singapore's multicultural society," he says.

Mr Tan will complete his part-time degree programme, which lasts six terms (each term is three months), by the end of this year.

He is looking forward to the Winter School Programme in Adelaide. "I want to be a social entrepreneur. I hope to eventually be able to help others and give back to the society and contribute to the economy at the same time," says Mr Tan.

His personal experiences have made him realise the importance of improving human interaction in today's environment, he says.

"I grew up with an elder brother who is physically challenged, and the experience has allowed me to witness the amazing drive and motivation of the human spirit. "He has shown me that a strong will can help you achieve goals and aspirations, and that obstacles should never hinder you from maximising your potential and ability," he says.

"By creating more platforms to increase students' social interaction with the less fortunate at a younger age, I hope they will grow to better understand differences and work towards a more compassionate society."

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