A firm foundation for a better future

Staff nurse and lecturer invest in further education to build up skills base to improve career prospects

A fascination for the mechanics that drive the implementation of projects was the impetus behind Mr Tay Tong Leng’s decision to pursue a postgraduate degree in Applied Project Management.

"Project Management forms an integral part of everyday life, in our careers and personal lives," said Mr Tay.

"I believe that by enhancing my knowledge in this area of study, I will be better equipped to achieve greater success in the future."

The Institute of Technical Education lecturer enrolled in the programme with Ngee Ann Adelaide Education Centre (NAA) because of the university’s reputable international standing and broad-based curriculum.

In addition, NAA offers him the flexibility to attend weekend classes while concentrating on his work during weekdays. He enjoys having the lecturers challenge him to think critically. He said: "This makes the programme rigorous and mentally challenging."

The overall school experience is positive and memorable, with many new friendships forged.

"I enjoyed having a great deal of discussion and debates with classmates, many of whom are professionals in their own field as well as with lecturers who bring a wealth of experience," he said.

The programme helped to reshape his thought process, allowing him to adopt a holistic view on situations and challenge himself to "think outside the box."

Having supportive employers also eased the challenges of a part-time student, allowing him to complete his work obligations within office hours most of the time, while focusing on his studies after work hours and on weekends.

Supportive

His wife and parents were equally supportive and encouraging.

"I spend my weekends with my family when I'm not attending classes or working on my assignments," he said.

Mr Tay was recently awarded the Ngee Ann Adelaide Scholarship and is grateful for the tuition subsidy, which has helped to relieve some of the financial obligations.

He advises aspiring students to centre plans on what they want to achieve in their career and life, and to think about how they will benefit from further education.

Miss Meera Begum pursues the Bachelor of Nursing programme offered by NAA as a step to advance in her career.

"I was searching for all the different schools that were offering the degree programme I wanted. NAA's programme outline impressed me and it is also a reputable university as a member of the Group of Eight – Australia's top research-intensive universities," said the staff nurse.

She said the lectures are interesting and conducive, and group presentations are held to promote learning and understanding.

"The programme has trained me to think critically when I have a patient problem to solve," said Miss Begum.

"I have also learnt how to carry out a proper assessment of patients in order to identify emergency situations beforehand."

Miss Begum enjoys how the programme develops critical thinking skills and also includes research courses that taught her to find answers to questions that had never been researched on.

"As my hospital extensively practises evidence-based nursing, the research knowledge gained in this programme will definitely help me to better contribute to the evidence-based practices," she said.

"My work experience helps me when I do my assignments and in understanding the course content."

Her employers have been supportive of her education.

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Scholarship holder's advice to potential students is not to procrastinate and to press on in pursuit of new knowledge. "We have to build our knowledge and learn to manage our time effectively," she said.