

## INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES



The **School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS)** provides Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students with a broad-based education to expand their personal and professional boundaries, allowing them to become more versatile and competitive in today's job market. The School does so by providing a variety of novel and exciting modules to challenge conventional thinking and encourage creativity.

At IS, students are empowered to make their own module choices. After the first year, students choose general modules and the Innovation & Enterprise in Action module.

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Former students from our Enhancement Programme, Amanda Chang and Ellice Low beat university participants to clinch second and third places respectively in the University Tertiary Category of the Annual Japanese Speech Contest 2007. The contest, organised by the Embassy of Japan and the Japanese Association, was held at the Japanese Association on 8 July 2007.

In July 2007, a team of students from the School of Film & Media Studies clinched the Silver Service Learning Award from the National Youth Council for an awareness-building project entitled "The Life for Rent" Conference. The team was the only polytechnic team to clinch an award in the Junior College/Tertiary Institution Category. The Award recognises and rewards exemplary service-centric community projects initiated and implemented by young people. Only 11 out of 88 project submissions received an award in 2007. The project's citation can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov.sg/sl/projects.htm>.

IS and the School of Business & Accountancy also co-organised the second NP Ideas Buzz in conjunction with Student Entrepreneurship Day in May 2007. About 2,000 students from the Creativity & Applied Thinking Skills module participated in the yearly competition, which showcases students' creative talents. Mr V S Kumar, Vice President of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME), was the Guest of Honour. ASME supported the competitions with prizes and free ASME student memberships. Twelve teams were shortlisted by the panel of judges and encouraged to submit their ideas for the Tan Kah Kee Young Innovators Award.

### DIPLOMA PLUS PROGRAMMES

IS currently offers three Diploma Plus Certificate Programmes – in Business, Innovation & Enterprise, and Foreign Language – to second- and third-year students. These programmes are aimed at enhancing the value of a polytechnic education and improving Ngee Ann graduates' employability by adding relevant broad-based skills to the ones they attain via their core disciplines.

The recently-launched Diploma Plus Certificate in Business provides students with a basic understanding of the environment in which a business operates, and the management of a business and its critical resources. It helps to prepare non-business students for work in a business environment, as well as gives a head start to those who wish to pursue a business degree after graduating. This programme is open to second-year students.

The Diploma Plus Certificate in Innovation & Enterprise delivers business, communication and life skills modules to promote an entrepreneurial mindset. The programme is especially useful for graduates who go on to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. These graduates will receive credit exemptions for a Diploma in Innovation Management if they decide to pursue this additional diploma at the University.

The Diploma Plus Certificate in Foreign Languages (FL) is open to all Ngee Ann students, as an enhancement programme (i.e. outside of curriculum time). In this programme, students will take six modules and attain a level of competency that enables them to sit for foreign language examinations.

Currently, the Certificate in FL is only offered for French and Japanese. Students, who hold the Certificate in French, will be able to sit for DELF A1 and A2, which are diplomas issued by the French Ministry of Education. These qualifications are recognised globally as they certify a candidate's ability to communicate effectively across a wide spectrum of functions. Students holding a Certificate in Japanese will have a level of basic proficiency corresponding to the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) Level 4.

## FACILITIES & STAFF

The School of Interdisciplinary Studies is home to ISpark!, a student-centred studio area designed to spark students' creativity, and where students organise and attend workshops, seminars and exhibitions. Interesting features in the studio include Monkey Mirrors, which reflect different perspectives on the same thing; and the Living Wall, a creative use of wall space to project messages.

IS lecturers continue to deliver quality broad-based education while conducting independent research and development work. They also run communication and written skills courses for the general public and industry. In addition, they provide consultancy services for companies and government agencies including the Public Utilities Board (PUB) and the Central Singapore Community Development Council. IS lecturers have also conducted workshops and courses for clients such as Caterpillar Logistics (Enhanced Spoken & Written English Course) and Senoko Power (Essentials of Publishing a Newsletter Workshop), as well as for the public (Basic Pronunciation & Speech Training Course).

The School also designed and conducted a Writing Clinic from May to June 2007 for the inaugural cohort of students enrolled in Wheelock College's Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Educational Studies and Leadership Programme.

## COLLABORATIONS

As part of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, the School was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct training programmes for Cambodian and Laotian government officials. The School successfully conducted a course in Business Communications Skills for Cambodian government officials in June 2007, as well as four rounds of an Executive English Language & Communications Skills programme in Cambodia in 2006 and 2007. The School will also be involved in a similar training course for Laotian government officials in early 2008.

IS continues to maintain partnerships and collaborations with overseas universities for student and staff exchange programmes. For example, as part of an exchange programme with Osaka University, a Japanese Language Immersion Programme (from 28 September to 11 October 2007) and a Teaching Internship Programme (from 12 to 25 November 2007) were conducted.

Under the Japanese Language Immersion Programme, eight Enhancement Programme students who took Japanese attended 30 hours of language training at Osaka University. These students gained first-hand experience of the Japanese culture. In the teaching internship programme, three Japanese interns from Osaka University attended several workshops and teaching practice sessions in NP.

## COURSE MODULES / CLUSTERS

The School offers course modules grouped under the following clusters:

- Communication
- Life Skills
- Entrepreneurship
- Media & the Arts
- Science & Technology