Freshmen at NTU assured of 2-year stay on campus

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Freshmen who stay at halls of residence at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) usually have to compete with one another and take part in as many extra-curricular activities as possible to stay on campus for a coveted second year.

But the incoming batch of freshmen will have it much easier.

The freshmen enrolling in the 2017/18 academic year, which begins this July, will be guaranteed a room for two years, said NTU president Bertil Andersson at the annual State of the University address yesterday.

“A residential experience is part of the holistic education we offer here at NTU,” he said.

Since 2012, NTU has guaranteed every freshman the opportunity to live on campus for a year. It will be expanding the programme this August for students to stay on into their second year.

Professor Andersson said: “Demand (for campus living) has always been high and we have been doing a lot of construction in the last few years to meet the demand.”

In August, three new halls will open in Nanyang Crescent, providing accommodation for 1,820 more students.

Hall rooms are currently awarded to seniors based on a competitive entry-point system, where students take part in hall and university activities to earn points. There is usually a cut-off point to qualify for a room in the second year.

This system has deterred some seniors, such as third-year biological sciences student Koh Wei Yi, 22, from re-applying to stay on campus after their guaranteed stay during their freshman year. “I had other commitments outside and was not interested in joining activities just for the sake of getting points,” said Ms Koh, who stayed on campus only during her first year.

Last September, NTU opened three new halls which offered 2,100 more places to students.

With the upcoming halls, about 14,200 undergraduates will be able to live in 24 halls across the campus, fulfilling over 90 per cent of the current demand.

Typically, halls regularly organise their own sports, recreational, and social activities, such as Hall Day celebrations and inter-hall games.

Prof Andersson said: “Talk to any NTU graduate and they will tell you that living on campus is something not to be missed.”

Miss Tan Li Yun, 19, a first-year business student, agreed.

“One of the best things about hall life is playing sports or just hanging out with friends after classes,” she said.

One prospective student is already looking forward to hall life.

Siti Aisyah Daniyah Mahmod, 18, who visited the NTU campus during the school’s Open House two weeks ago, said: “The idea of staying at a university campus is really exciting.”

Associate provost for student life Kwok Kian Woon feels that the new halls will allow more students to “experience community life and learning beyond the curriculum”.

“They will enjoy a vibrant campus life, which is the hallmark of NTU’s holistic education,” he said.

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