

NTU programme to nurture students' non-academic talents

Wong Man Shun

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) launched its Student Talent Development Programme (STDP) on Aug 30 as part of its inaugural OneNTU Day.

The STDP aims to provide students with opportunities to nurture their non-academic strengths and talents in fields like technology, culture, environmental sustainability, entrepreneurship and healthcare.

Participants can look forward to curated learning opportunities like learning journeys, workshops and masterclasses led by industry experts and NTU faculty members, conversations with industry experts and mentorship.

The programme will last for about a year, after which participants are expected to implement "impact initiative" projects based on their fields that will benefit the NTU community and beyond.

The STDP is part of a wider movement across the nation to maximise students' potential. Education Minister Chan Chun Sing, the event's guest of honour, cited examples like the recent changes to the Gifted Education Programme and higher mother tongue languages announced at 2024's National Day Rally.

"One way of looking at success is to see what we have accomplished individually – academically or non-academically," he said at a panel discussion during the programme's launch.

"But I always encourage Singaporeans to look at success not just as our personal accomplishments but also our collective contributions for a more heartwarming society."

He added that Singapore had to focus on economic competitiveness to survive as a country in the past. Now, Singaporeans can pursue a diversity of areas like entrepreneurship, music or sports but they must always remain con-

scious of our vulnerabilities as a small country.

NTU deputy president and provost Ling San said the definition of success must be broadened, with success being seen as a collective effort towards shared growth and goals.

"It is important to help a person discover (his or her) talent. Beyond that, it is also important for a university or any educational institution to provide the kind of opportunities and environment for the individuals to develop that gift and talent further. That's the purpose of this programme," said Professor Ling.

He added: "Success in life is not one-dimensional. In order to achieve the objective of preparing students for life, we need to facilitate a mindset that we recognise what your talents are and help you develop them."

NTU undergraduate Sricharan Balasubramanian, 22, who is co-founder of social enterprise Jalan Journey, said the STDP would address one of the biggest challenges his company faced: recruiting people driven to serve the community. Jalan Journey runs interactive workshops to teach secondary school students about social issues.

The second-year Renaissance Engineering Programme student said: "The STDP will bring together a lot of like-minded people. This allows us to synergise. We are able to collaborate across the different tracks of the STDP and come up with solutions even bigger than what we have individually."

The application window for the STDP will close on Sept 1. All Year 1 to Year 4 NTU undergraduates can apply.

The STDP will have an inaugural cohort of up to 200 students, including 24 full- and mid-term NTU Talent Scholars who are required to be part of the programme.

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NTU undergraduate Sricharan Balasubramanian said the STDP would address one of the biggest challenges faced by the social enterprise he co-founded: recruiting people driven to serve the community. ST PHOTO: WONG MAN SHUN