THE UNION HERALD

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FOREWORD

I hope all of you had a good term break, and are ready to start the semester fresh. After the inconveniences caused by the construction work last year, the NTU community have returned to a spanking new lifestyle hub at the North Spine that features new F&B outlets, a supermarket, a 24-hour printing services shop and many more. The U-Shop even has a home to call its home now. In this issue, we take a look at some of these fresh offerings.

The first week of the semester also started with a bit of fun with Super Goal!, a human foosball event organised by the NTUSU Health Committee.

For some of our friends, they are returning to NTU after a semester abroad with their exchange universities. They sure have many new experiences to share, so we speak to two students who went to Prague and New York (see story on Pages 05 & 06).

As we welcome February, — which undoubtedly is the season of love with Valentine’s Day around the corner — my team and I would like to share your love stories. Found a significant other on campus? Love your hallmates like they are your own siblings? If you have a personal story to tell, do refer to The Back Page on how you can spread the love around.

As usual, suggestions and comments about this issue are always welcome at su-publications@e.ntu.edu.sg

Till next time,
Tan Li Fang, Jolin
Chief Editor
NORTH SPINE: A FRESH NEW LOOK

By Tiong Linshan

Thanks to months of construction work last year, students were welcomed to a revamped North Spine as they returned to campus after the term break.

The new offerings are aplenty, ranging from food and beverage (F&B) outlets — great for alleviating those hunger pangs — to a 24-hour print store. Truly looking to be a mini lifestyle hub for the NTU community as a one-stop destination for everyone’s needs, there is also a Korean hair salon promising busy students 10-minute haircuts, as well as a Buzz convenience store for those who need a quick grab while on the go.

The U-Shop (see story on Page 03) next to OCBC Frank outlet sells varsity merchandise, such as tee-shirts, hoodies and tote bags.

Students who used to lament the fact that the only supermarket on campus was Giant at Hall 2 could not be happier with the opening of Prime Supermarket.

Zhang Zheyuan, a first-year student at the Nanyang Business School, said: “I think it’s awesome. They do free grocery deliveries above S$30 too, which is really convenient.”

Maritime Studies freshman and Hall 16 resident Wilfred Wong, agreed, saying that the new supermarket is a convenient “one-stop shop” for him to purchase daily necessities.

The new lifestyle hub also boasts a generous selection of F&B joints. Paik’s Bibim — which serves Bibimbap, a signature Korean mixed rice dish — was one of the first to roll up its shutters last semester.

Other F&B joints at the lifestyle hub include Dunkin’ Donuts, The Sandwich Guys, Each A Cup, a Japanese Udon noodle bar, Plus39 gelato bar, as well as Italian fast food restaurant Mia Pizza & Pasta Express.

Students agreed that the new choices make dining in NTU more interesting. “The bibimbap shop gives me and my friends an alternative option to the local cuisine that is available in the respective canteens and the fast food chains,” said Nabil Ismail, a Year-2 Sociology student.

However, the new hub has some caveats — namely the price points of certain food outlets, as well as the lack of variety in healthy food choices. Xenia Low, a first-year Psychology student, said that, The Soup Spoon, while good, “should have student discounts for its NTU outlet”.

Year-1 Chemistry student Jamie Sim said: “It’s good that North Spine now presents some healthy options, but I would like a wider variety of healthier choices.”

Besides food, the North Spine houses a local gift shop chain Mini Toons, with an interesting concept displayed outside their store. Students who wish to provide a product or service to fellow NTU students can rent a space from Mini Toons. The white shelves outside serve as mini pop-up shops for budding entrepreneurs.

“I think the new North Spine is really great — from its location, which is pretty central, to the wide range of shops that cater to different needs. I like that the school is gradually building more facilities that make it much more convenient for those who stay on campus,” said Fiona Mei Robinson, a first-year Communications student.
With the various new offerings at the North Spine, NTU students now have another go-to place for their fix of NTU merchandise.

The U-Shop was started by the NTUSU with the aim of contributing to the Students’ Fund, a bursary for needy students in NTU. Seniors would remember the humble beginnings of the U-Shop — which until last semester was just a counter at the SAC. However, with the North Spine receiving a new facelift, committee members of the U-Shop saw the opportunity to take their initiative one step further. Not only could the U-Shop be more than just a retail store selling NTU tee shirts, there was the potential for it to be a greater stepping stone in funding students, faculties, clubs and societies in NTU.

Keeping in mind the NTUSU’s motto of Voice, Service and Vibrancy, the U-Shop began developing its own vision statement. Said Ng Yi Xin, Janis, Chairperson of the U-Shop committee: “The U-Shop aims to be the touchpoint that brings together the various NTU communities that embodies the NTU spirit. Our mission is to provide students, faculty and staff with essential, desired and quality products and services that serves and reflects spirit of the NTU community.”

“This vision will guide U-Shop in its initiatives. We hope to work with the different communities in NTU to achieve this goal.”

Some of the NTU merchandise for sale at the U-Shop includes: Tee shirts (S$15), hoodies (S$27.50), singlets (S$12.50), tote bags (S$12.50) and shoe bags (S$15). NTU students get to enjoy a 20 percent discount on U-Shop designed merchandises.

With feedback from customers, Janis revealed that her committee is in the midst of looking at a wider variety of items for sale, such as notebooks, running shorts, decals, stickers and lanyards. Laptop sleeves and files are also some other university essentials in the pipeline.

The Year-3 Nanyang Business School student added that, although “U-Shop just began its operations and everything is in its infancy ... but moving forward, we hope that this aspirational goal will become a reality”.

A BIGGER, BETTER U-SHOP

Flaunt your NTU pride with latest merchandise offerings
The first week of the semester saw the NTUSU Health Committee organising the university’s first-ever inflatable human foosball event.

On January 15, teams of six came together to take part in Super Goal! held at the Nanyang Auditorium.

Human foosball is a life-size version of the table top soccer game that we are all familiar with. Participants had to stand in alternate rows, moving from side to side to kick the ball that moves around the “field”. It was a fun afternoon of kicking around and grappling with the game techniques; laughter and loud cheers could be heard echoing from the event venue.

Concurrently, there was a booth at the Linkway offering health checks and services, such as chiropractors consultation on the neuromusculoskeletal system.

Photos by NTUSU Photography Team
TALES OF FOREIGN LANDS
We talk to two students who have recently returned from their exchange programmes

By Jolin Tan

What modules did you take?
Kenzo: I took seven modules during my exchange. Steel design structure, reinforced concrete, foundation of structure, transportation engineering, environmental engineering, building technology and management, as well as basis of bridge design.
Hemant: The University of Rochester offers a wide variety of interesting and unique history modules that take a very interdisciplinary approach to the subject, and not just the conventional take on history. The modules included the likes of History of Film and The History of Corruption.

How did you pick the destination country of your exchange?
Kenzo: I chose Prague because it’s a beautiful place and it’s relatively cheaper to stay there. Besides, the school offers the courses that I wanted to sign up for.
Hemant: New York has always been one of my favourite places to go to so it was an obvious choice to make. This, plus the opportunity to explore the East Coast that has some of the most historic and famous cities in America, was an opportunity of a lifetime.

Tell us about the culture/people of the place you visited.
Kenzo: The people in Czech Republic are quite friendly, despite the communication barrier (the people do not speak English). Unlike Singaporeans, people in Czech Republic do not spend their free time whipping out smartphones to play games or surf the Internet. The people there enjoy drinking beer, and it is common to see customers ordering beers even during breakfast and lunch.
Hemant: American culture would be one that is pretty familiar to everyone. From TV shows such as “Friends” and “How I met Your Mother”, we get a pretty good idea of how open and friendly people in that part of the world are. Small talk is very important there. People usually prefer small talk over awkward silence and so it’s easy to strike up a conversation with almost anyone.

Share an interesting place/tourist spot.
Kenzo: I visited the Astronomical Clock in Prague, the only oldest astronomical clock in the world that is still working.
Hemant: One of the most interesting spots I visited would be the High Line in New York City. It is a 2.4km-long stretch of park that was converted from old train tracks that run through the city. It was interesting to see a park perched above the roads of New York that wounded through the city and even through some buildings. Although it isn’t as famous as the other notable green attraction in the city, it stands out for how it shows the importance of conservation in a city that progresses so quickly.

Is their education system similar/different to Singapore? How so?
Kenzo: The education system in Prague is different compared to Singapore. Most of the teachers there use blackboard and chalks during lessons.
Hemant: A notable difference in their education system would be how they give much focus to discussion and class participation. Most lectures and lessons are heavily focused on discussions with almost everyone in the class actively participating. Even though assignments and exams are present, it is obvious the system there focuses more on learning than studying.

Any advice for people considering to go for exchange or embarking on their exchange journey?
Kenzo: Learn the language and embrace the culture.
Hemant: Don’t treat it like a vacation! Even though it is kinda like one. What I mean by that is, exchange gives you a chance to really stay and immerse yourself in cities and its culture. If you treat it just like a holiday, you might lose out on the chance to fully experience. So when you spend time to visit the tourist sites, also take time to go off the track and visit places that tourists wouldn’t normally go to and get to know the locals.

What’s the biggest lesson you have learnt from your trip?
Kenzo: I have learnt to appreciate Singapore better after my exchange trip. Singapore is safe and clean. Remember to be alert and always look out for your belongings when travelling. I was almost pickpocketed during my stay in Prague.
Hemant: One of the biggest lessons I have learnt to appreciate the things I have in Singapore more. Being away really teaches you to appreciate everyone and everything you so easily take for granted. Exchange really makes you realise how there’s so much you should be thankful for, that people elsewhere might never get the chance to have.
SNAPSHOTS

Kenzo’s

Hemant’s

Photos courtesy: Kenzo Wong & Hemant Kumar
Planning for life after University days
Brought to you by AIA Singapore

Life in school may be a bed of roses for many as you do not need to worry about supporting your parents, paying the monthly household bills or raising a family – simply because you are not earning an income. However, as your graduation day draws near, the thought of taking on the responsibility seems daunting, isn’t it? You start to think about earning an income.

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In fact, start as early as you can for a good headstart.

Set financial goals
- Determine the financial goals that you would like to achieve by the end of your university days. For example, you can aim to have $X in your bank account to tide you over for a period of three to six months while job hunting.
- Decide how much you need to put aside every month to achieve your goals. Rule of thumb: do not spend every single cent of your monthly allowances.
- Take note to include inflation rate into your calculation.
- Review every six months to ensure you are on track.

Start a disciplined savings and/or investment plan
- After you have set your financial goals, start a disciplined savings plan.
- Set up a separate dedicated bank account to save up for future use. You can set a standing instruction in your current bank account to auto transfer a fixed sum to your dedicated savings account every month.
- Another way to achieve your goal is via an investment-linked plan, where you ride on the potential upside of your investment-linked funds to accumulate returns – a long term investment horizon is required.

Consider getting basic protection plans
- With any financial planning, it is advisable to start small to cultivate the habit and thereafter build on it to create a more robust plan. This is especially so if you have not had any financial plan. Do speak to an insurance advisor if you need help to get started as he/she will be able to review your financial needs, and thereafter advise and recommend plans to help you meet your financial goals.
- Accidents and illnesses strike without warning. Take care of your protection needs so that you are not financially strapped should the unfortunate happen. Generally, you can purchase a personal accident plan at an affordable premium.
- If you have a CPF account, consider purchasing a hospitalisation and surgical plan payable via Medisave.

With your income, you can consider increasing your protection coverage to ensure that you and your loved ones are not in financial distress should an accident or illness strike. This is especially important if you are planning to get married and start a family too.

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- Consider getting insurance plans that provide coverage for death, total and permanent disability and critical illnesses.
- If you already have a hospitalisation and surgical plan paid via Medisave, you can consider upgrading the plan for more comprehensive coverage.
- Disability Income plan is also important which can protect your income should you suffer a disability and unable to work.

Increase monthly amount that you put into the savings and/or investment plan that you started during your university days
- As a rule of thumb, you should save at least 10% of your monthly income and as usual set a standing instruction to auto transfer it to your dedicated savings account.
- When you receive bonus, you can park more to your savings or channel it to your investment-linked plan to potentially boost the returns. Investment-linked plans, while giving you a potential return, may also provide you with valuable insurance protection.

During University

Good financial planning should start before you graduate. In fact, start as early as you can for a good headstart.

Set financial goals
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Review financial goals
- Review the financial goals that you set earlier to include your new priorities.
- Consider having long-term, medium-term and short-term goals to meet your needs such as saving up for property, a car or for emergency use.

Increase protection coverage
- With your income, you can consider increasing your protection coverage to ensure that you and your loved ones are not in financial distress should an accident or illness strike. This is especially important if you are planning to get married and start a family too.
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Kopi Talk with Minister Chan

As the semester came to an end last year, NTU students had the opportunity to be “Up Close and Personal” with Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office on Nov 13. Titled “Challenges and Opportunities in the Eyes of the Next Generation”, the two-hour session was meant to serve as a prologue to Ministerial Forum 2016. The key talking point was on how youths could mitigate challenges and risks, and maximise opportunities for themselves. Mr Chan also spoke on wide-ranging topics, including Singapore’s ageing population, overseas community involvement projects and the future economy. Photos by NTUSU Photography Team
STAND A CHANCE TO WIN
ONE OF TWO STARBUCKS CARDS with S$30 value EACH!

♥ Found love while studying in NTU? Love your roomie like your sibling? Have a clique of friends you really adore? Doing something special for your special someone this Valentine’s Day? Share the love with us! ♥
♥ Tell us how you met, how much these people mean to you and we will feature your stories in the next issue of The Union Herald! A picture speaks a thousand words, so remember to include some. ♥
♥ Submissions can be made to su-publications@e.ntu.edu.sg by February 14 ♥

Winners will be chosen based on quality and creativity of submissions. All judges’ decisions are final.

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