



insight

by **ntusu**
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Get Ready To Be Hall-Rified

The Chilling Tales Of Horror Roommates

23:59 Living Life On The Edge

The "How-To" Guide To Fight Procrastination

OK Boomer

Our "Strawberry Generation"

The Ones Who "Protecc"

Students Who Defend Our Nation

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



**Bryan Michael
Chiew**

Dear Union Members,

I hope you find the third edition of U-Insight a pleasurable read that sheds light on student perspectives and views beyond academia. Our team has worked hard to curate a series of stories and narratives – designed as an escape from our classrooms.

We hope that your journey through these pages will help you understand the key objectives that your elected student leaders have embarked upon in areas such as empowerment, environmental sustainability, and mental health. Many of these initiatives, improvements and milestones in Semester 1 have also been reflected in this issue.

Through all these, we consistently endeavour to communicate these improvements and milestones to you, our members, as we work tirelessly beyond the scenes. After all, our goals are the same as yours: to create a safe, seamless and pleasant student experience for everyone.

And this is only the beginning. With many more projects lined up for students, by students, we are excited to embark on this journey with you in working towards a bigger, better and more beautiful NTU experience.

Yours,
Bryan Michael Chiew
29th NTUSU President

HEAD EDITOR'S NOTE



Rachel Chan

"This year is really about, like the year of just realising stuff, and everyone around me, we're just realising things" – Kylie Jenner

Blasé and meme-worthy that quote may be, but it was the first thing that hazily swept into my mind as my team and I sat down to think about what should encapsulate this third issue of U-Insight. To put a nicer, more creative ring to it, we want to focus on the idea of coming of age – that is, from young adult to university student, and vice versa.

We can ponder, what's the role of a university student? For most, probably to get good grades or attain your degree after being stuck in a paper chase for so long. Whereas as young adult, our roles can be as a brother, a daughter, a friend etc. Almost too often, however, both roles can be in arms with each other as we are too caught up with everything. The distinction between school and social life ceases to exist.

As you grasp this magazine and flip through its pages, we at U-Insight hope that the stories you will read serves as a food for thought that among the still and clatter of life, to always step back, take a breather and look around us; to remind yourself about the things that you profoundly care about, and that we are more than the sum of our parts.

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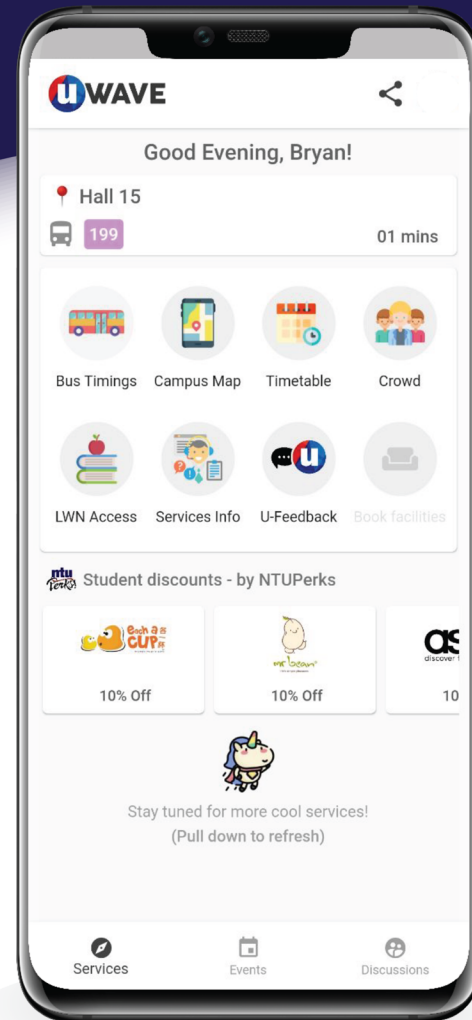
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MY COLLEGE BUCKET LIST

Three things to accomplish in NTU, written by an international student.

Text: Banerjee Preksha | Design: Lim Yi Xun



Dr. Seuss once said, "If you never did, you should. New things are fun, and fun is good." I never would have expected the huge culture shock I was in for when I left the comfort of my home in Karnataka, India and arrived at NTU for the first time exactly one and a half years ago. The people, the food, the rules, the lifestyle, it was totally different! At that time, the concept of change seemed extremely daunting to me. For one, I was used to eating dinner extremely late at night, around 9:00 pm. On the first night here at NTU, by the time I came down to the canteen, every stall was closed! Since then, I have taken to eating earlier.

I soon set out to explore and adapt. In the process, I found that it can be quite an invigorating task in itself. Thus, I started by making a small checklist of things I'd like to try out during my time in NTU and would recommend to any student fresh off the boat here in Singapore.

Try the mala in every single canteen at NTU, at least once, and nothing below medium spice level.



Initially, I always stuck to my comfort zone when it came to food, which manifested itself as the Indian stall in the Tamarind hall canteen. But slowly, throughout the course of my first semester, I tried and explored food which I had never consumed in all my previous 18 years of life. I was amazed when I had the highly popular mala dish for the first time, I had never tasted anything quite like it before - it was a dish that was both spicy and numbing. As someone with a huge sweet tooth, I have an extremely low tolerance for spice. It might not have been to my taste, but I was glad to have tried it.

Taking at least one unconventional UE mod in NTU.



The degree I am pursuing here is Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE). However, that is not the only area wherein my passion lies. I love to write poetry, read horror mystery novels, act, play the piano and many other activities. As such, it was highly fortunate that NTU allows students to take so many electives in addition to the core courses. I feel this flexibility contributes towards my holistic development as an individual. From the thought-provoking psychology module on death, to the fascinating forensic science module, they're alternatives worth exploring for every student here.

Perfecting my "coffee-ordering" skills, and trying every sort of unconventional drink, including bubble tea, by the end of these 4 years.



One of the things I found hardest upon my arrival at NTU was the process of ordering coffee. My first experience trying to order coffee was hilarious, because I somehow ended up with something entirely different from what I had in mind! But I have advanced miles and miles ahead since then, I finally know the difference between Kopi-O and Kopi-C and the many other variations. One of the many amazing things I have also gotten to try here is bubble tea, which is sugary heaven for a sweet-toothed person like me. The different kinds of bubble tea as well as the variety of toppings means you can customise the order to your liking - which I definitely exploited!

Last but not least, I would like to say that nervous butterflies always seem to appear whenever we try out new things with new people, but the best thing to do then is to just embrace the new changes with a smile and adopt a broad outlook. University is a formative time for many of us, and the experiences made here can define the individuals we all become later.

GET READY TO BE HALL-RI-FIED

We've compiled chilling tales starring roommates and neighbours that are so horrific – you wouldn't wish them on your worst enemy.

Text: Jonathan Chew | Design: Gladys Ow Yong

STAINED WITH DISBELIEF

"It's one thing to be comfortable with your flatmates. However, complete strangers should at least uphold some boundaries. Not my flatmates on exchange though.

When we first moved into the shared dorm, I kindly equipped the washroom with toilet rolls. But after a while, I noticed that none of them were contributing the same way. I had only used the roll thrice before I found the entire roll empty. None of them were willing to go out and buy additional rolls themselves, so I got fed up and stopped providing the toilet rolls.

Little did I know that one of my flatmates, being too cheap to get her own toilet rolls, would decide to clean herself off in the sink after doing her big business. She even left the door open and waved at me nonchalantly when I made eye contact with her! As for my other flatmate, she decided to wash herself off in the bathtub – while she was on her period. You can still see the stain in it today."

A STICKY SITUATION

"Every month, one of the girls on my floor terrorises the rest of us by sticking her used pads (with period blood still on it) everywhere in the toilet. Nowhere was spared: doors, on top of the sanitary bins, walls and even on the floor. Some of us have tried putting up signs and notices in the toilets telling her to stop, but to no avail."

UNDERCOVER ACTIVITIES

"After clubbing on a Friday night with my girlfriend, we returned back to NTU to stay the night in hall. My girlfriend followed me to my room to retrieve some of her belongings that she had left there previously. However, when we opened the door, my roommate was on his own bed and covered his body with a blanket that would not stop moving. We realised what was happening the moment we looked at each other. I immediately closed the door and never talked about that particular incident with my roommate ever again. Today, I always make sure to knock before entering my room to prevent similar things from happening again."

ALL 'RAT' REMAINS (LITERALLY)

"Just like other halls in NTU, my hall houses a really cute black cat who loves to roam around the blocks and pay tiny visits to the residents' rooms once in a while. All was good, until halfway through the semester when a rat started to rummage through a garbage bin near my room every night, which was pretty disgusting. My roommate and I were constantly on the lookout in case the rat ran into our room, but the hall cat quelled our worries when it went feral on the rat and left a surprise outside our door – the rat's decapitated and mangled body all over our floor and slippers. We had to dispose of the carcass and wash the blood off our things, but it was an interesting experience nonetheless."

FLOODED WITH DESPAIR

"My roommate and I were staying in one of the halls during the Freshmen Orientation Programme. We returned late one night after preparations for the next day, and we were preparing to shower in the shared toilet, along with the people from the adjacent room sharing the same toilet. However, the people from the adjacent room started banging on the wall, as if to say we had been really noisy even though we were not talking at all. When the banging stopped, we thought it was over. We were about to use the toilet when the same person started to flood our room through the gap below the toilet door by using the hose in the toilet. We were really worried about whether the other person was in the right state of mind, so we requested for a change of room immediately before complaining to the hall office the next day."



LIVING LIFE ON THE EDGE

A last-minute guide to beat the clock.

Text: Shermaine Lim | Design: Lim Yi Xun

If there's one national symbol that can unite most students, it's the number 23:59 and our dedication to submit our assignments exactly at that time.

What makes us hold back on completing those pesky assignments only to experience the wrath of those 4 digits on the rim of our 14th cup of coffee and the dulling sag of our eyelids? We know it as procrastination. It's time we understand why we do it.

Immediate Gratification

When we think about immediate gratification, we often refer to the 'marshmallow test'. A child is given a single marshmallow, and will be rewarded with one more if the child is able to resist eating it, from the time it takes for the tester to leave the room and come back.

More often than not, the marshmallow will disappear in the time the tester takes to leave the room. This is known as immediate gratification. By choosing to eat the marshmallow instead of waiting, the child discards the future benefit of receiving a greater reward in favour of helping themselves immediately to that happy, bouncy cloud of sugar.

The same principle applies to our dedication to wait out deadlines. Procrastination manifests as a technique that protects the self from the stress of enduring a task that we do not look forward to. We protect ourselves from the stress of having to endure an assignment by choosing to do more immediate and satisfying tasks (like watching six episodes of Marie Kondo and then reorganising your dish rack alphabetically).

A lack of self-compassion

That constant delay in finishing your assignments may be indicative of other hidden factors. A research paper by Fuschia M Sirois in 2014 indicates that one's level of self-compassion may act as a mediator between procrastination and stress. Self-compassion refers to the ability to reduce one's internal negative state by being kind towards yourself when things go wrong.

A lower level of self-compassion, it causes one to blame oneself when one procrastinates, leading to a cycle of rumination. This hinders the work progress as the person is unable to move ahead to complete the task, which further prolongs the completion of the task until the dreaded deadline. So, what does this mean for us?

I'm sure that many of us find it easy to beat ourselves up over our inability to stop procrastinating. We constantly find fault in ourselves when we are unable to overcome our own mental barriers. Turns out, this may be the reason why! The time we take to do our assignments becomes time taken not being kind to ourselves, which then leads to more procrastination, which then leads to more self-blame, which then leads to more procrastination, which then... I think you know where this is going.



Mindfulness Tips You Can Start To Apply To Your Life

Recognise those feelings

We now know that self-compassion plays a pretty big role in assignment punctuality, and that understanding and acknowledging your negative feelings is the first step to eradicating them.

One good step to developing self-compassion is to look towards mindfulness practices.

1. Redirect

According to HelpGuide, sideways is the best way. When you find yourself criticising yourself or distracted from a current task, do not fight it head-on by blaming yourself. Slowly try to redirect these thoughts and try to understand where you are and where your mind has gone to. If you can understand that you are currently engaging in negative emotional practices that are unhelpful to you, you can slowly lead yourself back to the present, and this allows you to stay on track.

2. Meditation

Meditation is a process of developing your concentration and focusing your attention on current sensations. A technique that HelpGuide introduces is to sit quietly and focus on your breathing. If negative thoughts arise during this process, do not focus or ruminate on them, but acknowledge them and let go. Focusing on your current bodily sensations, such as the temperature and your current emotions helps you to center yourself in the present.

3. It's the little things

Another step we may take, one listed by Forbes Coaches Council, is to identify a positive outcome that comes from performing a task on time. By doing this, you focus on getting something beneficial and building your self-esteem through your productivity. For instance – finished that research in the week you receive the assignment? You'll spend less time stressing about your topic. Having a complete assignment a week before the deadline? You can take a break for a day or two.

Delayed Gratification

Now that we understand how immediate gratification affects us, it's time to start developing delayed gratification. The first step to doing this is to understand what you value and what you want to achieve.

1. Identify your values

Write down a list of what you value. Try to focus on the tangible aspects. If your goal in life is to be happy, try to figure out what tangible aspects lead to this outcome. For example, it can be getting good grades or doing things you enjoy. Once you identify these goals, you have something to work towards. Now, the immediate satisfaction of doing something unrelated to your assignment can be countered by another tangible, long-term goal that you can foresee.

2. Calendar time

Next, you need to work towards creating a schedule for yourself. Break your work into small chunks and assign a date and time that you will do these tasks. Of course, there is always the risk of prolonging your deadlines, since you are the one setting them. One tip that always works for me is to treat my deadlines like real deadlines that contribute to your grades. I lump all my deadlines, whether self-appointed or module-assigned, together. This prevents me from giving myself excuses.

3. Treat yourself

Lastly, remember to actively reward yourself for your dedication after you are done. No matter how many tips we can find to avoid procrastination, initiation is always the hardest part. Getting through those stages is challenging – you deserve to be rewarded. You've finished that tough assignment, now watch that new series on Netflix. Go for a much-needed shopping spree. Eat your chocolate rainbow marshmallow.



THE PERILS OF PERFECTION

Often portrayed as a positive trait or a clever response to the “greatest weakness” question during interviews, perfectionism might actually be counterproductive.

Text: Cheryl Lim | Design: Lim Yi Xun

Before writing this article, I stared at my laptop for minutes, more specifically at the countless open tabs, which all contained crucial information that I absolutely had to include in this feature. I’m familiar with this process: I spend way too long on assignments, re-reading them for the nth time when I’m aware that I’m pretty much done and it’s time to finally shut down my laptop and sleep, but I still struggle with putting it to rest, knowing that I still have hours for further revision before the deadline. This makes me a true-blue perfectionist, but I’m unsure whether this is something I should pride myself on.

The psychology of perfectionism is rather complex. It is a personality trait characterised by efforts to be flawless, unrealistically high standards, and excessively critical attitudes, about oneself and others. Perfectionists strive to produce flawless work and we also have higher levels of motivation and conscientiousness than non-perfectionists.

However, it’s also an abstraction and an impossibility in reality. Though often portrayed as a positive trait or a clever response to the “greatest weakness” question during interviews, when we fall into the perfectionism trap, we face the same roadblocks: inflexibility and paradoxically, a major hit to productivity.

As perfectionists spend more time staring at the weeds than assessing the forest, we tend to get lost in the details instead of actually completing it. But we’re almost blinded to all of these, especially when unrealistic expectations loom over us until we’re stuck, until our inner voice berates us for procrastinating or not knowing how to start – simply because it’s an all-or-nothing mindset; it’s either perfect or a total failure. Not only is this mentally draining, we’re also punitive in our self-evaluations, deeming our self-worth as contingent on performing perfectly.

Gordon Flett and Paul Hewitt, two researchers on the topic, found that perfectionism manifests itself in three interrelated domains: self-oriented perfectionism, or imposing an unrealistic desire to be perfect on oneself, other-oriented perfectionism, or imposing unrealistic standards of perfection on others, and socially-prescribed perfectionism, or perceiving unrealistic expectations of perfection from others.

A double-edged sword, perfectionism can be a positive force – think professional athletes, who train for higher levels of competition. In well-adjusted perfectionism, one who doesn’t get the gold is able to forget his setback and try again. In maladaptive perfectionism, however, one creates archives of all his failures and revisits them constantly. As such, research shows that perfectionistic tendencies predict issues like depression, anxiety and stress, especially among students and millennials.

We’re part of a generation that’s been conditioned to seek out metrics and compare ourselves with others. Oftentimes, we strive for perfection because we feel that it’s a

prerequisite for success. However, there’s a difference between striving for excellence and demanding perfection, since the latter often verges on self-destruction, handicapping our performance ahead of time.

The pursuit of perfection is a vicious cycle and because it’s impossible to attain perfection, a fruitless one. As Sheryl Sandberg says, “Done is really better than perfect.” When you focus on completing your tasks instead of being the best, you start to fully value your hard work and embrace your abilities, rather than the end goal.

WARNING MESSAGE

Dealing with your inner critic can be hard, but here’s what you can (try to) do.

1. Learn to recognise perfectionism

Self-awareness is a vital first step in controlling perfectionism. If you’re unsure, ask yourself: do I feel frustrated or anxious while trying to meet my own standards? Do they get in my own way, making it difficult to meet deadlines, trust others, or do anything spontaneously?

2. Rechannel your strengths

If it’s impossible for you to aim lower, rechanneling your strengths will allow you see the bigger picture and take some pressure off yourself.

3. Maximise the impact of your work

Truth is that we can never be perfect, but what we can do is to concentrate on what’s truly important. This helps with the cycle of rumination.

4. Create a checklist for your tasks

Perfectionists are always going to want to keep working on a given assignment. But the end result is rarely satisfying. Creating a checklist will help you satisfy your need for competition.

CLOSE

LUNCH ON THE GO

There's no such thing as a free lunch, but you sure can freely pack your lunch.

Written by: Zoe Zeng | Designed by: Jena Ong

Why do you bother packing your own lunch? As a student who prepares my own lunches twice a week, this is the question I face most often whenever I choose to bring a packed lunch to school. After all, isn't it inconvenient and counterproductive to make and pack your own lunch when a wide variety of F&B options are available on campus? Heres why I choose to pack my own lunch!

PORTION CONTROL

If your New Year's resolution was to start eating healthier, making your own meals can help greatly. Not only do you know exactly what goes into it (yay for picky eaters!), you can actively pick and choose healthier alternatives for the standard ingredients found in foodcourt dishes.

SUSTAINABILITY

There's more to doing your part to conserve the environment than simply avoiding the use of plastic straws. Why not challenge yourself by ceasing the use of takeaway containers entirely? By packing your own school lunches, you'll no longer depend on the daily usage of non-biodegradable styrofoam and plastic packaging.

IT'S FUSS FREE!

Putting in the time and effort to prepare your meal ahead of time means not having to decide what you want to eat, and being able to skip the excruciating queues at the food courts. Your friends will certainly be envious when they get back to see you already digging in!



Stir-fried teriyaki chicken and bok choy over steamed rice



Prep: 10 mins
Cook: 10 mins
Ready: 20 mins

Ingredients (1 serving):

1 chicken fillet (can be replaced with your favourite cut)
1/2 cup of fresh bok choy
Black sesame seeds
1 tablespoon cooking oil
2 tablespoons teriyaki sauce
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 cup rice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup of mushrooms



1. Begin by steaming the rice.
2. Meanwhile, cut the chicken fillet into bite-sized pieces and marinate in teriyaki sauce for 5-10 mins.
3. In a saucepan, stir-fry bok choy and mushrooms with cooking oil for approximately 2-3 mins.
4. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
5. Adding the chicken to the pan, cook for around 3 mins on each side or until meat is browned.
6. Serve over steamed rice with a drizzle of teriyaki sauce and garnish with black sesame seeds.

Oven-baked salmon with grilled veggies

Ingredients (2 servings):

3 medium potatoes
1/2 medium zucchini
1 salmon fillet (can be replaced with your preferred fish)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon ground black pepper



Prep: 10 mins
Cook: 35 mins
Ready: 45 mins



1. Peel the potatoes. Cut the potatoes and zucchini into bite-sized pieces. toss in olive oil, salt and pepper.
2. Halve the salmon fillet. Rub salt and pepper onto each piece.
3. On an oven-safe plate or tray, put the fish skin-side down and arrange the vegetables to lie flat. Bake at 180°C for 25 mins.
4. Set aside vegetables. Flip fish over and bake for another 10 mins at 200°C.

Tomato pasta with broccoli and bacon bits

Ingredients (1 serving):

1 cup dried pasta
1 medium broccoli
3-5 bacon strips
1 tablespoon salt
Pasta sauce
Grated cheese



Prep: 5 mins
Cook: 20 mins
Ready: 25 mins



1. Add salt and pasta to a pot of boiling water. Cook to al dente (approximately 10 mins).
2. Cut the broccoli and bacon into bite-sized pieces. Adding the bacon to a saucepan, cook for around 3-5 mins or until crisp.
3. Strain pasta. Add the pasta, broccoli and pasta sauce to the pan. Mix evenly on low heat for 3-5 mins.
4. Adjust the thickness of the sauce by adding water to the pan. Top with cheese before serving.

NTUSU COUNCIL STRUCTURE



Bryan Michael Chiew Sen
President

As the head of the Executive Committee, the President lays the strategic direction and oversees the executive decisions of the Union.



Vinod Segar
Vice-President (Student Activities)

Oversees and aligns flagship projects of Union according to NTUSU's mission and vision.



Cheng Si Min
Vice-President (Corporate Communications)

Oversees the entire communication processes of the Union to ensure consistent branding and manages relations between the Union and the student body.



Tong Kai Ting
Honorary General Secretary

Promotes internal governance of Union and oversees the operations and research arm of the Union.



Liew Yew Meng Royston
Honorary Financial Secretary

Strategises for the prudent use of Union funds and oversees the corporate and financial arm of the Union.



Juliet Tan
Welfare Executive (Student Life)

Promotes the welfare of students through projects such as campus transportation, orientation, hall allocation schemes and healthcare.



Sheena Lee Jia En
Welfare Executive (Development)

The WED works to enhance students' welfare by campaigning for a holistic, student-centric academic experience in NTU.



Glen Tang Jun Hao
Human Resource Executive

Oversees matters pertaining to the human resource policies of the Union.



Cheah Guan Ying
Special Projects Executive

Organises ad-hoc projects to engage students during the semester.



Yap Ying Qian
Corporate Communications Executive (Branding)

Oversees all branding strategies and execution processes of the Union through the maximising of design and media collaterals.



Lee Jie Si (Jane)
Operations Executive

Manage assets and oversees the facility operations of the Union.



Tilden Tan Jun Leong
Finance Executive

Responsible for the financial claims and reimbursements on expenses related to the Union.



Bruce Loke
Student Life Executive (Orientation)

The SLED oversees the relationship between students and the University administration in all matters pertaining to orientation.



Lim Gia Lim
Information & Research Executive

Oversees the research and data arm of the Union to support policy formulations.



Amann Kaur
Integration Executive

Responsible for promoting cultural awareness of NTU's diversity and advocating an inclusive, holistic student experience for local and international students.



Vicki Sim Wen Qi
Student Engagement Executive

Responsible for building the communication channel between the student body and the Union to foster a spirit of community and unity.



Cheryl Lim Yan Shan
Corporate Communications Executive (Relations)

Oversees the two-way relationship of the Union and the student population through feedback platforms and the Union's editorial publication, U-Insight.



Ng Li Xuan
Business Projects Executive

Responsible for the business arm of the Union and promotes innovation of new businesses to support the Union.



Hwang Yong Jie Terence
Orientation Associate Executive

Supports the Orientation Executive in executing duties, as well as helming the position of UOC chairperson.



Ng Kaitlin Calista
Corporate Liaison Executive

Responsible for engaging corporate partners and securing partnerships to provide welfare for the students.



ACADEMIC CONSTITUENT CLUBS

ABC
Lee Wei Jun, Javier

ADM
Cheng Boon Ruan (Clara)

ASE
Xaiver Sim Le Jing

CEE
Muhammad Firdaus Bin Kamsani

EEE
Kan Siew Yin, Debbie

CI
Tang Wei Quan (Eugene)

MSE
Wong Jia Mian

MAE
Pu Wen Wei

SBS
Lim Kai Yi (Eldeen)

SCBE
Delfina Paulin

SPMS
Wong Wei Xiang, Alvin

SSS
Hashen Singh Dhillon

SMS
Ashwin s/o Singaram

SCSE
Park Kunyoung

SOH / Council Chair
Jared Tan

TTC
Goh Cheng Ze (Tristan)

NON-ACADEMIC CONSTITUENT CLUBS

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES CLUB (CAC)
President
Liu Bingyu

Vice-President
Benedict Teo Wei Hwa

WELFARE SERVICES CLUB (WSC)
President
Iswari Joyce Kaliappan

Vice-President
Smeetha Nair

SPORTS CLUB
President
Howard Foo

Vice-President
Keoni Sean Foo

As the legislative branch of the Union, the NTUSU Council makes decisions relating to the entire student population in NTU. It consists of the Executive Committee (Exco) and representatives of the Constituent Clubs.

According to the Union Constitution, the Union Executive Committee is the recognised means of communication between the students and the university.

The Constituent Clubs consist of the Academic Constituent Clubs (ACCs) and Non-Academic Constituent Clubs (NACCs). They represent the interests of their members, collectively encapsulating the student population. There are 16 ACCs and three NACCs.

WHAT'S UP NTUSU?

A summary of all the important NTUSU initiatives and events in Semester 1.

Text: Rachel Chan | Design: Lim Yi Xun

The bi-annual U-Study event is NTU's largest welfare initiative, where 5000 welfare packs and other welfare treats are given out to students. Organised by NTUSU's Welfare Initiatives Committee, this semester saw shorter queueing times with the implementation of matriculation card scanning stations, as well as an item exchange corner to reduce wastage.

U-STUDY

LAUNCH OF U-WAVE

U-Wave, an NTUSU collaboration with Wave, is a unique all-in-one campus application that aims to provide students with an integrated and seamless campus experience. Available on iOS and Android mobile devices for free, some of U-Wave's features include sending feedback to NTUSU via U-Feedback, checking for bus timings and crowd situations at canteens with a live feed, and getting student discounts via NTUPerks.

A NEW AND IMPROVED STARS

NTUSU worked closely with OAS and CITS on the integrated STARS system, providing students with a single platform for course planning and registration. This is a continuous effort with relevant departments in conveying student feedback and areas of potential improvement to STARS in the near future.

INTEGRATION NIGHT

Spearheaded by NTUSU's Student Integration Committee, Integration Night was an event that welcomed new undergraduates to NTU's student environment and embraced diversity. Held on Oct 17, the night served as an opportunity for local and international students to connect over activities such as table tennis, mass karaoke and even a themed escape room.

SU AWARENESS DAY

Organised by NTUSU's Student Engagement Committee, the Students' Union Awareness Day on Nov 4 aimed to raise awareness of past and present initiatives by NTUSU in tandem with the overarching "Youth Empowerment" theme.

FIRESIDE CHAT

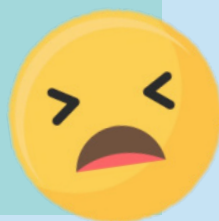
On Nov 5, NTUSU's Integrated Career Opportunities Network (ICON) held The Fireside Chat with Mr Tan Chin Hwee, CEO of Trafigura Pte Ltd. The three-hour sharing session was a networking initiative to allow students to get to know more about the global economy, entrepreneurship and various industries.

CAMPUS TRANSPORT SURVEY

During the first U-Study in Semester 1, a Campus Transport Survey was conducted to gather feedback from students. This was the first step to improving the campus transport system by gathering feedback on the ground regarding both campus and examination buses. NTUSU is currently working with school management to make necessary changes and improvements to the existing system.



IS THERE LIFE AFTER SOCIAL MEDIA?



Our writer Ziqian takes one for the team and goes on a week-long social media cleanse to find out.

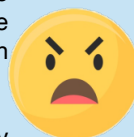
Written by: Lim Ziqian | Designed by: Jena Ong

Social media has completely revolutionised our lives. Even the grandeur of the most unexplored terrains on earth is now accessible via Instagram, the most mundane lectures can be spiced up simply by toggling between cute cat videos on Twitter and food videos on Facebook. Being a frequent user of social media myself, I can attest to its benefits. With social media applications like Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr, there never really is a dull moment, as long as you have Wi-Fi!

Yet, with all its virtues, social media comes hand-in-hand with some pretty depressing downsides. First and foremost, it is a huge time-waster and probably the reason behind most of your all-nighters. We've all been there – we tell ourselves we'll only spend five minutes scrolling through our feeds but before we know it, we've ended up scrolling a few miles' worth of posts.

Ironically, social media makes us feel lonely sometimes. When you're way behind on your coursework and decide to skip a night out with friends, trust me, the last thing you want to see on your feed is a post about how much fun they're having without you. Instances like this have given rise to the crippling millennial fear of being left out of all the fun stuff everyone is having, or FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), if you will. Throw in the conscientiously curated online presence using trendy VSCO filters and tacky captions that make your life seem dull and uneventful in comparison, and social media becomes the perfect recipe for crummy self-esteem.

As someone who is well aware of the drawbacks of social media but has never mustered enough willpower to stay away, I finally decided to challenge myself to a seven-day ban. This decision came after I realised my work ethic was steadily deteriorating and that I was barely getting four hours of sleep every night. For anybody else interested in embarking on this challenge, these were some of my thoughts while tackling this challenge:



Day 1: I woke up to a rather empty home screen. It was intuitive for me to go through my notifications first thing every morning. However, having logged out of my accounts, I no longer received any updates. Admittedly, I did feel a niggles of anxiety at the prospect of missing something important but I managed to still get on with my day. Not being lured into checking my feeds actually saved me two hours which I judiciously used to catch up on sleep.

Day 2: FOMO finally hit like a bad sugar craving and I found myself feeling pretty miserable at not being privy to online content. It was a little unsettling to realise that so much of my life was embedded onto these platforms that I was getting withdrawal symptoms without them.

Day 3: Thankfully, I am now getting used to my new routine. I spent the empty pockets of time either by reading e-books that I never got around to opening, or revising lecture material. Not having Instagram or Twitter also allowed me to pay more attention during classes. Trust me, there is an indescribable sense of personal pride when you walk out of the lecture theatre knowing that you actually learnt something.

Day 4: I now have the bandwidth to cultivate more meaningful relationships with those that mattered to me. Not having my phone light up every few minutes made way for more honest conversations during meals. I could now truly listen and engage with whoever was sitting across me, as opposed to breaking my train of thought whenever I received a trivial notification from Facebook.

Day 5: Despite the rosy outlook I've painted for the past few days, there are some downsides to leaving social media for good. I've realised that conversations do revolve around Instagram feeds, and not having access to mine rendered me a passive spectator as my friends quipped about the latest happenings online. It did feel a little disempowering as I sat there doe-eyed and slightly confused. However, in exchange, I managed to finish my readings punctually and even negotiated for personal time to read books.

Day 6: Before my social media cleanse, on average, I usually took up to a week to finish a five-page essay for my modules. Of course, this was after factoring in time spent watching cat videos on Twitter. Since I've tuned out, I managed to complete these essays in two days, which gave me more time to engage in oft-neglected hobbies such as going for a run and catching up on reruns of my favourite Netflix shows.



Day 7: Taking on the last day of my social media ban challenge gave rise to conflicting feelings. On one hand, I was definitely excited to once again have access to online content. However, on the flip side, now that I knew exactly how much time I was saving, I was a little hesitant about going back online and compromising all the progress I've made.

Conclusion

These seven days have been both emotionally gruelling yet irreversibly rewarding. Knowing how much time I waste online has given me new insights which I will now use to finetune my own schedule.

Unfortunately, I've also come to realise that social media is a key, irreplaceable feature of the conventional millennial experience. That's right, an outright ban is not the solution we are looking for in order to enjoy meaningful relationships, pick up a new book or have more time to sleep. More than ever, I believe that the key is simply to strike the right balance between the two.



THE LOWDOWN ON MILLENNIALS' OBSESSION WITH ASTROLOGY AND HOROSCOPE SIGNS

There's more to it than just seeking answers from the cosmos.
Text: Shannon Ang | Design: Lim Yi Xun

Personally, I've always felt the inconspicuous presence of astrology. Remember those days when they were a fun staple in the back pages of every glossy lifestyle magazine or newspaper? Of course, no one took it seriously, but it was (and still is) a cheap and effective form of entertainment. And who could forget those times where we'd check our 'love compatibility' with our crushes? All it took was the entry of a pair of zodiac signs or birthdates and voila! It may sound silly to some, but I am guilty as charged.

Today, the resurgence of astrology comes through stronger than ever. That is, in the proliferation of Instagram horoscope meme accounts. Many of us may not even realise the presence of astrology in our daily lives, even as we exchange these memes with friends and family on the daily.

I should also mention the existence of astrology apps like Co-star, which algorithmically generates insights on one's personality (and possible future!) by using data provided by NASA.

Presenting astrology in an easy to digest, humorous yet relatable manner has made it more accessible and relevant. Case in point: on several occasions, I have turned to astrology to break the ice with fellow millennials. Somehow, it has worked miraculously; some show keen interest, while others who subscribe to it reply fervently. Think of it as an alternative Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality type test, but less rigorous. Even if you are not an astrology buff, it's likely that you'll know your horoscope since there is no need to fill in a test. There is also some logic in the system which shows some correlation of the sign to your personality (though not evidenced, because astrology is technically not science).

Which begs this question: What makes astrology so enticing to millennials?



Personally, I am that one person who needs receipts for happenings in my life and maybe that's how my attraction to reading horoscopes grew.

Generally, astrological readings are designed to cater to a wide audience. However, the validity of one's daily horoscope can seem surprisingly on point, which encourages further self-reflection.

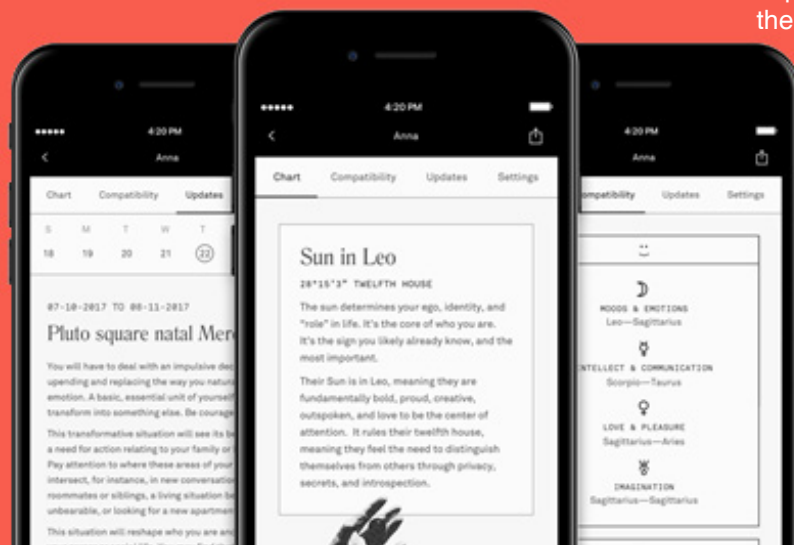
I believe that alludes to the romantic notion that we are all just storytellers, seeking narratives to explain our lives, actions and social relations. According to a Refinery29 article by Los Angeles-based astrologer, Chani Nicholas, this stems from a desperate craving to be reflective to locate our agency.

Local astrologer May Sim, has a more technical approach to viewing astrology. From her interview with local website Zula, she emphasises that astrology provides a framework to understanding life, especially in times of problems and need of clarity in a certain scenario, which explains the renewed interest.

"What I like about modern astrology is that it gives free will back to a person. We don't care about things like fate and destiny anymore because we believe if we can make our [own] decisions, the world is your oyster."

"Young people are looking for a way to understand the world, because they have realised that conventional wisdom doesn't work for them anymore. The alternatives are what they are looking for, and astrology gives [them] that."

It is clear that in an environment full of stress and uncertainty, astrology is the comfort that we yearn for and a reminder that rough times too, shall pass. After all, astrology is made up of unscientific theories that act as placebos. Just like how carrying good luck charms and heeding superstitions reassure us, astrology plays the role of soothing stress and provides relief amidst the chaos and pandemonium of life.



OK BOOMER

The reason millennials can't seem to shake the reputation of being 'the strawberry generation', and why it's perfectly alright.

Text: Melissa Teo | Design: Jena Ong

We can all agree that the worst way to respond to someone's problems is to try and "one-up" them. Not only is it incredibly conceited, but it invalidates the pain of the sufferer. But, that's the response we millennials often receive when we voice our concerns these days. You know the drill: we'd be constantly reminded of our privilege, that someone else has it worse than us and that our lives are so much better than that of past generations. In reality, while it's true that we are living in better times, the fact is that every generation faces their own set of pressing problems.

It is unfortunate that millennials are often mocked to be overly sensitive, and associated with related synonyms such as "fragile" and weak-minded. In other words, members of the strawberry generation. However, our "sensitivity" in society can also be perceived as a positive trait.

Trading outdated and uncouth methods of harsh treatment and yelling at the workplace in favour of constructive criticism and logical feedback can make work much more enjoyable for everyone. Employees are also more likely to flourish in a respectful work environment as opposed to being stifled in fear by a tyrannical boss.

One of the characteristics commonly attributed to millennials is their seemingly overwhelming self-involvement and inability to show concern for others. 'Why are they always on their phones and ignoring others around them?', the older generation may wonder. However, what they may not realise is that millennials express their passion and involvement in a different way.



Due to the rise of social media, a whole new world has opened up to the younger generation, which allows us to be more vocal about causes that we believe in. Whether it's a debate over international politics or environmental awareness, more large-scale projects have been set into action by the youth of today than ever before. According to the National Youth Survey in 2017, nearly 70 per cent of young people aged 15 to 34 are actively involved in community groups related to social welfare, arts and sports.

Furthermore, what the older generation may conceive to be a young person's obsession with technology is usually an eagerness to be connected. Not only are we incredibly in touch with our friends and peers from all around the globe, but millennials are also quick to acquire news and information – spending an average of 86 per cent of their screentime daily doing so, according to statistics from the National Youth Survey 2016.

As university students, one of our most pressing concerns is the lack of job prospects in a future of economic uncertainties; after all, up to 5.2 per cent of Singaporeans under 30 years old remain unemployed in the first financial quarter of the year, according to the Ministry of Manpower's statistics.

These problems are not unique to us – in fact, the older generation was in the same position just a decade ago. Having prevailed through multiple economic downturns, from the 2001 economic recession to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, it's surprising how difficult it is for them to empathise with our problems today.

One reason for this is the older generation's unwavering belief that hard work would have definitely led to eventual success. As this worked for them in the past, they have in turn, drilled that mantra into our brains. As a result, many of us dutifully followed our mapped-out plans only to see our expectations crushed by the reality of unemployment – and have our disappointment misunderstood as being entitled.



If we remain indoctrinated with the outdated idea that a stable job and income will follow with the possession of a university degree, millennials today will never be ready to face such economic instability.

Thankfully, Singaporean youths have been trying to stay ahead in this competitive climate. Besides balancing projects, assignments and numerous tests, many of us take on extra-curricular activities to beef up our portfolio.

While our generation of millennials are definitely better off than our elders, the challenges that we face should not be trivialised – but rather met with empathy and understanding.

Likewise, as millennials, we should also seek to bridge the generation gap with our elders. Hopefully, cultivating this mutual understanding between the different generations will encourage a more inclusive and open-minded society.

Aiyohhhh
BACK IN My DAY HORR
YOUNGSTERS NOWADAYS AHH...
WAH You KNOW -

THE ONES WHO “PROTECC”

Chelsea features two NTU students who fight for our nation while fighting the bell curve in school.

Text: Chelsea Ong | Design: Lim Yi Xun

We've seen our fathers get called back for reservist, laughed at our friends' horror stories about their time in National Service (NS), and rejoiced with our brothers during iconic milestones in their two years of service – especially when they finally get to shout “ORD loh!” (or Operationally Ready Date, for those unfamiliar with the term). But what about those whose time in the uniform does not stop then? What about those who choose a career in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) when so many are more than happy to leave that period of their lives behind?

Leroy, a third-year Computer Science student, shares with us his experience and passion for serving the army.

Chelsea: Not many people decide to sign on to the SAF, what motivated you to do so?

Leroy: One of the key reasons is the environment. It is really a joy to work in an environment where people share a common interest or belief. Camaraderie is formed during this process and I really value this relationship. It feels good to know someone has got your six. This is something that is rarely seen in the corporate world.

Chelsea: Do you have any commitments while in university?

Leroy: I have this thing called Vacation Attachment (VA). This attachment is usually done over the summer break. The idea of VA is to keep us updated with the changes in the army and to expose us to other areas in the army. The only time we will miss a VA is when we have academic requirements to fulfil, like internships or exchange.

Chelsea: Did anybody have any objections when they heard you signed on?

Leroy: There were a few friends who commented that with my course of study, I would be able to fetch better pay if I were to work in the corporate world. However, I feel that your pay shouldn't be the most important factor in deciding which career to pursue. We should pursue a career that we believe in and are passionate about.

Chelsea: Would you encourage people to sign on?

Leroy: I would encourage people to sign on for the right reason - if they see the value and believe in the work that we do in the SAF.

I feel that the SAF is an organization that values character and ethics. In a military setting, there are a lot of regimentation and rules. Some people may feel that these regimentation and rules are restrictions and cause uneasiness.

However, I feel that uneasiness builds character. It builds resilience and consistency. These values set you apart from others. It makes you feel comfortable being uncomfortable. If you're someone who values character and ethics, you should consider signing on!

Jay, an NTU Accounting graduate, shares with us her experience in the Air Force and her thoughts on girls signing on to the SAF.

Chelsea: A career in the SAF is not exactly the most conventional career path for women in Singapore, why did you choose to sign on?

Jay: Signing on was more of seizing an opportunity that came by, instead of letting it pass. After junior college, there was a women's recruitment seminar that I had heard about and after attending the seminar, joining the SAF seemed like a really interesting choice so I simply decided to sign on.

Chelsea: Were there any objections from people when they heard you were going to sign on?

Jay: My father objected at first because he felt it was way too physically demanding and it is a very male-dominated industry after all. But after I cleared Basic Military Training (BMT), he was super happy and was very supportive from then on. There are also times where people ask me if I signed on because I did badly for my A-levels, which is not true. Many people who signed on actually did well in their studies.



Chelsea: Here comes a controversial question: should NS be made compulsory for female Singaporeans as well?

Jay: With the current construct of BMT, I don't think it is a good idea. The current construct of BMT then vocation training/office assignment is a very male-oriented way of doing things. Realistically speaking, there will be a smaller percentage of females than males who will be able to, for lack of a better word, manage and successfully complete BMT (especially with things like cramps and periods). I think that if the construct was changed slightly, though I'm not sure how exactly, then females should be made to serve

The passion Leroy and Jay feel towards committing to and serving the SAF is certainly admirable. While some of us float our way through university hoping to find something that excites us, they have already found an unconventional career they enjoy and are passionate about. In the words of Leroy, “To find joy in work is the greatest return.”

WORK HARD, EARN HARDER

Ever wondered how some of your peers manage their time between working and studying at the same time? Rohan takes a look at NTU's Work Study Scheme.

Text: Rohan Kapur | Design: Lim Yi Xun

Remember the decked-up ushers that guided you during your freshman welcome ceremony at the Nanyang Auditorium? Or the students who you occasionally see behind the counters at OneStop@SAC? They are all part of NTU's Work Study Scheme (WSS), where students take up jobs supervised by the university. The Work Study Scheme is a program that helps students to work with NTU on a part-time basis in a hassle-free manner, in areas such as finance, marketing, administration and event management.

I have been working under the WSS since the beginning of the first semester myself, and have had a great experience so far. Here, I'll share my own experience as well as insights from two other students involved in this initiative.

For myself, I looked at the WSS as a way to defray my living expenses and to try and become self-reliant. Hence, I sifted through its online portal at iNTU to look for something suitable. I found a job monitoring LT Video Recordings through a remote centralised station at the Centre for IT Services (CITS). The cameras in the lecture theatres are controlled by a group of students, each of them remotely monitoring a minimum of eight LTs at a time from a room below McDonald's.

This is a long-term assignment, which hired students at the beginning of the semester. I worked 13 hours a week here, and was paid by a monthly basis. On top of it being relatively-well paid (\$8 to \$9 an hour on average), the job offers flexible hours, which is definitely an added bonus.

Lim Yi Xun, 23, a second-year Sociology student, compares the WSS to other external part-time work available for us students. While my job was more of an administrative nature, Lim has explored the research field, having assisted in the translation of a manual that teaches the elderly how to use a blood pressure monitor. When asked what kinds of jobs he enjoyed doing the most under the scheme, Lim said: "I feel that those jobs which have a direct impact on research or those that can help others are more meaningful."

According to him, the pay is substantial, especially in view of the rising costs of student living expenses. He also looks at it as a little extra pocket money, which he can use for leisure purposes. Lim added that a good work-study balance is essential, and what you give more time to depends on what your goal is at that point in your university life.

As a person who has worked many jobs within the WSS, Shen Chen, 21, talks about how the WSS acknowledges the fact that you are students and ensures that you can take leave for quizzes or presentations, in contrast to other part-time jobs where there may not be much flexibility.

As a final year student, Shen has seen it all, having worked at OneStop@SAC and as an operation assistant with LCC Communication Cube, Chen says that all these jobs have different dynamics which depend on your supervisors, working hours and the work that you do.

The Work Study Scheme – A Guide

The Who

All full-time undergraduates are allowed to apply, but students who are under certain scholarships (check out the list on WSS's portal) are not permitted to work.

The How

To sign up, visit the StudentLink tab of your iNTU account, and under 'Financial Assistance', click on the WSS portal link.

What's the catch?

From time to time, students may expect to face a shortage of job openings due to popular demand. A useful hack to combat this is to sort the portal's list of assignments by date, allowing you a much better chance of landing a job, since you'll be applying for a recently posted one.

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PROMOCODE: NTUMR15

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W.A N T

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Valid till 31 Oct 2020



PROMOCODE: BOTNTUPERKS

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CLINIC**

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