

University scholarships prove popular among students

By **APRIL CHYE**

A SCHOLARSHIP connects one with academic excellence and prestige. But while some are simply grateful for the financial aid, others are more picky about their source of funding.

An annual survey by BrightSparks, Singapore's largest scholarship and higher education media, has found that scholarships awarded by local universities, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), are voted as most popular among recent 'A' Level and International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma graduates. Changi Airport Group, Singapore Airlines and the Economic Development Board ranked third, fourth, and fifth respectively.

"University scholarships have been progressively gaining popularity over the years. We've been observing this trend for quite a while now, and it's not surprising that the top two spots are taken by NUS and NTU this year," said Mr Lim Der Shing, CEO of JobsCentral Group, that owns BrightSparks.

The survey took place between March and April this year, where a total of 2,738 respondents participated in the 2012 BrightSparks Scholarship & Career Survey. The test targeted potential scholarship recipients, and among the respondents, 1,533 are 'A' Level and IB diploma graduates, 650 are final year polytechnic students, and the remaining 555 are undergraduates in their first and second year of study at NUS, NTU and Singapore Management University (SMU).

NUS retained last year's top spot as the most popular scholarship provider this year with 47.8 per cent of vote-share, a big improvement from its 14th place back in 2007, when the BrightSparks' scholarship provider rankings first started.

"University scholarships allow more freedom in courses of study and are also predominantly bond-free. Both are attractive to our bright young students looking to have the best of both worlds – the prestige and financial benefits of a scholarship, as well as the ability to decide what to study and which career path to embark on. We expect this trend to continue into the future," says Mr Lim.