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刘富文(中)的妻子叶爱丽(右)和长女刘惠贤昨天出席他的毕业典礼,见证他成为新大史上最年长的本科毕业生。(何炳耀摄)

获武装部队全额津贴 新大最年长本科生毕业

陈婧 报道
jingchen@sph.com.sg

对45岁的刘富文来说,在这个年龄重返校园的最大挑战不是应付考试,而是如何与比自己年轻20多岁的同学打交道。

这名新加坡武装部队高级军事专才四年前成为新加坡管理大学的全职学生。他昨天不仅顺利取得信息系统管理学上学位,成为新大建校15年来最年长的本科毕业生,也变成可以和女儿畅谈流行音乐的“潮爸”。

刘富文受访时回忆,他入学后不久就发现自己经常和同学想法不合:“这些年轻人有很多新颖、大胆的设想,但不太考虑如何实施。而我这个年龄的人,更看重那些实在、可行的主意。”

经历过最初的磨合期后,刘富文逐渐掌握与新世代的沟通合作之道。他鼓励同学们提出想法,自己再根据可行性提出建议,从而共同解决问题。

刘富文说,自己不仅从年轻同学身上学到如何换个视角看问题,还在他们影响下爱上了流行音乐,譬如青春歌手黛咪洛瓦特(Demi Lovato)及偶像电影《歌喉赞》(Pitch Perfect)里的歌曲。

“女儿发现我在听这些歌时大吃一惊,甚至担心我会不会太‘潮’了。但现在我们经常会一起唱流行歌曲。”

刘富文24年前加入武装部队时,只有高级国家工艺教育局证书(Higher NITEC)学历。好学不倦的他先是在2007年获得理工学院文凭,又在武装部队“军事领域专才计划”下获得全额津贴修读学士学位。

副总理兼国家安全统筹部长及

内政部长张志贤昨天在新大毕业典礼上致词时,也以刘富文为例说明,无论哪个年龄层的国人都有继续深造的机会。

他勉励即将步入社会的毕业生们在工作、生活和社会中努力“超越自我”,度过有意义的一生。

张志贤说:“我希望你们能一直朝向‘超越自我’的人生努力。在工作中寻找使命和目的,在生活中建立起有意义的人际关系,在回馈社会时,不要只考虑‘自我’,而要想到‘我们’。”

今年共有2348名学生从新大毕业,即1643名本科生、634名硕士生和71名博士生。

新大勇士奖学金 为退役军人展开新征程

首批“新大勇士奖学金”(SMU Warriors Scholarship)得主也在昨天领取毕业证书。这个去年推出的奖学金专为即将退役或刚退役的正规军人提供奖学金,帮助他们修读硕士课程,至今已有22人获颁奖学金。

50岁的前上校杨炜青是首批10名毕业生之一,他以优异的成绩从高级工商管理硕士课程(EMBA)毕业,并在通讯及新闻部展开全新征程。杨炜青受访时说,这项课程让自己得以接触到来自各行各业、不同国家的人才,大大提高了沟通和管理能力。

另一名奖学金得主、前上校陈百泉(46岁)则从创新学理学硕士课程中获得创业灵感,也学到实用技巧,目前已踏上创业之路。

他说:“我们在课堂上学到怎么与投资方谈判协商,以及如何推销创业提案,这些技能在我的创业过程中都发挥重要作用。”

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Headline: Oldest SMU undergraduate awarded degree

To 45 year-old Eugene Low, the rigorous examinations was not the biggest challenge he faced as an older undergraduate that it was a struggle at first to fit in with classmates who were 20-odd years his junior.

In addition to becoming the oldest student in Singapore Management University (SMU)'s 15-year history to be awarded a bachelor's degree, the father of two was transformed into a "Cool Dad" who enjoys discussing pop music with his daughters.

Recounting his experience as an undergraduate in the School of Information Systems, Mr. Low admitted that his thinking was very different from his younger peers. He added that many of them "have brilliant and innovative ideas" that were not easy to implement while, as an older guy, he has a tendency to be more prudent about the practicality and feasibility of those ideas.

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Despite the initial struggle, Mr. Low gradually mastered the art of communication and collaboration with the younger generation. He said that he would encourage his classmates to share their ideas and opinions while he would provide constructive suggestions and work with them to resolve the problems.

Mr. Low said that working with his younger classmates has enabled him to look at things from a different perspective, on top of kindling his interest in pop music. He now considers himself an unabashed fan of Demi Lovato and the songs from the popular movie "Pitch Perfect".

"My daughters were very shocked when they found out that I was listening to those songs and were understandably concerned if I had become too "hip". Nowadays, we sing those songs together very often," joked Mr. Low.

Mr. Low joined the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) 24 years ago with his highest qualification being a Higher National Institute of Education Certificate. Always eager to learn, he took up a scholarship from SAF and subsequently graduated from Nanyang Polytechnic in 2007 with a diploma in Engineering Informatics, before moving on to pursue his bachelor's degree in SMU. Both of his academic pursuits were fully sponsored by the SAF.

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Co-ordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean was the Guest-of-Honour at SMU's commencement ceremony. Citing Mr. Low's success story, DPM Teo urged graduates to not stop expanding their horizons, adding that every Singaporean can continue to upgrade themselves regardless of their age.

"Look for mission and purpose in your work, build meaningful relationships in your personal life, and think about 'we', and not just 'me' in giving back to society," he said.

SMU Warriors Scholarship

Preparing retiring SAF personnel for new journeys

The inaugural batch of graduates under the SMU Warriors Scholarship also received their graduation certificates yesterday. This Scholarship was launched last year specially for retiring Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) personnel to undergo postgraduate studies. To date, 22 people have been awarded the Scholarship.

Colonel (NS) Yong Wui Chiang, aged 50, is among the 10 pioneer graduates. He graduated with outstanding results from the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programme, and has started a new career at the Ministry of Communications and Information. In an interview, he said the course enabled him to meet talents from multiple industries and countries, which helped greatly in improving his communication and management skills.

Another scholar, Colonel (NS) Chin Pak Chuen Jeff (46 years old), gained entrepreneurship inspirations and practical skills in the classroom during his Master of Science in Innovation (MI) studies, and has embarked on an entrepreneurial path. He said, "We picked up critical skills such as negotiation and marketing that are important in my entrepreneurship journey."