

Day Of Celebration For S'pore Scholarship Recipient

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: Former Sayyidina Ali Secondary School student Justin Then Sing Yick has been awarded the 2012 Singapore Scholarship and will be pursuing a Degree in Mechanical Engineering at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Borneo Bulletin reported.

The announcement of the 2012 Singapore Scholarship recipient was made in a press statement over the weekend.

Justin, who will join 27 other Bruneians who have also been awarded the prestigious scholarship, said, "Before I applied to NTU, I had actually done a lot of research on possible universities I wanted to go to and on which courses suited my interest.

"I am interested in Mechanical Engineering as I have always been strong in Physics and Mathematics in school. From my research, I found that NTU is one of the top universities in the world for Mechanical Engineering and this made NTU an easy choice for me as it met my interests and expectations. Being at NTU will allow me to explore and experience the latest engineering technology available."

In response to why he chose the Lion City as the destination to further his studies, Justin explained, "Singapore is very near to Brunei, which allows me to be close to my family. The people in Singapore and Brunei share the same culture and lifestyle and that will enable me to cope and adjust easily. Furthermore, Singapore is a competitive country and the learning environment will push me to work harder and attain higher grades.

"I learnt about the Singapore scholarship when I attended the Higher Education Exhibition at ICC organised by the Ministry of Education. I felt the scholarship would ease the financial burden on my parents and at the same time provide me with the opportunity to explore a foreign country and be more independent. The fact that there is no bond associated with the scholarship would mean that I can return and work in Brunei as soon as I graduate.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new friends and people in Singapore and I'm excited to encounter the challenges and activities ahead," he added.

Meanwhile, Singapore High Commissioner Jaya Ratnam in his remark said, "The Singapore Scholarship was introduced to provide an opportunity for promising students across Asean countries to pursue their tertiary studies in Singapore. Each scholarship is for a full-time undergraduate degree course at the National University of Singapore, the Nanyang Technological University or the Singapore Management University.

"We are very happy to announce that since the scholarship's inception 13 years ago, we have attracted many applicants from Brunei and have awarded 27 scholarships to Bruneian students. There is a scholar currently studying in NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information," he added.

"We would still like to attract a larger pool of applicants and we encourage all Bruneians who qualify to apply as there is no quota if they are deserving candidates.

"The scholarship covers the tuition fees for the duration of the undergraduate studies, which may be for three or four years depending on the discipline. Scholars will be given an annual living allowance of S\$4,300 in addition to accommodation allowance. On top of that, we will pay for an economy class ticket from Brunei to Singapore and return."

When asked if there was a bond attached to the scholarship, he replied, "No. In fact, we expect scholars to return to Brunei and contribute towards the development of their country and 'Masyarakat'.

"Bruneian scholars have chosen to major in disciplines such as Business Administration, Computing, Engineering, Science and Industrial Design, just to name a few. They are free to choose any discipline, except Medicine, Dentistry, Architecture and Law.

"All the Bruneian scholars have graduated, some with honours degrees and others have decided to pursue post-graduate studies. Those who have returned have secured good jobs in either the public or private sector. We have scholars who are currently working at the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Shell Petroleum Co Sdn Bhd, BIBD and Citibank.

"We also have two brothers who have set up their own company called Caveena Solutions which provides computer solutions and expertise. They were awarded a contract by the Anti-Corruption Bureau in 2009 to manage the bureau's i-COINS system. This in itself is testament to the versatility and employability of a graduate from one of Singapore's universities," the Singaporean High Commissioner added.

Explaining how the scholarship benefits both countries, he said, "The scholarship is a modest contribution to Brunei's efforts at capacity building. We have helped to train Bruneian engineers, scientists and business executives at our top universities, and they have returned to Brunei to contribute to the economy. We hope more Bruneians will avail themselves of this opportunity."

The scholarship, he added, "has also contributed to the people-to-people links. Some of the returned scholars have told us that they have enjoyed their stint in Singapore. In fact, some of them still keep in contact with their Singaporean friends and travel frequently to Singapore for both social and professional reasons. So I would say that from a personal development standpoint, the scholars themselves have also benefited from the programme."