

A Sea of Talents



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On 3rd August, 41 scholarship and academic sponsorships were awarded to young talents at the MPA and MaritimeONE Scholarship Awards Ceremony. J Thachayini reports from the PSA Auditorium at the PSA Building.

THE BIG "MPA AND MARITIMEONE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS" DAY

The atmosphere at the PSA Auditorium was one brimful of anticipation and excitement – particularly for the 41 students who were receiving sponsorships and scholarships awarded by MPA and the MaritimeONE Outreach Network. This is the third consecutive year in which the two organisers have jointly given out the awards, in a bid to nurture skilled professionals for the maritime workforce.

"The maritime industry is one of the key pillars of Singapore's economy with ample opportunities for young people to develop their careers," said Mr Lucien Wong, chairman of MPA as he congratulated the 10 MPA scholars and 21 MaritimeONE scholars. They have been awarded scholarships to pursue maritime qualifications, such as the diploma course in Maritime Business and in Nautical Studies at Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA), the degree programme in Maritime Studies in NTU and in universities overseas.

Despite the recent economic slowdown, the maritime community remained steadfast in its efforts to nurture talents for the maritime workforce. The total value of the 21 MaritimeONE scholarship awards is valued at \$549,500 and the funds are pledged by maritime companies. The rise in the number of applicants for the MaritimeONE scholarships signifies the growing interest and heightened awareness of the maritime sector amongst the youth. This year also marked a significant jump as compared to 14 scholarships given out during the inaugural award ceremony in 2008.

"It is critical to nurture a ready pool of highly qualified maritime personnel in Singapore to meet the demands of the maritime industry. We hope that more maritime partners would come forth to support our endeavour to grow the maritime talent pool in Singapore," added Mr Wong.

PORT OF CALLING

Crossroads sat down with MPA and MaritimeONE scholarship recipients Quincy Quek, 19, Lim Ray Wen, 21, Matthew Long, 21 and Tjua Xin Ying, 22 for a quick tete-a-tete on their plans and bright future in the Singapore's maritime landscape.

XR: Why did you choose this particular scholarship?

Quincy: I chose to study maritime studies as I am interested in the maritime industry and I would like to build a career path that is related to the maritime business and what I study in school. A career in the maritime industry would give me the opportunity to network with maritime leaders in this industry.



Third from left: Mr Lam Yi Young (Chief Executive, MPA), Mr Lucien Wong (Chairman, MPA), Mr David Chin (Executive Director, Singapore Maritime Foundation) and representatives from The LRET, "K" Line, PCL, SMA and PIL with 21 MaritimeONE Scholarship recipients



MPA Chairman Mr Lucien Wong, MPA Chief Executive Mr Lam Yi Young and representatives from APL, SMOU, SOS, PIL and PACC with the 7 TMSS recipients

Ray Wen: I toyed with a variety of courses before I decided to apply for this scholarship. My previous sailing experience and the movie, Titanic have left a deep impression on me. This scholarship appeals to me as it offers a diverse range of career opportunities and job prospects.

Matthew: The maritime industry in Singapore is very extensive and it is one of the main GDP generators. There are many career prospects and I like the challenges of being part of a large-scale operation. A career in this huge sector will provide me with many opportunities to advance myself professionally, both in Singapore and overseas.

Xin Ying: This scholarship can relieve the financial burden of my family. With this scholarship, I can even save some money to travel around Europe when I get to travel there as part of the course.

XR: Most people may not consider a scholarship if there is a bond attached to it. What encouraged you to take up the scholarship despite the bond?

Quincy: The scholarship is flexible and as such, I did not feel uncomfortable taking up the scholarship.

Ray Wen: With the scholarship, there is no worry as to where I should head to when I graduate. I also believe that as a scholar, it will open more doors and career opportunities for me in future.

Xin Ying: The bond is to serve in the Singapore maritime sector for three years. I am not bonded to a particular company and I would get to choose which company I would like to work for in future. Joining the maritime sector upon my graduation is a natural progression. Personally I don't think it is much of a bond and I like the flexibility that this scholarship offers.

XR: How do you think the scholarship will benefit you?

Quincy: The scholarship will push me to stay focused in excelling well at school and to carve a career path that is relevant to what I have learn. I will also be able to apply for further education in university in future.

Matthew: This scholarship will take the financial load off my parents.

Xin Ying: It will motivate me to study even harder because as a scholar I have the duty to perform to the best of my ability.

XR: What do you plan to do after graduating?

Quincy: I am committed to a bond and as such I would like to learn as much as possible from my sponsor company during my bond period. The foundation and knowledge gained would allow me to explore what I really want to do and possibly find choose a specialisation within the maritime sector to focus on.

Ray Wen: I will be joining the shipping division of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore to work as a surveyor.

Matthew: At the moment, I would like to go into ship chartering. However, this may not change once I enter the course as I may discover another aspect of the maritime business that I would like to specialise in.



From left: Quincy Quek, Lim Ray Wen, Matthew Long and Tjua Xin Ying

About MPA scholarships

Since MPA's launch on 2 February 1996, 105 scholarships and sponsorships for maritime-related degree and diploma programmes from have been offered to outstanding students. The degree scholarships are tenable at prestigious overseas and local universities, while the diploma sponsorships are tenable at the Singapore Maritime Academy in Singapore Polytechnic.

MPA and its maritime partners have come forth to sponsor competent students to cultivate and gather a team of well-trained maritime personnel in Singapore to meet the demands of the maritime industry to enhance Singapore's position as a leading international maritime centre.

About MaritimeONE scholarships

Since its launch three years ago, MaritimeONE has engaged in various initiatives to raise the profile of maritime careers and education among local youth, such as an island-wide launch of postcards featuring six young and outstanding maritime professionals and the exciting aspects of their careers. It has organised an exclusive tour of maritime facilities for tertiary students, maritime scholars and employees. Subsequently, in its maiden collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic, students created their own maritime commercials that were placed on the STOMP website for public voting for their favourite commercial.