

POLY OPEN HOUSES PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS

BY KATELYN WOODWORTH

Polytechnics did not hold back during their recent series of open houses. There were virtual-reality games, hands-on workshops, tours and live performances at the events from Jan 5 to 7, just before the O-level results were released.

The annual drive to attract students aimed to give those who were undecided a clearer idea about their post-secondary options before picking what to do next.

Over the last few years, polytechnics have become a more legitimate education choice rather than a fallback for those who cannot make it to junior colleges. In fact, some courses are highly sought after and there is increasing demand for places as more of the institutions mould their curricula to pass on real-world knowledge.

Dr Girija, deputy director of the School of Applied Science and chairman of Republic Polytechnic's Open House Committee 2017, said: "Traditionally, some students

are not really aware of all the potential careers that they can go into, so the reason for this open house is... so students can form some impressions and explore a bit more."

"I think the students find that poly will give them a more hands-on approach, and also more opportunities to work closer with the industry (of their chosen fields)."

Saikh Muhammad Haikel, 16, a Sec 4 student from Damai Secondary School, was one such student who was unsure about what course to pursue before going to Nanyang Polytechnic open house. He said: "I had no course in mind at first, but I talked to lecturers from biomedical science and I think it's something I might enjoy."

He went on to say that he enjoyed connecting with students running the booths, and that visiting open houses strengthened his decision-making for what to pick after he received his results.

Here are some highlights of the polytechnics.

Additional reporting by Darrell Lim



Lecturer in architecture Samantha Gebb's bite-sized class offered prospective students a hands-on taste of what her course would offer.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic

What's new: NP will be launching its Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education. It is the first and only such diploma offered in polytechnics here. Students enrolled in the course will be trained to become Tamil language pre-school or primary school teachers.

A new Airbus A320 flight simulator will also be housed at NP's Aerospace Hub. The flight simulator serves to deepen students' understanding of aircraft flight performance.

Open house highlights: A new open house activity, "A Day with NP Fam!", let prospective students fully immerse themselves in the NP school life experience.

With a series of 10 different bite-sized classes to choose from, which ranged from customising animated characters to learning about the cutting-edge technology of 3D printing, visitors

could understand more on what their prospective courses would offer.

For instance, one such class allowed visitors interested in architectural design to learn about how architects think about sunlight.

Held by Ms Samantha Gebb, an international fellow and lecturer in architecture at NP, "Designing for Sunlight" involved a short lecture then a session where 25 participants constructed their own cubic house based on the knowledge which they just gained, similar to what happens in a usual architecture class.

"I think (the students) enjoyed it. Hopefully, it was a good ratio of knowledge and lecture to giving them time to be creative and work with their hands," she said.

Ng Su Aung and Jovin Goh, both 16 and graduates from Anderson Secondary School, said the bite-sized classes offered fun and informative hands-on experiences and allowed them to see what polytechnic students do.



Temasek Polytechnic

Open house highlights: Of all the schools in the five polytechnics, the Most Enthusiastic award would go to TP's School of Business for their loud and exuberant welcome cheers.

Sixteen-year-old Felicia Ng, a graduate of Anderson Secondary School, quipped: "They're welcoming, but too welcoming!"

During the afternoons, TP students grooved together in a mass line dance, did the "chicken dance", and sang their dynamic TP Song.

In addition, visitors to TP's School of Humanities and Social Sciences had the opportunity to rediscover their childhood memories and find out more about the Diploma in Early Childhood Studies as they tried out various cute games which were designed for pre-schoolers.



Singapore Polytechnic

What's new: SP opened its Nutrition Lab, a food testing application facility in partnership with leading multinational chemical company BASF. The facility's food-testing equipment will allow researchers and students from SP's Diploma in Food Science and Technology and Diploma in Nutrition, Health and Wellness to collaborate with experts from BASF to conduct research.

State-of-the-art food printers (left) will soon be incorporated into the curriculum of the Diploma in Food Science and Technology, allowing students to experiment with the design and nutritional contents of food.

Also launching this year is the Black-box, a high-tech facility for the Diploma in Applied Drama and Psychology students, used to apply drama in therapy.

Open house highlights: One of SP's open areas was transformed into a colourful carnival, which included a variety of action-packed games, CCA performances and, of course, food and balloons.

Brandon Lam, a Sec 4 student, liked the freebies given out, as well as the aerospace simulator at SP's School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. "We got a feel of what it's like to fly a plane," the 15-year-old said.



Trainer Mark Tay introducing a variety of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) displayed in Republic Polytechnic's new UAV Training Centre.

Republic Polytechnic

What's new: RP unveiled two new facilities.

The RP-Unity Teaching Retail Pharmacy, a partnership with NTUC Health, gives Diploma in Pharmaceutical Sciences students the opportunity to experience practical training in a more authentic setting.

The RP UAV Training Centre consists of a computer lab where students practise flying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in simulations before moving to the more hands-on lab, where they learn to operate,

maintain and modify the drones.

Drones are increasingly being used in various industries, including agriculture, construction, and search and rescue operations.

Open house highlights: The School of Applied Science's Anatomy Museum featured interactive Augmented Reality models of the human body and organs, while the Diploma in Sonic Arts booth turned a nearby set of stairs into piano keys, which sounded a chaotic impromptu jingle every time a group of people stepped on them.



Solstice, a duo from Nanyang Girls' High School, performing at the annual NYP Jam! Finals at Nanyang Polytechnic's night open house. PHOTOS: DARRELL LIM, SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC

Nanyang Polytechnic

What's new: NYP is rolling out a new diploma in Sustainable Architectural Design. The classes merge traditional design skills with higher technological proficiencies and environmentally friendly architectural design techniques.

Open house highlights: At NYP's Night Open House on Jan 6, local band The Sam Willows performed, while a team of students from two fields, the Diploma in Multimedia & Infocomm Technology and Diploma in Electronics, Computer & Communications Engineering, collaborated to show off their skills in projection mapping, creating a light show projected on NYP's Block A facade.

Students also got to view a driverless car, try virtual reality escape rooms, and had the opportunity to design personalised hand creams.



Scan or click on this QR code to check out the awesome light show featured at NYP's open house.