Source: *The Straits Times,* Scholars' Choice III, p10
Date: 2 March 2015

Global exposure

Yale-NUS Faculty Scholarship recipient Adrian Stymne enjoys a diverse cultural experiences and an enriching student life

by christina ching



PHOTO: ADRIAN STYMNE

SWEDE Adrian Stymne (right) is a second-year student at Yale-NUS College in Singapore and is currently spending a year as an exchange scholar at Yale University in California.

The 20-year-old intends to major in psychology in his four-year Bachelor of Arts with Honours course.

Awarded the Yale-NUS Faculty Scholarship, Mr Stymne came to Singapore to pursue his undergraduate studies.

Part of the college's merit-based scholarships, the Yale-NUS Faculty Scholarship offers recipients $18,000 a year towards subsidised tuition fees, regardless of nationality.

Mr Stymne was admitted to several top schools in the United States, but none offered as affordable an education as Yale-NUS. This is partly because the merit-based scholarship offered to him covers half of his subsidised tuition fees across all four years.

In addition, he took up the tuition grant scheme — a government subsidy for international students to defray the cost of higher education in Singapore.

Singapore permanent residents and international students who take up the tuition grant scheme are required to work for a Singapore-registered company for three years upon graduation from Yale-NUS College.

Yale-NUS also offers other merit-based scholarships: the Global Leader Scholarship and the Yale-NUS Dean Scholarship.

The Global Leader Scholarship fully covers subsidised tuition fees and full residential college fees for four years. It also gives recipients living and book allowances and a one-time computer allowance.

The Yale-NUS Dean Scholarship covers full residential college fees.

Both scholarships are bond-free and given out to recognise the exceptional qualities of the top applicants to the college.

Laying the groundwork

Mr Stymne is happy about his decision to study — and later work — in Singapore and be part of the pioneer batch of students in a new college. The school enrolled its inaugural class of 150 students in August 2013.

"I thought it would be fascinating to study in Southeast Asia, at such a new school, and with such a diverse student body," he says.

"It has been exciting to build student organisations from scratch, to learn from classmates with different cultural backgrounds, and study classical Chinese and Indian works in constant juxtaposition with the Western canon."

Mr Stymne co-founded the Yale-NUS music society — the Singers Guild — and sings with friends in a vocal group. He also co-founded a small business selling school merchandise.

He adds: "I know many of my professors by their first names, I have been given opportunities to travel almost fully subsidised to Kyoto, Japan, and I've been put in contact with financiers for my start-up."

The college has also made it possible for him to study in the US this semester.

"I look forward to making new connections with professors and students at Yale, and take some courses that are not yet offered at Yale-NUS," says Mr Stymne, who left for his exchange in early January this year.

"I also look forward to bringing back insights and ideas to Yale-NUS. After all, Yale has had a couple of hundred years to get things right — we have had one-and-a-half."

In a new school like Yale-NUS College, hiccups are expected. Students and teachers work together to improve courses and processes. "Being forced to re-think things on the fly and take some curveballs has helped me build resilience and made me more conscious about my role as an individual in changing and shaping this institution, as well as future ones I will be involved in."

While he has not yet decided on his career path, he may continue the research path he has already started, or look towards more applied fields, such as medicine or biotechnology.

"Either way, I do not doubt that the cross-cultural competence I have developed at Yale-NUS will come in handy," he says.

Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd. Permission required for reproduction.