

Stepping out of comfort zone led to start-up role

Mr Amirul Lasiman could have packed his bags for New York or Silicon Valley when he signed up for the National University of Singapore Overseas College programme.

Instead, he chose to go to Beijing, making him the first Singaporean Malay student in the programme to do so. Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat yesterday held him up as an example of how Singaporeans should go beyond the familiar.

The 25-year-old said he wanted to push his own boundaries.

“I would be lying if I said I wasn’t a little apprehensive with my inability to converse in Mandarin and the cultural and religious differences,” he said. “But I decided that I had to be a little more gung-ho if I wanted to stay true to my goal of leaving my comfort zone.”

The programme allows students to experience working at a start-up, through an internship, and Mr Amirul said that Beijing stood out as an option as its tech scene is more advanced than most others around the world.

After graduation, he ventured into Singapore’s start-up scene, and is now the digital marketing lead for start-up Oddle, which builds online ordering systems for restaurants.

Cultural and language barriers did not stop Mr Amirul from choosing to go to Beijing for an internship.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF AMIRUL LASIMAN

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