

More choosing to study nursing

NUS received so many applications for its nursing programme that it raised the intake from 155 to 235

✔ **SANDRA DAVIE, THE STRAITS TIMES**

With her straight As, former Dunman High School student Lim Xin Min stood a good chance of studying medicine at the National University of Singapore (NUS) but opted for nursing instead.

The 19-year-old is among the growing number of young people choosing to study nursing at NUS, which received 2,200 applications this year – from 1,730 applications two years ago.

And 940 of them had listed nursing as their first or second choice, compared to two years ago when about 600 had listed nursing as their top two choices.

The NUS Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies increased its intake of students from 155 last year to 235 this year. It is looking to raise it to 300 over the next few years.

Professor Emily Ang, head

of NUS Nursing, attributed the increased demand for its nursing degrees to concerted efforts in raising public awareness of nursing as a challenging and fulfilling career.

She said it helps that nursing graduates have comparable, if not slightly higher starting salaries compared with their peers from other degree courses.

Last year's graduate employment survey saw nursing graduates start off with median monthly salaries of \$3,500 for those with honours, and \$3,400 for those without – higher than the \$3,360 for graduates across all degree programmes.

To give students a taste of what nursing entails, the Ministry of Health reached out to secondary school students with information about healthcare and nursing careers, engaging family members through the Care To Go Beyond campaign.

And it seems to have worked



Ms Lim wanted to offer direct help to patients and Mr Tan's NS experience nudged him towards nursing. PHOTO: NUS

with school-leavers like Ms Lim.

The Health Ministry scholarship recipient said her interest was sparked while on an attachment at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, where she shadowed a nurse.

"I saw what it is that nurses do, and realised that not only was it a fulfilling and challeng-

"I saw what it is that nurses do, and realised... (the profession was) one that offered variety."

— Ms Lim Xin Min

ing profession, but one that offered variety," she said, referring to the different tracks nurses can progress to, including research.

On why she chose nursing over medicine, she said she preferred being able to offer direct help to patients in nursing.

Polytechnic graduate Tan Jung Howe, 22, who listed nursing as his only choice in his

university application, said his parents had to be persuaded to support his choice.

He is part of a promising trend of more male students taking up nursing. About 16 per cent of those taking up nursing at NUS this year are male, compared with 10 per cent more than two years ago.

It was his experience as a combat medic during national service that convinced him to choose nursing.

The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) offers a two-year degree in nursing with the University of Glasgow aimed at poly nursing diploma holders.

SIT said it had also seen more applicants this year and increased its intake from 55 students last year to 64 this year.

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