

# Preparing For A Post-Pandemic World

NUS student Julianne Leow hopes her studies in biomedicine and public health policy will put her in good stead in the fight against widespread diseases

BY GILBERT WONG

At 16, most of us are often unsure of what we intend to do in the future. But for Ms Julianne Leow, even at that tender age, she already knew she wanted a career in life sciences.

This was thanks to an essay contest on antibiotic resistance jointly organised by the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health and Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

"Being unfamiliar with the topic back then, I had to do plenty of research on antibiotic resistance and its biological mechanisms," says the now 19-year-old.

She adds: "I came to understand that the problem of antibiotic resistance is one that is extremely complex and extends beyond the field of biomedicine."

While the essay contest piqued her interest, it was the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic that eventually made her pursue a Minor in Public Health, to complement her Bachelor of Science degree in

Life Sciences at NUS. Ms Leow, who is an NUS Merit Scholarship recipient, was keen to study these subjects as she believes they are crucial in combating dangerous and infectious diseases, now and in future.

#### Real-life learning

In her Evolutionary Biology class, Ms Leow learnt about topics such as deadly diseases. And as part of her Minor in Public Health, she has also gained an in-depth understanding of how government policies are shaped by various stakeholders.

"Such knowledge has benefited me in understanding both the current science and local management behind the pandemic in Singapore... and I hope to build up my understanding even further," she says.

Being in the middle of the pandemic has also been an invaluable lesson. Ms Leow says: "To be able to learn and understand the

**"I aspire to integrate the fields of biological science and public health to prevent and resolve major health crises, including both infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases."**

Ms Julianne Leow, NUS Merit Scholarship recipient



Ms Julianne Leow says the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has enabled her to learn more about such pandemics as they unfold and how such public health crises can be prevented and resolved. PHOTO: MAX CHIAN

situation as it simultaneously unfolds helps me to think critically about the possibilities that lie ahead."

She hopes to contribute more in the fight against diseases. "I

aspire to integrate the fields of biological science and public health to prevent and resolve major health crises, including both infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases."

■ Visit <https://nus.edu/freshmentscholarship> for more information.

## A BROAD-BASED EDUCATION

### 1. Disaster management

Under the National University of Singapore's (NUS) University Town College Programme, Ms Julianne Leow took part in a seminar module titled Radiation and Society. Professionals in the field from Japan and Cambodia were invited as guest speakers, all of whom had played a significant role in handling the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident in 2011. The module is offered by her residential college, Tembusu College.

### 2. Public speaking skills

One of Ms Leow's public health modules, Systems and Policies to Improve Health, entailed group discussions on presentation topics, which allowed her and her classmates to learn more effectively together. They also sharpened their critical presentation skills such as public speaking.

### 3. Giving back

As an NUS Merit Scholarship recipient, Ms Leow participated in the Seeds of Good programme. Participants plan and execute real-life community projects within NUS and beyond.