Fast-tracked into a promising future

Contributing to Singapore's efficient public transport system, this SIT scholar commissions new trains for the Thomson-East Coast Line

University scholarships are reserved not only for top scorers, as Mr Jantzen Lee found out in 2019.

When he attended an open house at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) that year, he discovered that their undergraduate scholarship was awarded not based on grades alone, but on one's potential to make a real impact on society.

Intrigued, Mr Lee decided to apply but was not prepared for the gruelling interview with the Admissions and Financial Aid (AFA) team.

Recalling the experience, he says: "The AFA team conducted the interview and one of them, assistant director Saleh Omar Talib, posed so many tough questions that I thought I had failed the interview."

Despite his initial apprehension, Mr Lee was awarded the scholarship.

"I guess they liked my outspoken nature," he adds with a laugh.

Delivering under pressure

This opportunity led Mr Lee to SIT's Sustainable Infrastructure Engineering (Land) degree programme (now renamed Engineering Systems), which aligned with his interest in Singapore's efficient transport network.

Mr Lee joined the Land Transport Authority (LTA) full-time in 2022. Today, he serves as a project engineer on the Rolling Stock Projects team, responsible for overseeing the design, manufacturing, testing and commissioning of new trains for the Thomson-East Coast Line (TEL).

His LTA job has striking parallels to his SIT scholarship journey: Constantly meeting challenges head-on to achieve high performance. One of Mr Lee's key responsibilities at LTA is to ensure that new trains for the TEL are operationally ready before being put into passenger service.

The pressure to commission the trains on time can be stressful yet fulfilling, and Mr Lee has learnt from his scholarship experience how to take things in stride.

Reflecting on his learning curve, he says: "I was quite a perfectionist and did not like to make mistakes. However, my mentors in the SIT scholarship programme created a safe environment that promotes growth and learning instead of fault-finding.

"Thanks to them, I am now less afraid to make mistakes and am ready to take on more challenges."

Mr Lee's experience at SIT was further enriched by the Integrated Work Study Programme, which combines academic learning with industry experience. Mr Lee says the programme made him operationally ready from day one at LTA.

He credits this development to Mr Saleh from the AFA team, SIT career coach Ong Gin Yong and his work mentor Lim Wen Xin. Due to their mentorship, he received guidance in various key areas like soft skills development and industry best practices, and was exposed to new opportunities in the field of engineering.

"My work mentor told me that how much we want to learn depends on how hungry we are as individuals," shares the 26-year-old.

That hunger to grow was also stoked by being with like-minded achievers at SIT.

During his first year, Mr Lee attended the SIT Scholars' Camp, which helped him to identify his strengths and weaknesses. The Covid-19 lockdown had triggered self-doubt, but his mentors and peers supported him, reinforcing his belief in continuous growth.

"I used to believe that scholars needed to 'have it all'. However, I have learnt that it is not about having it all together, but about who we can become," he says.

With guidance from mentors and meaningful experiences at SIT, Mr Lee was able to overcome self-doubt and face whatever life threw at him.

"I will always remember what my mentors have told me: To always be learning and growing," he says.

> "I will always remember what my mentors have told me: To always be **learning and growing.**"
>
> **Mr Jantzen Lee**
> Recipient of the SIT Scholarship

Scan for more on the **SIT Scholarship.**

SIT scholar Jantzen Lee is part of the team who commissions new trains for the Thomson-East Coast Line.
PHOTO: SPH MEDIA