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**Bachelor of Business Management**  
**(Tourism Management)**  
**First Class Honours 2008**



Upon finding out that I was majoring in leisure studies at university, my friends all produced the same startled reaction. "Leisure studies? Why do you need to learn about having fun?"

I soon got used to such expressions of surprise and disbelief. . After all, to the uninitiated, leisure studies may come across as an unusual field of study. In reality, the management of recreation is a diverse field that requires an extensive depth of specialised knowledge. The NParks scholarship offered me the unique chance to explore this intriguing academic domain, where leisure and recreation is researched, analysed and debated in a structured and systematic manner.

During my childhood, I was fortunate to spend 6 years living in one of the last surviving Kampongs in Singapore. My family home was surrounded by greenery and my father planted fruit trees providing a steady supply of tropical fruits. Naturally, I developed a love for nature and the outdoors, as well as a keen interest in exploring the rich flora and fauna in Singapore. I was thus eager to apply for a scholarship with NParks, with the aim of pursuing a career in this area.

My time at La Trobe University, Australia, was enriching. The coursework spanned Aristotle's philosophy on free time to Luther's Protestant work ethic, and helped develop my knowledge on a wide range of subjects. At the same time, hands-on projects such as organising fundraising events provided invaluable experience, and equipped me with the knowledge and skills to manage recreational services.

Although living in a foreign country was difficult at times, the challenges of assimilating into a different culture and the need for self-sufficiency have shaped my personality, building greater self-confidence and independence. I have also grown to cherish my family and friends more. NParks was very supportive throughout, and I very much appreciated the care and advice offered while I was overseas.

Upon completing my studies, I was assigned to oversee the management of East Coast Park. The job is exciting, complex, multi-faceted and far from a "walk in the park". Besides maintenance and horticulture works, I helped to coordinate numerous major events at East Coast Park. A major highlight was organising the inaugural Singapore Extreme Championship, at Xtreme SkatePark @ East Coast – Singapore's first international standard skate park. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working alongside world-class event experts from ESPN Star Sports to plan and execute this international action sports competition.

The diverse scope of work within NParks offer scholars a long-term career with challenges across areas including policy and planning, conservation, and business development. I have been involved in cross-departmental projects, which allowed me to better understand the operations of NParks and develop competencies in multiple areas. For instance, my stint in the planning division has taught me how to handle strategic land planning issues, while my current role in East Coast Park places me in the front-line to address concerns from the public.

To enable new officers like me to carry out my job more effectively, NParks provides comprehensive landscape training for all new recruits. This induction program was also a good time for us to network with other new recruits, which developed into firm friendships. We participated in hands-on horticultural projects and were briefed on the local landscape industry.

My career at NParks not only provides me with opportunities to apply academic theories to practical situations, but also allows me to develop other skills and capabilities continually. There is no doubt that NParks offers its officers a platform to grow, and takes pains to nurture them from fresh-eyed greenhorns to dynamic individuals.

Though I am only 9 months into the job, I can see the potential for a lifelong career at NParks. If you share a similar passion for the outdoors, and want to play a part in making Singapore a "City in a Garden", don't hesitate to take the first step by applying for an NParks scholarship. A meaningful, exciting and rewarding career awaits you.