

Getting To Know Our Students

Dr Ang Hak Seng, BBM, PhD graduate



Dr Ang Hak Seng, BBM

is currently the Deputy Secretary, Commissioner of Charities, and Executive Director of the Registry of Co-operative Societies and Mutual Benefit Organisations at the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. He is also a PhD graduate of Policy & Leadership Studies (PLS) Academic Group.

What are you currently working as?

I am in the public service and lead a government agency which brings people of diverse backgrounds together to live in harmony, and work with our government to make Singapore a better place for all of us. Diversity is both a boon and a challenge. But with the support of committed staff and dedicated volunteers, we offer platforms for people of different backgrounds, interests and needs to interact and understand one another better. In a nutshell, we promote the “kampong spirit” of looking out and caring for one another.

What attracted you to a higher degree programme at NIE?

As the leader of an organisation and a practitioner of community building, I wanted to leverage the latent knowledge and experience that I have accumulated over time. Research in pursuit of a higher degree helped me learn new ways to do things smarter, faster and ultimately, better for our citizens. In making a choice amongst being smarter, faster, or better, there will always be trade-offs. Therefore, I decided to embark on this research to satisfy my curiosity and quest for new insights and knowledge.

How would you describe your interactions with NIE faculty members?

The sessions with the reviewers were engaging as they were very much like peer-to-peer interactions. In many ways, Associate Professor Ng Pak Tee, my supervisor, gave lots of input by bouncing off ideas and viewpoints; and value-added to the research work in a nurturing manner.

Could you share with us more on the research that you did? Did the research yield the desired outcome that you hoped for?

My research work expanded my horizons and challenged me to be even more open-minded when looking at issues. One key learning point for me is that decisions are not always just a choice between ‘1 or 2’ nor a combined choice of ‘1 and 2’; they could very well be the dynamics and tension between ‘1 and 2’.

What was the best part of being a student at NIE?

The quest for knowledge is never-ending. Being able to explore new knowledge and ideas was what I really enjoyed about being a researcher.

Has the programme been beneficial to you in bringing forth changes in your organisation?

At work, I have already started implementing some of the new paradigms that I discovered through my research. Now that my research has been endorsed, I will step up the pace of implementing my learning, for the benefit of Singaporeans and the community.