

Teaching, And Learning As Well

By
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During the day, Ngee Ann Polytechnic provides quality tertiary education to teenagers and young adults. In the evenings, the polytechnic attracts a different crowd – working adults. Ngee Ann Polytechnic is a Continuing Education and Training academy and part of the CET Masterplan which provides a lifelong learning system to help our workers stay relevant and seize opportunities in new growth areas.

In this current economic downturn, Ngee Ann Polytechnic also serves as a provider of courses under the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR).

Mr Tan Kay Tiow, President of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Academic Staff Union, said: “With greater emphasis on SPUR, our members will be required to teach both young students as well as working adults. We would have to equip ourselves with skills to counsel and guide the young students, and impart relevant work skills to the adults.

“Thus our members have to be well equipped with the proper Information Technology skills relevant to their own discipline of knowledge as well as IT skills needed to deliver their lessons. They have to be well-versed in both domain IT and pedagogical IT.

“Members who are interested in teaching adult learners, especially under the courses sponsored by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, are strongly encouraged to obtain the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment. Currently, under mutual



arrangements between WDA and Ngee Ann Polytechnic, existing full-time lecturers are given exemption from ACTA. However, on re-employment, members would need to have ACTA to teach WDA sponsored programmes, hence the encouragement on the part of NPASU to its members to obtain ACTA.”

Besides teaching and training others, Ngee Ann Polytechnic lecturers themselves are required to clock in 10 days of training per year. NPASU has the agreement of the management to allow its members to undergo long-term training, both locally and overseas, whenever there is a need. Such trainings include taking up a Masters programme sponsored by the management. Other incentives include granting of special leave for examinations and thesis writing.

“There is no need for the union to push our members to upgrade. In our occupation, all our members understand that it is their responsibility to update their own skills and knowledge through formal and informal training. It is important for them to set an example for the students that they teach,” said Mr Tan.



The Ngee Ann Polytechnic Academic Staff Union was set up in 1980 as a house union representing the interest of the polytechnic’s academic staff. The union currently has 634 members – 514 Ordinary Branch members and 120 General Branch members. The union aims to achieve a total of 530 OB members and 140 GB members and have a membership outreach of around 90 per cent.

A Proactive Union

NPASU is enjoying a high level of success in terms of membership recruitment. 80 per cent of newly recruited lecturers join the union within six months of their employment.

Mr Tan Kay Tiow, President of NPASU, explained: “We are proactive in serving our members. New lecturers join us because their colleagues, who are already on our books, strongly recommended them to join us. We provide a channel for our members to air their grievances. The interest of lecturers is better served, if they channel their grievances to us and we bring it up to the management for them.”

Another possible reason for this is the good Labour Management Relations. The union is working on engaging the management at all levels in understanding the need for good LMR and getting management staff to join as General Branch members, so that they can also benefit from union membership.



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