OmniSCI
An online publication especially for NUS Science students and alumni

NUS National University of Singapore | Faculty of Science

Students

The X-Factor in Science!

For the first time, Faculty of Science students clinched top prize in the Amazing Science-X Challenge.

Recognising our best and brightest

The Science Students' Awards are given out annually to honour students who have performed exceedingly well in their respective fields of studies.

What is it like to be a Science student?

Ever wondered how exciting life can be for a Science student? Read on to find out...

Prime

A heritage to preserve

The new Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum is on its third phase of fundraising to engage a talent pool before setting to open in 2014.

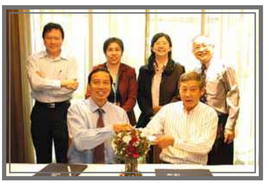
Science Club: Unity through participation

Meet the 33rd Science Club Executive Committee who will unite Science through welfare and participation.

Alumni/Friends

Nurturing post-graduates

The Faculty receives a generous gift from Rhodia Novecare Asia Pacific that will develop and nurture post-graduate students in Science.



Help for the needy students

The Goh Foundation made a munificent gift that brings hope and help to deserving and needy Science students.

Are you ready to face the world?

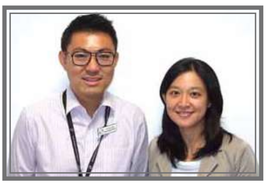
Hear it from alumni who have taken similar paths, and meet potential employers right here at your Faculty.

Science ON SATURDAY!

What's Up...

Check out the events held from April 2013 to September 2013!

Research

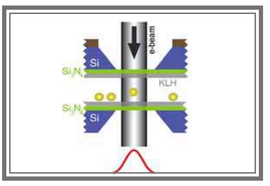


When drugs do damages

For the first time in Singapore, Assistant Professor Nancy Ko reviewed drug interactions in medications prescribed for cancer patients.

Co-discoverer of evolution and Singapore

For the first time, lesser known co-discoverer of the theory of evolution, Alfred Russel Wallace gets his well-deserved recognition by having his complete works available online.



E-beam Allows for Precise Manipulation of Nanoparticles

For the first time, scientists demonstrate the possibility of manipulating nanoparticles and pave the way for useful applications.

Department

A prestigious win

For having a breakthrough research in the understanding of cell movement, Professor Michael Sheetz wins the Lasker Award 2012.

Pharmacy shines

Since its establishment in 2005, the AAPS-NUS Student Chapter has brought valuable experiences to students of the NUS Pharmacy Department. Their hard work has recently paid off.

An outstanding young scientist

Recognised for his works on interface engineering for molecular, organic and graphene electronics, Assistant Professor Chen Wei was awarded Young Scientist Award for 2012.

Faculty Champions

From a humble beginning, the Faculty of Science is where it is today as a result of an undoubtedly capable and talented pool of faculty and support staff. The annual Faculty Level Awards pay tribute to them.

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PRIME

A heritage to preserve

The new Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum is on its third phase of fundraising to engage a talent pool before setting to open in 2014.

(From left) NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Prof Leo Tan, Dr Lee Seng Tee, Prof Tommy Koh, Dr S R Nathan and Faculty of Science Dean, Prof Andrew Wee at the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum.

The Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum is on its way to becoming one of the largest collections of Southeast Asian biodiversity in the region as well as home to rare 150-million year old dinosaur fossils.

A dream come true

The idea of a Southeast Asian natural museum was first conceived by Professor Tommy Koh, who was then Chairman of the National Heritage Board in 2004. The idea was eventually "a dream come true" when two passionate individuals, Professor Leo Tan and Professor Peter Ng embarked on an ambitious journey to transform this idea into reality.

Fundraising campaigns have been taking place in three parts to address specific needs of the new museum. Namely, for the construction of the building, exhibits and then a pool of talent.

At the moment, the museum has captured strong interest for its near-complete dinosaur fossils, fondly nicknamed, Twinky, Apollonia and Prince. Prof Leo Tan believes that "when the museum is completed, it will serve as a hub for learning and discovering natural history."

The final phase of raising $10 million for employing talent in the enlarged museum is now underway. The museum is looking to appoint those who have the knowledge, passion, credibility and ability in biodiversity and natural heritage to excite others.

Groundbreaking

Construction for the museum commenced on 11 January 2013, with a groundbreaking ceremony held in the presence of 40 guests including Guest-of-Honour Prof Tommy Koh, Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large and Honorary Chairman of Singapore's National Heritage Board, sixth President of Singapore Dr S R Nathan and Dr Lee Seng Tee, Director of Lee Foundation.

The new seven-storey museum that has been designed by W Architects, will be completed in 2014 and will serve a crucial role in preserving Southeast Asian heritage and as Prof Peter Ng pointed out, "house collective memories". He added that it will also allow for the current Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research (RMBR) to expand its research and "bring what we do to a higher level."

In his speech, NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan commented on how this task to "scale up its works on biodiversity preservation, education and research has been made more crucial against the backdrop of climate change and a rapidly developing Asia."

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PRIME

Science Club: Unity through participation

Meet the 33rd Science Club Executive Committee who will unite Science through welfare and participation.

Joyce Fu (back row, 2nd from right), President of the 33rd Science Club Executive Committee, with the rest of the members who will be planning events and activities to ensure an enriching student life for the Science Faculty.

Through a symbolic handover ceremony, the newly elected Science Club's 33rd Executive Committee (ExCo) officially took over from the 32nd ExCo on 11 September 2012.

Carrying on the "black-and-white" tradition, the ceremony saw the ExCo's incoming members dressed in all white and receiving a key pendant from the outgoing ExCo members who were dressed in all black.

"I am very honoured to be able to have this opportunity to lead the Science Club. The 33rd ExCo seeks to reach out to more students in Science and put the welfare of Science students as a priority as we plan the various upcoming events," said the newly elected president of Science Club, Joyce Fu.

In her first speech as the incoming President of the 33rd ExCo, the Year 2 Life Sciences student also called upon Science students to join the club as subcommittee members and participate in the events organised, "as we move forward together as friends and family towards an even better Science Faculty!"

The new members of Science Club's 33rd Executive Committee (ExCo) are:

President –
Fu ZiHui Joyce, Year 2, Life Sciences

Vice-President (Internal Affairs) –
Chua Si Hao, Year 2, Life Sciences

Vice-President
(Freshmen Orientation Projects) –
Tan Jun Kai, Year 2, Applied Mathematics

Honorary General Secretary –
Tan Chin Yee, Year 2, Life Sciences

Honorary Treasurer –
Low Jing Wen Vanessa, Year 2, Chemistry

Welfare Director –
Tng Le Hua, Year 2, Chemistry

Sports Director –
Chen Wei Wei, Year 1, Statistics

Publications Director –
Ng Kian Wee Aaron, Year 2, Applied Mathematics and Economics

Dinner & Dance Director –
Marcus Chong, Year 2, Applied Mathematics

Science Volunteer Corps (SVC) –
Elgin Ting Zhi Hong, Year 4, Chemistry

Freshmen Orientation Project Assistant Chairperson (FOPAC) –
Shawn Poh, Year 1, Statistics

Science CAMP Director –
Ng Shun Xiang Alan, Year 3, Chemistry

Science Orientation Week Director –
Koh Chen Hong Kenneth, Year 2, Mathematics

RAG Director –
Doh Poh, Year 4, Life Sciences

Flag Director –
Lee Min Jue, Vanessa, Year 2, Life Sciences

Business Director –
Tan Kai Bin, Year 3, Statistics

Internal Committee Assistant Chairperson –
Tang Wai Kit, Year 2, Chemistry

Administrative Liaison Secretary –
Ng Jun De Andrew, Year 1, Chemistry

Project Angel Director –
Erika Ivana Halim, Year 3, Life Sciences

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STUDENTS

The X-Factor in Science!

For the first time, Faculty of Science students clinched top prize in the Amazing Science-X Challenge.

The winning team from NUS on their way to national fame as they receive their awards from Dr Tan Kim Siew, Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (second from left). From left: Alisa Lim, Dr Tan Kim Siew, Amelia Tan and Ernest Tan.

We see and use various light sources every day, but how much do we know about and appreciate them?

Faculty of Science (FoS) students built a meritorious exhibit that demonstrated the concepts of light spectra and diffraction that won the hearts of the judges at the Amazing Science-X Challenge 2012.

Organised by DSO National Laboratories (DSO), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Science Centre Singapore, the Amazing Science-X Challenge sets out to find exhibits with the X-factor that best explain a science phenomenon.

The X-hibit

Using some everyday materials such as table lamps to construct the exhibit, Ernest Tan, Alisa Lim and Amelia Tan from the Special Programme in Science (SPS) displayed the different wavelengths of light in a visually appealing and intuitive fashion to explain diffraction. The exhibit revealed the rich and interesting structure hidden in ordinary "white" light and comparisons were also done between different light sources such as fluorescent, incandescent and LED lamps. It allowed viewers to appreciate the differences between these everyday light sources, and thereby gain a better understanding of the nature of light.

Special mention award team from FoS receiving their prize. From left: Rebecca Khoo, Joey Wang,CEO of DSO Mr Quek Gim Pew and Ng Wei Jie.

Their captivating exhibit earned them top prize in Category D (Polytechnics, Universities and Others), which is a first for FoS.

Also worth mentioning is another team from SPS, Joey Wang, Ng Wei Jie and Rebecca Khoo, whose exhibit seeks to explain superhydrophobicity or commonly known as the "lotus leaf" effect.

Their exhibit won them a Special Mention Award in Category D.

"I'm very proud for both teams' achievements. Indeed, their winnings justify the amount of effort and commitment they put in as they spent the whole of their June holidays to prepare for this competition," Mr Andreas Dewanto, from the Department of Physics and staff advisor for participating teams from FoS said about the achievements of the Faculty this year.

The winning team from FoS is now on their way to gaining national fame as their exhibit is being displayed in the Science Centre Singapore and viewed by millions, alongside other winning exhibits from other categories.

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STUDENTS

Recognising our best and brightest

The Science Students' Awards are given out annually to honour students who have performed exceedingly well in their respective fields of studies.

Proud moment for Mr and Mrs Ong (first and second from left), who specially took leave off work to witness their son, Zongjin (second from right) receive his prize. Also in the picture is Zongjin's younger brother (far right).

For Ong Zongjin, recipient of the Arthur Rajaratnam Prize for Experimental Physics II, the prize certainly gave his confidence a boost before he embarks on a teaching career upon graduation.

"It was really a very big surprise to me. Part of the module included oral presentation on our experiment, and I guess that was what made me stand out as I have always been keen to share about Physics with people. That is also why I chose to be a Physics teacher," beamed the Ministry of Education Teaching Scholarship (Local) holder.

To encourage more students to continue their pursuit of physics, the Arthur Rajaratnam Prize is awarded to two top performing students who have excelled at their experimental physics during their coursework every year.

A right to be proud

Zongjin is one of 33 students who received recognition at the annual Science Students' Awards Ceremony on 7 September 2012 at the University Hall Auditorium.

Congratulating the winners, Professor Andrew Wee, Dean of Faculty of Science said in his opening speech," Your accomplishment today is the culmination of a long and arduous process and your parents and teachers have every right to be proud of you, and you have every right to be proud of yourselves."

Indeed so, as the Science Students' Awards recognise the best and brightest students in their respective fields of studies for having outstanding academic achievements.

These awards are made possible from the proceeds of donations by individual and corporate donors. This year's ceremony was graced by our kind donors, including Emeritus Professor Goh Suat Hong, Ms Linda Seah and Ms Venasse Yap from Baxter Healthcare (Asia) Pte Ltd, Dr Karen Chong from Singapore National Institute of Chemistry, Dr Lena Goh from Food Science & Technology Alumni, Mr Philip Curran from Firmenich Asia Pte Ltd, Mr. Richard Khaw from Singapore Institute of Food Science & Technology, and Mr. Olsen Ong from SIS'88 Pte Ltd.

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Students being recognised at the Science Students' Awards Ceremony were:

Tan Teck Chwee Book Prize
Luo Yusheng
Toinh Long Teng

Tan Siak Kew Gold Medal
Zhou Jun

Baxter Academic Excellence Prize
Hong Yi Shuen
Loh Guek Leng
Wong Bin Sheng

Arthur Rajaratnam Prize
Michel Lim Yi Han
Ong ZongJin

Goh Teng Loon-Wong Kim Lo Medal
William Zhan

Firmenich Best Honours Student
Welzl Nicolas Xin Qiao

Food Spectrum Prize
Amanda Ang Mei Yen

PJB Book Prize
Tay Geng Yu

Jurong Shipyard Book Prize
Ang Ther Wey Jeysthur
Deng Jiawen
Ng Kia Boon
Tan Ying Zhe Ernest
Teo Meng How
Wong Whye Khuin Nicholas

Malayan Nature Society Silver Medal
Mohamed Hussain

Special Programme in Mathematics
Book Prize
Shi Xiaojie

Lim Soo Peng Book Prize
Li Chenhao
Zhou Jun

Schering Plough Gold Medal
Quah Hong Sheng

Raffles Prize
Yeo Renjie Wilfred
Navjot Sodhi Prize
Lim Bock Hing Rayson

Runme Shaw Book Prize
Koh Xin Yu Hazel
Leong Shi Yun

SIFST-NUS Best Student Award cum
SIFST Scholarship
Toh Mingzhan

Singapore National Institute of Chemistry Book Prize
Gan Wei Kiat Vincent
Liew Shu Min Christina
Tan Weiliang Jansen

SIS Sugar Prize
Tan Ying Zhe Ernest
Zhou Yiming

Group photo of all prize recipients, donors, Head of Departments and the Deanery of Faculty of Science.

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STUDENTS

What is it like to be a Science student?

Ever wondered how exciting life can be for a Science student? Read on to find out...

Elgin trying his hands at mixing a skin lotion at Johnsons & Johnsons Singapore.

University life is not all about paper chasing for that degree. While pursuing academic excellence, why not try out something enriching? If you hesitate because of fear of the unknown, read on to find out how exciting life can be by actively participating in activities outside the curriculum!

Having a go at making a skin lotion

"My hands were always smooth after working at the Research & Development (R&D) lab!" chuckles Elgin Ting, a Year 4 Chemistry major.

He was reminiscing about his internship at Johnsons & Johnsons (J&J) Singapore, which is part of the Undergraduate Professional Internship Programme (UPIP). Elgin managed to impress the interviewers by putting the interview skills he learnt into practice and was selected by J&J to be an intern attached to the Quality & Compliance (Q&C) and R&D departments.

"I followed a formula and tried my hands at making a batch of J&J skin lotion, but too bad I couldn't bring any back with me," Elgin shared his experience working at the R&D department.

Through the 2 months internship, Elgin also managed the raw material database and had to ensure quality and compliance with other offices. "I had to correspond with offices in the neighbouring regions and that was an eye-opener for me," Elgin said. "Having colleagues from different countries and cultures also sharpened my communications skills and definitely better prepared me for the working world. I learnt how to communicate in different ways with different counterparts from other parts of the world in order to get them to cooperate with me for certain tasks as they have different working styles," he added.

Recalling his experience at J&J, Elgin was all positive about it. Initially he took up the module SP1001, Career Planning & Preparation, to learn about transiting himself from school to work. Thereafter, he decided to take what he has learnt from the module to another level by participating in UPIP where he will get a chance to put what he learnt in SP1001 into good use, get some relevant working experience and also a taste of how it is like to work in a big corporation like J&J.

Elgin said, "I was feeling very nervous while waiting for my turn to be interviewed. I recalled what we did during the mock interview practice we did in class for SP1001, and that really proved to be useful for me to clinch the internship opportunity."

Other than being able to get some working experience, Elgin also shared that a beneficial part of the programme was that he got to try out whether pursuing a chemistry-related career is what he really wants to do after graduation.

"After my internship with J&J, I am even surer that I would want to have a career that is chemistry related. After studying chemistry for so many years and seeing the relevance and importance of it in the consumer world makes me feel that all the effort and hard work are all worthwhile!"

Having a hand in faculty events

For Chua Si Hao, Vice President (Internal Affairs) of the NUS Students' Science Club, science and movies are his greatest passion. Thus, weaving movies into celebrating Science came naturally.

"I was thinking of a way to integrate the various Academic societies and their respective disciplines into a common theme to showcase Science for Science Day 2013. In the end, I decided that "Science in the Movies" will be an elegant solution as the sheer breadth of topics that movies cover will provide us with many topics to discuss and showcase," explained Si Hao. "Furthermore, the accessibility of movies to the student population made the topic easy to relate to," he added.

His decision proved to be a brilliant one as students flooded the foyer of LT27, participating in activities held as a celebration for Science Day on 22 January 2013. Each Academic Society had a booth for students to visit as part of a crossword puzzle game, and at the end of the day, a lucky winner walked away with an iPod Nano, amongst other prizes.

Enjoying himself tremendously at the event, Shankari Ganesan, a Year 2 Life Science major said, "It was a fresh concept as it enlightened us about scientific concepts behind movies such as the principles of 3D movies demonstrated by the Physics Society."

"As students of the Faculty of Science, Science Day gave us a unique opportunity to perceive Science in a brand new way. Despite watching and dealing with movies a lot in our daily lives, not many of us would have a good understanding of the workings behind movies. Science Day 2013 allowed many students to learn about principles and concepts certainly not covered in any lectures. Science Day also gave many students a chance to really feel proud about being a student of Science, as it showed how useful and integrated Science is to the world around us," Si Hao, who is a Life Science major himself, said with a wide smile.

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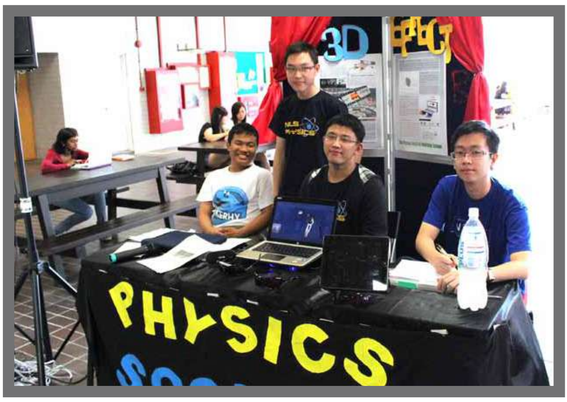

Members of the Physics Society chose to demonstrate scientific principles behind 3D movies.

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Alumni/Friends

Nurturing post-graduates

The Faculty receives a generous gift from Rhodia Novecare Asia Pacific that will develop and nurture post-graduate students in Science.

Seated: Representing FoS, Prof Andrew Wee (left) and Dr Chen Pu, representing Rhodia Asia Pacific Pte Ltd

Standing, from left : Prof Ji Wei, Ms Anna Chia, Mr Galder Cristobal, Mr Pierre-Franck Valentin, Assoc Prof Chin Wee Shong, Ms Chay Choy Fun, Dr Lawrence Chia and Prof Xu Guo Qin.

One deserving PhD candidate will benefit from the prestigious scholarship, Rhodia Graduate Fellowship in Science, in Academic Year 2013/14, made possible by the generous donation of $150,000 by Rhodia Novecare Asia Pacific.

Encouraging excellence in science

"This collaboration with NUS is evident in all the strong commitment our organisation has placed on developing talents to meet the needs of sustainable growth in the region" said Dr Chen Pu, Vice President & General Manager, Novecare Asia Pacific, during the signing ceremony held at the Scholars NUSS Guild House on 25 October 2012.

Also present at the ceremony were Mr Pierre-Franck Valentin, Vice President, Product Line Management, Novecare Global, Ms Chay Choy Fun, Human Resource Director, Novecare Asia Pacific, Mr Galder Cristobal, Research & Development Manager, Novecare Asia Pacific.

Professor Andrew Wee, Dean of FoS, graciously acknowledged the gift and said; "The Rhodia Graduate Fellowship in Science will be a highly-regarded award that will enable the Faculty of Science to groom the next generation of outstanding students. It would further spur the developments and recognise the achievements of graduate students in science."

About Rhodia Novecare Asia Pacific

Rhodia is a member of the Solvay Group, an international industrial company offering a broad range of products and solutions that contribute to improving the quality of life.

With 14,250 employees and sales of EUR 6.17 billion in 2011, Rhodia is a world leader in the development and production of specialty chemicals. They provide added-value products and high-performance solutions to diversified markets, including automotive, electronics, flavors and fragrances, health, personal and home care, consumer goods and industrial, through their 11 Global Business Units.

Rhodia has a strong geographic presence in high-growth markets and a resolute commitment to sustainable development. The company also stands strong in supporting and encouraging NUS in their efforts to foster education to achieve the same goal. This donation to the Science Graduate Fellowship further serves as a testament of their commitment to nurturing young talent in Singapore.

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ALUMNI/FRIENDS

Help for the needy students

The Goh Foundation made a munificent gift that brings hope and help to deserving and needy Science students.

Representing FoS, Prof Andrew Wee (left) received a generous gift from Dr Tan Eng Liang, representing the Goh Foundation. Also present were (from left) Dr Chew Tuan Chiong, Ms Anna Chia, Assoc Prof Chin Wee Shong and Dr Lawrence Chia.

Started in 2012, the Goh Foundation Bursary has helped four needy students from the Faculty of Science (FoS).

Made possible by a generous gift of $150,000 from the Goh Foundation, a signing ceremony and lunch was held on 4 December 2012 to show the Faculty's appreciation for the gift.

Held at the Shaw Foundation Alumni House, the ceremony and lunch were attended by Dr Tan Eng Liang and Dr Chew Tuan Chiong, Directors from the Goh Foundation, Professor Andrew Wee, Dean, Associate Professor Chin Wee Shong, Vice-Dean, Dr Lawrence Chia and Ms Anna Chia, Associate Director.

Acknowledging the gift, Prof Wee noted that this gift will be an encouragement to needy students, giving them hope and help to complete their education in NUS despite their family's financial situation. "This gift will propel students to achieve academic excellence and to continue in the cycle of giving and receiving," added Prof Wee.

The Goh Foundation Bursary targets to benefit up to 6 needy students by Academic Year 2014/15.

About the Goh Foundation

The Goh Foundation is committed to helping the sick and the needy through various community-based efforts. Through corporate philanthropy, the Goh Foundation seeks to improve the quality of health and education through pro-active programmes in the Singapore National Cancer Centre, Singapore General Hospital, Universities and Polytechnics, amongst others.

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ALUMNI/FRIENDS

Are you ready to face the world?

Hear it from alumni who have taken similar paths, and meet potential employers right here at your Faculty.

Ms June Chiam from Applied Materials SEA Pte Ltd sharing with 2 enthusiastic students the opportunities in her organisation.

In getting our students ready for their future, the Faculty of Science (FoS) brings Science Career Nexus and Science Alumni –Student Networking Evening back in their second and fourth run respectively.

Science Career Nexus

Held annually, the Science Career Nexus gives employers from various industries a chance to meet some 1,000 intelligent and ambitious Science students who will be soon graduating and embarking on a professional career. At the same time, our students get to talk to these employers and assess their suitability and determine their interest in a specific field.

This year, the Faculty is pleased to have companies from diverse industries to participate in this one day event held on 8 March at University Hall. Some participating companies were Singapore Economic Development Board, Pall Filtration, Applied Materials SEA Pte Ltd, Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, Unicorn Financial Solutions, Kelly Services and AXA Hedging Services.

The employers were certainly heartened to see the enthusiasm from students seeking to know more about the various trades and skills required for different industries.

Students who attended the event generally found it enriching and useful in finding out more information about each industry and the different types of careers that they can consider with a degree in Science.

Science Alumni-Student Networking Evening

Being able to learn from seniors who have taken similar paths was what made the Science Alumni-Student Networking Evening a repeated success.

The networking evening this March saw 20 Science alumni making a special trip "home" to share with the juniors their career possibilities with a degree in Science. The event was a great success and students were still crowding around alumni way past 9pm.

Coming from a wide representation of industries, participating students found it particularly useful as they learned about the endless opportunities waiting for them.
Both alumni and students enjoyed themselves during this sharing session, and the students particularly look forward to more of such occasions to consult with their seniors.

The Science Alumni-Student Networking Evening session was held at the University Hall on 8 March 2013, from 7pm to 9pm.

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Ms Karine Teo (far right) explaining what a Food Safety Executive with 7-Eleven does and the satisfaction she derives from the job.

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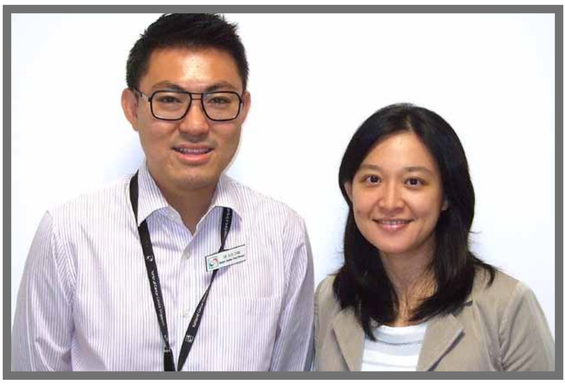
RESEARCH

When drugs do damages

For the first time in Singapore, Assistant Professor Nancy Ko reviewed drug interactions in medications prescribed for cancer patients.



Assoc Prof Alexandre Chan and Asst Prof Nancy Ko noted the lack of research in interacting drugs prescribed to cancer patients and thus did a retrospective study for review.

Both cancer patients taking oral anti-cancer drugs and doctors who are prescribing them, should pay extra attention to the other accompanying medications that patients are taking.

This is because a study done by Asst Prof Nancy Ko from the Department of Pharmacy found that 5.4% of cancer patients in Singapore who are taking oral anticancer drugs are exposed to other interacting drugs that might induce adverse effects.

Putting the focus on cancer patients

"Most studies on drug interactions are done on the general public or the elderly," said Asst Prof Ko. "However, compared to the general population, cancer patients are more vulnerable to drug-drug interactions and little is known about the worldwide rates of these interactions in oncology," she added.

Thus, in order to put the focus on cancer patients, Asst Prof Ko, together with Associate Professor Alexandre Chan, led a team of researchers to conduct a retrospective investigation on interacting drugs on 8,837 cancer patients; a first in Singapore, and one of the few worldwide.

Conducted over 2 years from 2007 to 2009 at the National Cancer Centre, Asst Prof Ko and her team reviewed 39,772 oral anti-cancer drugs prescribed, aiming to find the extent to which drugs that has potential harmful effects when taken in combination, are prescribed to patients.

In the study, some commonly prescribed interacting drug combination included prednisolone with aspirin, that induces an increased risk for gastrointestinal ulceration when taken together and methotrexate with amoxicillin or ketoprofen, which may increase methotrexate toxicity when combined. Methotrexate toxicity may result in a wide range of systemic adverse events, such as myelosuppression, mucositis, renal dysfunction and central nervous system toxicity.

"However, the extent of harm to patients from the drug-drug interaction co-prescriptions is unknown," Asst Prof Ko shared her concerns.

A need to raise awareness

Concerned over the results of her study, Asst Prof Ko commented that there is a need to raise the awareness of the importance of interactions between drugs among healthcare providers, particularly those involving oral anti-cancer drugs, since the use and availability of these drugs are increasing. In addition, doctors' prescribing support systems should be put to the best use, and pharmacists' screening of the prescriptions during dispensing should be valued.

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RESEARCH

Co-discoverer of evolution and Singapore

For the first time, lesser known co-discoverer of the theory of evolution, Alfred Russel Wallace gets his well-deserved recognition by having his complete works available online.

Dr John van Wyhe (middle) with Professor Andrew Wee, Dean of Faculty of Science (left) and Professor Gregory Clancey, Master, Tembusu College, NUS University Town (right) at the launch of Wallace Online.

Did you know that Southeast Asia was the birthplace of evolution, and not the Galapagos Islands?

Back in 1854, British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace began his research in the biodiversity of Southeast Asia. Using Singapore as his base, he did extensive research throughout the region observing the distribution and habits of local wildlife and discovering hundreds of new species. In total he and his assistants collected 125,000 specimens of insects, birds and animals.

The specimens that Wallace collected were pivotal in inspiring him to understand how species become adapted to their natural environments by process of natural selection. The theory was first published in a joint paper together with Charles Darwin in July 1858.

Recognition and access to Wallace's works

Wallace has never enjoyed the fame and reputation of Darwin and access to his many publications, scattered over hundreds of newspapers, magazine and journals, has been impossible.

Darwin had his complete works edited, digitalised and published on the website, ***Darwin Online***, in 2006 by Dr John van Wyhe, then at the University of Cambridge. In 2009, upon being appointed as Senior Lecturer at the NUS Department of Biological Sciences, Dr van Wyhe and his assistant Dr Kees Rookmaaker began to work on ***Wallace Online***, which has for the first time published the complete works of Wallace and a large collection of additional material.

Dr van Wyhe said "Wallace is an outstanding example of someone who had no privilege, no wealth, no connections - and who went out to make his own way in the world. He learned to study and think independently. He discovered many amazing things about living things, not just evolution and he did so with modesty and good humour. That's why he remains such an inspiring figure for so many people."

Taking 3 years to complete the website, ***Wallace Online*** was launched on 27 September 2012 at Tembusu College, University Town.

The big Wallace year

Made possible by an anonymous grant from an American donor, the free site offers 29,000 pages of documents and 26,000 images. It contains everything from Wallace's first tentative scientific contribution to a journal to his full range of scientific books. Most of them have been out of print for decades.

The year 2013 is the centenary of Wallace's death, so the website is timely for researchers to access his life's work together with thousands of illustrations and scientific descriptions of his specimens from South East Asia.

"Just like 2009 was the big Darwin year, 2013 will be the big Wallace year. And I hope now that people have access to all of his writings, it will make a big difference to what people say and write about him." Said Dr John van Wyhe.

Now, you will be able to access all the works of this founding father of biodiversity online at ***http://wallace-online.org***.

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Some examples of the wildlife which Wallace collected in Singapore included the butterfly Elymnias undularis (bottom left) and the Asian Fairy-bluebird (top right).

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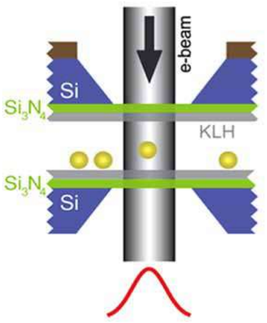
RESEARCH

E-beam Allows for Precise Manipulation of Nanoparticles

For the first time, scientists demonstrate the possibility of manipulating nanoparticles and pave the way for useful applications.



An electron beam passes through a silicon nitride window and traps gold nanoparticles inside the beam. (credit: Haimei Zheng et al./ Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory)

A first in the field, scientists have discovered the way to trap single or multiple nanoparticles and move them over large distances at will using an electron beam.

This discovery is by Dr Utkur M. Mirsaidov, research fellow from the Mechanobiology Institute (MBI) at NUS, in collaboration with Dr Zheng Haimei from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Unlike optical tweezers, electron beams allow for precision of manipulation of nanoparticles and even assemble them on a surface. This means that fabrication of devices using one nanoparticle at a time could, at last, be possible.

Unveiling new possibilities

Dr Mirsaidov commented, "Interaction between nanoparticles can be complex and diverse inside the beam. The chaotic movement of these particles is an area that the team is hoping to look into."

The discovery of using light to exert pressure for the movement of small particles was first developed by Arthur Ashkin of Bell Laboratories in the 1970s. Since then, optical tweezers were slowly being developed to achieve the trapping of both large and small particles. However, optical trapping of nanoparticles poses a great challenge. The forces understandably decrease rapidly when the object becomes smaller and this does not make it ideal for manipulation of particles of nanoscale.

Noting the difficulties, the research team's findings were a result of passing an electron beam through an environmental cell containing gold particles (sandwiched between two silicon nitride membranes) measuring ten-nanometer in diameter. As the beam was passed, the gold nanoparticles were trapped and bounced to and fro within the beam without being able to escape its confines. The team went on to alter the movements of the beam (faster and slower) together with singular and multiple gold nanoparticles.

When asked about the applications of this new finding, Professor Paul Matsudaira, Director of MBI and the Centre for BioImaging Sciences (CBIS) shared that "This (discovery) will allow the creation of new materials architectures and even toxicant particle removal."

Future directions

The trapping and manipulation of nanoparticles spell great potential for them to be collected and fused together. This in turn can lead to the synthesis of new materials that are useful in fabrication of new data storage devices, superfast computers, high-sensitivity chemical sensors and other useful devices.

Future directions in this area of research include the quest to understand how an electron beam traps these nanoparticles. The knowledge will enable the team to position nanoparticles precisely and rapidly in a programmed fashion. This involves overcoming the random motion of nanoparticles and working with a confined space between membranes.

The above mentioned paper was reported in Nanowerk.com. Click *here* to see how trapped gold nanoparticles are displaced within an electron beam.

Dr Mirsaidov discovered the ability of electronic beams to precisely move nanoparticles.

Prof Matsudaira looks forward to using electron beam for new materials architectures and toxicant particle removal.

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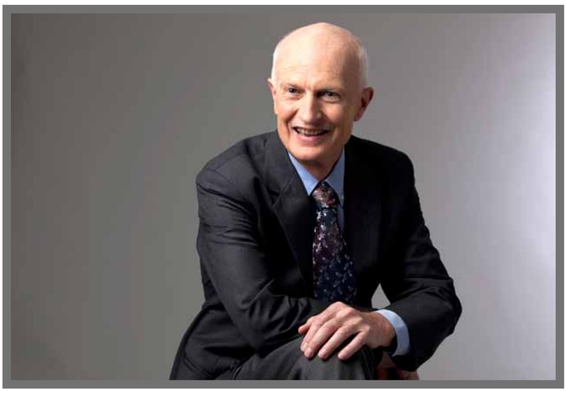
Department

A prestigious win

For having a breakthrough research in the understanding of cell movement, Professor Michael Sheetz wins the Lasker Award 2012.



Prof Michael Sheetz was honoured at the Lasker Awards 2012 for his research on cell movement.

Recognised for his breakthrough research of cell movement, Director of the Mechanobiology Institute of Singapore (MBI) and Distinguished Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences, Prof Michael Sheetz, is one of the two NUS scientists who won the prestigious Lasker Awards 2012.

A foundation for other medical applications

Prof Sheetz's research was in collaboration with Professor James Spundich (Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California) and Professor Ronald Vale (University of California, San Francisco), who discovered cytoskeletal motor proteins, which are like machines that transport cargoes within cells, contract muscles and enable cell movements.

"Their accomplishments enabled the discovery of the motor protein kinesin and unveiled the steps by which these engines convert chemical energy into mechanical work. The miniscule motors underlie numerous vital processes, and the landmark achievements of (this study) are driving drug-discovery efforts aimed at cardiac problems as well as cancer," according to the award description released for Prof Sheetz and team's Albert Lasker Basic Medical Research Award.

Their research has laid the foundation for many other potential medical applications.

An advocate of open culture of scientific exchange, Prof Sheetz thanked everyone who has played a part in his research for the past 30 years in his acceptance remarks and said, "The pace of discovery has always been greater when new technologies are brought to old problems. By bringing together the latest technologies of engineers and physicists with the problems of biology and medicine in an open, communicative environment, it has been and will be possible to discover many important aspects of the biological systems that underlie disease and regeneration in humans and animals."

About the Lasker Awards

The Lasker Awards are among the most respected science prizes in the world that honour the contributions of scientists, physicians and public servants towards the advancement of understanding of human diseases.

Since 1945 when the Lasker Awards were first given out, 83 Lasker laureates went on to receive the Nobel Prize, with 31 of them occurring in the last two decades. The Lasker Awards are hence often viewed as portends to the Nobel Prize.

The Lasker Awards 2012 were presented at a ceremony on 21 September 2012 at New York City.

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Pharmacy shines

Since its establishment in 2005, the AAPS-NUS Student Chapter has brought valuable experiences to students of the NUS Pharmacy Department. Their hard work has recently paid off.

Mr Liu Yuanjie delivering a short presentation after representing AAPS-NUS to receive the AAPS Outstanding Student Chapter of the Year award.

For the first time, the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) -NUS Student Chapter wins the AAPS Outstanding Student Chapter of the Year top prize.

The AAPS is a professional, scientific society that advocates the sharing of knowledge among scientists with the aim of enhancing international contributions to public health. Every year, the society recognises the top three AAPS student chapters around the world that have provided exceptional service and outreach to its members and the organisation with the AAPS Outstanding Student Chapter of the Year prizes.

Winning strategies

In his speech at the ceremony, Dr David Mitchell, 2012 President of the AAPS, commented on the 7th PharmSci@ Asia Symposium which the AAPS-NUS Student Chapter had organised in June 2012, "The mix of faculties, sponsors and student speakers kept the symposium interesting and energised. I like the fact that you brought together students from a variety of countries (and universities) in the Asia Pacific region, which may have made your symposium the only AAPS 'international' student meeting in 2012." Mr Liu Yuanjie, Chairperson of the AAPS-NUS Student Chapter, shared that the symposium was probably not the only factor that has driven the Chapter to higher standing.

Remaining strongly rooted to the core values of the AAPS-NUS Student Chapter has kept the group focused on providing opportunities for students. "Focusing on what students really care about," the Pharmacy PhD candidate highlighted. He felt that student chapters truly reflect students' interests and all events driven by the Chapter are students-oriented and catered to their development.

Effort from predecessors

Much credit has also been given to past committee members over the years since the Chapter was established in 2005.

Considerable and continuous effort from its members has always been put into improving the quality of seminars, symposiums and industry tie-ups.

"This really is an accumulated effort from all of the previous Executive Committee members," Yuanjie reiterated after receiving the honour at the AAPS Annual Meeting and Exposition in Chicago on 15 October 2012, in the presence of some 8,500 conference participants.

The award comprised of a certificate and USD$500, which will be used to fund a group activity.

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DEPARTMENT

An outstanding young scientist

Recognised for his works on interface engineering for molecular, organic and graphene electronics, Assistant Professor Chen Wei was awarded Young Scientist Award for 2012.

Asst Prof Chen Wei (left) receiving his award from Mr S Iswaran, Minister, Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Home Affairs and Trade & Industry.

"I hope I can revolutionise the research on data storage devices in the future."

This was what Asst Prof Chen Wei, recipient of the Young Scientist Award (YSA) 2012, had to say when asked about his long term research goals.

On his research

Asst Prof Chen was awarded for his research on interface engineering for molecular, organic and graphene electronics. Focusing his research on surface and interface science, Asst Prof Chen carried out atomic-scale investigation of the interface problems for molecular, organic and graphene electronics.

"The aim for my research is to use a single molecule to build the smallest molecular electronic devices," Asst Prof Chen shared.

Adding on, he said, "We demonstrated the feasibility of using dipole molecule to store information. If we can realise such information storage devices, we can actually achieve ultra high density data storage of capacity up to 100 times higher than current storage devices."

The current maximum storage capacity stands around 1 TB/inch^2, while the highest possible maximum storage capacity from Asst Prof Chen's molecule based storage device can go as high as 300 TB/ inch^2.

On his award

On his winning the YSA 2012, Asst Prof Chen, who belongs to both Department of Chemistry and Department of Physics said, "Winning this YSA award is recognition of my effort in doing research and pursuing research excellence." Adding special thanks to his former PhD supervisors, Head of Department of Chemistry, Professor Loh Kian Ping and Dean of Faculty of Science, Professor Andrew Wee, he said, "They are always ready to help me with useful suggestions for my research, which is greatly beneficial to my research career in NUS."

The YSA, administered by the Singapore National Academy of Science (SNAS) and supported by A*STAR are presented to young researchers, aged 35 and below, who are actively engaged in Research & Development in Singapore, and who have shown great potential to be world-class researchers in their fields of expertise.

The YSA 2012 was given out at the 2012 President's Science and Technology Awards (PSTA) ceremony on 30 October 2012 at the Resorts World Convention Centre.

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Department

Faculty Champions

From a humble beginning, the Faculty of Science is where it is today as a result of an undoubtedly capable and talented pool of faculty and support staff. The annual Faculty Level Awards pay tribute to them.

Recipient Dr Wang Qinghai (right), Department of Physics, receiving the award from Executive Vice President (Academic Affairs), Yale-NUS College, Professor Lai Choy Heng.

Mr Muthusamy s/o Annanvy (right), who has served the Faculty for 45 years, receiving his long service award from Associate Professor Roger Tan, Vice-Dean for Undergraduate Programmes.

"He's very entertaining and approachable. He uses potatoes, potato chips, onion rings and pizzas to explain integration."

This was what one student had to say about Dr Wang Qinghai, one of the recipients for the Teaching Excellence Award at the Faculty Level Awards 2012 held on 22 November 2012.

Tribute to excellent service

The Faculty Level Awards have traditionally recognised academic and administrative staff at the Faculty of Science (FoS) for continuous excellence in teaching, research and service as part of the Faculty's mission of providing quality education, fostering the spirit of enterprise and conducting leading edge research.

Amongst the over 200 staff who received an award for 2012, the largest group of recipients came from the Long Service Award category. These recipients were honoured for having crossed a significant milestone in their respective careers of over 10 to 45 years in FoS.

In particular, Mr Muthusamy s/o Annanvy, Operations Associate with the Department of Physics, who has toiled in FoS for 45 years, received rousing applause while on stage receiving his Long Service Award.

Tribute to excellent research

Another set of awards went to academic staff who have delivered outstanding contributions to research. A small but truly distinguished group, these scientists-researchers have been independently achieving consistently strong research track records in their area of expertise over a period of five years. The Outstanding Scientist Award signifies recognition by the science community for their significant breakthroughs and exceptional accomplishments in their field.

For a complete list of award winners, please click *here*.

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Science on Saturday 2013!

Not sure what to do on Saturdays? Join us in exploring Science!

Science on Saturday is back again this year with more fun and excitement!

Explore Science

Gain some science knowledge by attending the Science talks we have specially lined up for you. Be fascinated by our experiments and demonstrations. Get to experience intriguing Science principles and even go on a factory visit!

Keen to join?

Science on Saturday 2013 will be held at the NUS Faculty of Science on

1 June 2013
8 June 2013
15 June 2013

Check back on our website in May
www.science.nus.edu.sg
for more details!

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What's Up?

Check out the events held from April 2013 to September 2013!

MAY2013 18			• Faculty of Science Open House
JUN2013 1			• Science on Saturday
JUN2013 3			• Statistics Enrichment Camp
JUN2013 1	>	JUN2013 7	• NUS Chemistry Week 2013
JUN2013 3	>	JUL2013 12	• Nonlinear Expectations, Stochastic Calculus under Knightian Uncertainty, and Related Topics
JUN2013 8			• Science on Saturday
JUN2013 15			• Science on Saturday
JUN2013 9	>	JUN2013 21	• The 2013 IMS-FPS Workshop
JUL2013 6			• Alumni Day @ Bukit Timah Campus
JUL2013 14	>	JUL2013 15	• Faculty of Science Commencement Ceremonies
AUG2013 2			• Singapore Statistics Poster Competition Award Ceremony
AUG2013 17			• NUS Homecoming
AUG2013 24			• Mathematics Enrichment Camp
SEP2013 14			• Alumni Leaders Forum
SEP2013 26	>	SEP2013 27	• NUS-UTokyo Workshop on Quantitative Finance

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