

## Testimonial by Ng Wee Kang, Class of 2023

- **Why study Pharmacy? And how has the journey been thus far?**

I always enjoyed studying Chemistry and Biology since Secondary School. Therefore, I wanted a University course that incorporates both disciplines. More importantly, I wanted a career where I could translate my passion for Chemistry and Biology into something meaningful. For me, being able to help the sick recover or alleviate some of their discomfort is meaningful. Hence, Pharmacy was a natural choice.

The journey thus far has been challenging yet extremely rewarding. It is challenging as the Pharmacy curriculum requires you to learn sciences from many disciplines (eg. medicinal chemistry, pharmacology, biomedical sciences, biotechnology etc) which keeps you on your toes. However, that is also the beauty of it as there is always something new to be learnt! Grasping new concepts for the first time is always difficult but being able to master it eventually and seeing its application into clinical practice makes it all worth it. For example, knowledge on acid and bases from medicinal chemistry is important when considering whether certain drugs can be administered together through an intravenous line for a very sick patient in the hospital.



- **What interest you most in your studies?**

I really enjoy learning the pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics of drugs! In my own words, pharmacology studies how the body acts on a drug and how a drug acts on the body while pharmacotherapeutics is translating all that science behind a drug into clinical practice. It interests me a lot as I am transferring knowledge from textbooks/research to manage medical condition(s) of an actual patient. Also, there is never a dull moment when learning pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics! This is because there are so many medical conditions out there, each with their own unique set of issues, treatment, and clinical considerations. This makes it really interesting and challenging at the same time!

I also recently developed a strong interest in biopharmaceuticals! Biopharmaceuticals belong to an emerging class of medications that utilizes biomolecules such as DNA, antibodies, immune cells and many more to treat a variety of conditions. A few examples are the COVID-19 vaccine and immunotherapies to treat cancer.

- Apart from academic lessons, what other programmes (e.g. NOC, SEP, Summer/Winter Schools/Research/Internship, etc.) did you participate? And how did the experience(s) benefit you in your (a) personal growth and development, and (b) academic pursuits?

I am part of the University Town College Programme (UTCP) in Tembusu College. A unique aspect about the UTCP is that one gets to experience Inter-Disciplinary Learning in addition to Residential Living. In Tembusu College, the modules integrate themes of Science, Technology and Society. As such, I had the opportunity to take modules encompassing various disciplines. For instance, I took a module that teaches me the principles on how to prepare for a complex negotiation using real-world case studies such as Abraham Lincoln and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Charlene Barshefsky and US Intellectual Property Rights amongst others. I also took a module on linguistics focusing on Natural Semantic Metalanguage that seeks to explicate the meaning of words so that it can be understood across cultures. As such, being part of the UTCP broaden my perspective beyond Pharmacy and Sciences which is essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As part of Residential Living, I participated in several activities that allowed me to learn new skills, gain new experiences and make new friends. For example, I had my first experience in baking through tBakes, attended a formal dinner with my Pharmacy batchmates and picked up a fervent interest in running from Bolt and Pace. Being part of Tembusu College allows me to relax after a day of classes while still developing myself in non-academic aspects!



**Tembusu College Formal Dinner 2019**



**Bolt and Pace Interest Group**

- **What other interesting activities did you partake in to further enrich your student life, e.g. extra-curricular activities on campus (e.g. NUSPS, House, etc.)?**

There are so many to mention so I shall just share 2 of the most notable. The first was taking up the Youth and Mentoring Committee Head role in Tri-Generational Homecare (TriGen). TriGen is an Inter-Professional Healthcare Project involving 3 different generations – Elderly, University Healthcare Students and Secondary School Students. The Healthcare Students will conduct home visits/telemedicine fortnightly together with the Secondary School students! As Committee Head, I led a team to organize training sessions that equip students with the necessary medical and communication skills for home visits. During my time in TriGen, I had the opportunity to work closely and learn from Medicine, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Social Work students. It is very insightful to witness how various disciplines contribute their own unique skillsets to care for a patient holistically. This makes planning the training session challenging as all of us want to share our own unique skillsets with the students!



**Youth and Mentoring Committee AY19/20 and AY20/21**

The second is taking up the position as Vice-President (Internal) of NUS Pharmaceutical Society (NUSPS). NUSPS is the student-led organization under the Department of Pharmacy that is responsible for enriching student life academically, professionally and leisurely. As part of my portfolio, I oversee the 5 Houses of Pharmacy which is a support platform for all students. Upon entering Pharmacy, every student will be allocated to 1 of the 5 houses where you get to make friends with fellow House mates and attend House Events together! Each House have their own signature events and activities that caters to the varied interests of students. Additionally, I also oversee 4 Internal Committees that contributes vibrantly to student life. Welfare Committee provides monthly giveaways and end-of-semester welfare packs, and co-organizes the annual Inter-House League and Event. Essential Medicine Committee organizes many volunteering events in the community for students to participate in. Academic Committee takes on the responsibility of developing students professionally (eg. Career Preparatory Workshops, Mentoring Programmes, Industrial Visits, Alumni Sharing etc) and academically (eg. Industrial-focused webinars, Module Bridging Workshops etc). Lastly, Media Resource Committee is responsible for disseminating information to everybody in Pharmacy and managing the social media platforms we have! Fun fact: This is only 4 out of the 8 committees under NUSPS and not forgetting about 7 special projects too! There is so much to do in Pharmacy 😊



5 Houses, 1 Pharmily

~~~~~