

**OPENING ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION,
DR ANDREW CHEW, AT THE PSC SCHOLARSHIPS AWARD
CEREMONY
ON SATURDAY, 26 JULY 2008, 2.30PM AT THE ISTANA**

Mr Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Defence and Minister in Charge of the Civil Service

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the 2008 PSC Scholarships Award Ceremony. It is a joyous occasion as we come to celebrate the achievements of the new cohort of PSC scholars. My congratulations to all our scholars, their parents, principals and teachers.

2008 Selection Exercise

2 The Public Service Commission received more than 2000 applications for the 2008 Scholarship Selection Exercise. Between January and June, the Commission interviewed a total of 370 candidates. This is the largest number of candidates interviewed in the last 5 years. Of these, 69 were awarded undergraduate scholarships. This is 16 more than the 53 PSC Scholarships awarded last year.

3 Of the 69 undergraduate scholars selected this year, 38 will be pursuing their studies in the UK, 17 in the US, 2 in the People's Republic of China and 1 in Japan. The remaining 11 scholars will be entering the local universities. The scholars will be reading a diverse range of courses including Economics, Engineering, Politics and International Studies, Law, Natural Sciences, Life Sciences, Philosophy, Psychology and Mathematics.

4 In addition to the 69 scholars, 3 undergraduates have been awarded the PSC Mid-Term Scholarships and one graduate the PSC Master's Scholarship. This brings the total number of scholars receiving their awards today to 73.

5 To all our scholars, you will join the ranks of past PSC scholars, many of whom have made significant contributions to Singapore and who now hold senior positions in government, academia and the private sector.

Profile of Scholars

6 I am delighted to note the greater diversity in the profile of our scholarship recipients this year. As part of PSC's efforts to nurture talent with interests in specialised disciplines and to greenharvest top calibre students beyond fresh JC graduates, we have expanded our scholarship schemes. In 2006, we introduced the PSC Mid-Term Scholarship which is targeted at undergraduates in their second or third year of studies. In 2007, the PSC Master's Scholarship was launched to greenharvest top final year

undergraduates and recent graduates who are found suitable for the Management Associates Programme.

7 We have a diverse spread of scholars in our midst today. Apart from fresh Junior College graduates, the award recipients this year include two polytechnic graduates, three Mid-Term scholars, as well as our first Master's scholar. Mr Marvin Kang recently graduated as the top student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Business Studies course and was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew STEP Award, given annually to outstanding polytechnic graduates. Our second polytechnic graduate, Mr Wilson Yung, from Temasek Polytechnic also graduated as the top student from his Business course. Both of them will be studying in the National University of Singapore.

8 The three Mid-Term scholars are Mr Kelvin Chia, Ms Chitralekha Basu and Mr Teo Zhiyuan. Mr Chia is currently reading Sociology at the Nanyang Technological University, Ms Chitralekha is reading History at Oxford and Mr Teo is pursuing a degree in Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mr Yeo Zhong Yi, the first recipient of the PSC Master's Scholarship, just graduated summa cum laude from the Singapore Management University. He was also conferred the prestigious Valedictorian Award given annually to the most outstanding student in each SMU graduating cohort. He will be pursuing his Master's in Public Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.

Development of Scholars

9 The PSC places great emphasis on grooming and developing our scholars, and has prepared a suite of programmes to prepare them for a career in the public service. The development of PSC scholars begins before they embark on their studies, and continues throughout their undergraduate course.

10 Our scholars have spent the last 4 weeks undergoing their Pre-Departure Course. They had the opportunity to interact with leaders and policy-makers from different parts of government, giving them a better appreciation of the opportunities and challenges that Singapore faces, as well as of the day-to-day concerns of ordinary Singaporeans.

11 The Pre-Departure course also included a Leadership Module whereby the scholars obtained a better understanding of their leadership styles through workshops, peer appraisal sessions and a 4-day course at Outward Bound Singapore. The experience at Outward Bound helped stretch them beyond their comfort zones and gave scholars the opportunity to build teamwork and camaraderie. Scholars also learnt more about service to the larger community during a week-long Community Involvement programme, which included dialogue sessions and attachments to the Community Development Councils, voluntary welfare organisations and neighbourhood schools.

12 To our scholars, I encourage you to embrace the many opportunities that lie ahead of you. While the PSC will play an active role in developing you, I would like to see our scholars pro-actively seizing the opportunities available at university. The PSC wants our scholars to go beyond academic studies. Immerse yourselves fully in campus life, and network with people from diverse backgrounds. Participate actively in co-curricula activities and take full advantage of study-abroad programmes that are available.

Conclusion

13 To all of you receiving your awards today, it is a badge of honour you wear. You have worked hard and achieved much to be selected for this scholarship. There is much to be proud of. At the same time, bear in mind that the scholarship is a commitment you make to our country and to Singaporeans, that you want to play a part in making a difference. Strive for excellence in all you do, and when you return, remember to serve our nation with pride and passion.

14 With this, I wish you every success in your studies and a rewarding career in the years to come.

15 Thank you.