

Scholarships and pre-internship programme to prepare students for built environment sector



Ms Ong Yan Xiang, a recipient of the iBuildSG Young Leaders' Advocate award, and Mr Benjamin Chong, a recipient of BCA-WOHA iBuildSG Undergraduate Scholarship. PHOTO: BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

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SINGAPORE - Growing up, Mr Benjamin Chong used to watch his grandfather make toys out of scrap pieces of wood and fix broken home appliances.

The creative and problem-solving aspect of these DIY projects, coupled with his love for maths and science, inspired the 23-year-old to pursue a degree in Architecture and Sustainable Design at Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD).

He was one of 351 students and working adults who received an award at iBuildSG Scholarship and Sponsorship Ceremony held at SUTD on Thursday (Oct 24).

At the event, Second Minister for National Development Desmond Lee highlighted the importance of attracting and retaining talented individuals in the built environment sector.

He noted that the Government has partnered industry players, academics and the unions to come up with major blueprints to transform industries within the sector, which include construction, real estate and environmental services.

These industry blueprints include plans to adopt new technologies, he said, citing how innovative building technologies incorporating 3D printing, drone-based photogrammetry, machine learning and robotics are out on the horizon.

"All these sound very high-tech, but the future has begun to appear today. This can only be possible if we have a strong pool of professionals with the relevant skills and the willingness and culture to collaborate with one another," said Mr Lee, who is also Minister for Social and Family Development.

Now in his third year in SUTD, Mr Chong is more certain than ever that he wants a career as an architect.

"It's very fulfilling when you see your project come together at the end of the day," he said.

To better prepare students for their industry internships, the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) has also launched a Built Environment Formation Programme.

The four-day programme includes training workshops, industry sharing sessions and site visits.

The first run, supported by 22 industry partners, took place earlier last month with close to 60 participants. Over the next five years, around 2,000 interns will benefit from the programme.

At the event, Mr Lee also presented the iBuildSG Young Leaders' Advocate award to four people, for their contributions in mentoring the next generation through industry initiatives and career talks as part of a programme.

Ms Ong Yan Xiang, 36, senior principal engineer at CPG Consultants, was one of the four recipients. She has been working in the industry for 13 years.

She said: "In the past, we never had such programmes to prepare us for our internship so this will give students an even earlier kick-start in the industry. Hopefully that makes it more attractive for more people to join and stay in this industry."

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