



Going for the "ransom note" look. The style to use if ever I need to send a love note. Not so mushy!

TIAN

Pages from the Journal of Tian, A*STAR's Biomedical Research Council Scholar

★ "I am a 50% nationalist and 50% internationalist. Must develop and nurture our 50% of Singapore talent."

★ "We have about 2,000 scientists, most of them non-Singaporean. Barely 400 are Singaporean. Eventually we want 2,500, half Singaporean, half international, and 500 of the total being graduate students in our labs. The international scientists should be of all colours, from different countries. Only their grey matter is the same colour. Right now, with NSS* and OGS* and AGS*, we have more than 480 Scholars. We're on track towards having about 1,000 Singaporean PhDs by 2010. In addition to our Scholars, there are many students who study on Papa and Mama Scholarships. So there are enough Singapore kids doing Science. Those who are in NUS* and NTU* can come to us to do their PhD when they graduate. We have a large-enough talent pool. Getting 1,000 Singaporean PhDs is no problem."

(*NSS: National Science Scholarships. OGS: Overseas Graduate Scholarships. AGS: A*STAR Graduate Scholarships. NUS: National University of Singapore. NTU: Nanyang Technological University.)

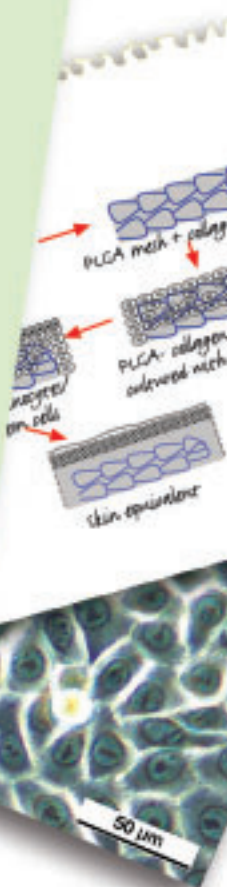


QUOTES from Chairman Philip Yeo

I'm me, man!
I want my place in Biopolis. Not only because I'm Singaporean, but also because I'll make a great scientist. Competition from non-Singaporeans? No worries!

MORE from the Chairman

★ "In the 2003 A-level batch are many kids with four As, A for General Paper and three S-papers with distinction. Those who want to do the PhD wouldn't want to go into banking or the Admin Service. **They are a different species.** For them and their parents, our Scholarships are very prestigious, the terms very attractive. We are giving them an eight-year scholarship with a six-year bond. Most of the other scholars here do three years for their Bachelor's, some do one year more for the Master's, and still have a six-year bond. This year (2004) we have 70 kids taking up BS-PhD scholarships under NSS. Fourteen other talented young people will do the OGS and nine others the International Fellowship. In addition, 61 are taking up the AGS. That's a total of 154 scholars!



"Our NSS are of the **best quality.** That's why we highlight the **Chairman's Honours List.** Those on the List have a GPA (Grade Point Average) of 4.0. They are our key Scholars. We want to focus on such people and grow the group. A GPA of 3.8 is a very high standard. Most US graduate schools take a GPA of 3.6. **We set a high benchmark.** Don't forget, **we're paying a stipend during their PhD years and also giving them a job afterwards.** So we want to make sure our Scholars are the best. We tell Scholars who are below GPA 3.6: 'Sorry, no PhD'."

wah lau, don't play, play!!!

"We'll publish the Chairman's Honours List every year. It will be extended. The kids who do well should be recognised. I was told by some visiting UK Parliamentarians at our Biopolis that I was promoting **elitism.** My response: every society needs an elite, like every train needs a locomotive. The key is to make sure that the elite feels a sense of responsibility towards the rest. Endowed with better innate capabilities, you have a responsibility. And we're funding you. **You have a responsibility to take care of the rest of society.** When the elite is selfish and self-centred, that's the worry. So we need to ensure that our Scholars have a sense of responsibility."

Gee, what a heavy responsibility!



From: tian_yb@scholars.a-star.edu.sg
Subject: de man's hi standards!
Date: 12 May 2004 12:13:14 GMT+08:00
To: samantha_ar@scholars.a-star.edu.sg

Hey, Sam!

Awake? Here in the eastern US of A, I still can't get used to this 'sg' server's Singapore time. Afternoon back home, not yet midnight here. Too early for bed...

Never mind that. Have you been reading all those quotes from A*STAR's Chairman? On the website. If you have, you would have noticed that he keeps saying "the key is talent" and "we need a diversity of talent". He seems obsessed that way.

He also states more than once that high standards have been set for A* Scholars. I remember being wowed by the NSS propaganda, so I joined the queue. Got in. Happy, cool and all that! Otherwise might never have met you, Sam. :)

Chairman says: "Scholars who are below GPA 3.6: 'Sorry, no PhD.'" Gotta make sure I'm ahead in the queue.

Good night. tian

From: samantha_ar@scholars.a-star.edu.sg
Subject: de man's hi standards!
Date: 12 May 2004 12:46:53 GMT+08:00
To: tian_yb@scholars.a-star.edu.sg

Tian... Here you don't want to say "join the queue", unless you want to come across real geeky. Say "join the line"...

To get to go on to PhD, it's not just a matter of physically rushing to the head of the line. Being first with an application to the Scholarship guys don't count.

Sure, I've been reading the Chairman. Have also been listening to him on various occasions. Take note of what he says. He's got this quirky, jerky manner of speech. But he's serious! Check out more of his thoughts (attachment). Be a research leader, Tian!

Good night... Sam

Attachment:





*A*Chairman, he says...*

Hope > Chairman > Thoughts

 Send this to a friend

On Diversity of Talent: "We have to compete, so we make Singapore the **Global Talent Hub in Asia** that is **English-speaking**. Our competitors are the USA, UK, Canada, Australia/New Zealand. When we recruit foreign scientists, diversity of talent is very important. Search the whole world for English-speaking people interested in coming here. We should not care whether they are from Ukraine or Canada or Latvia. But no monolingual Mandarin, Tamil, Hindi. I visited a lab at Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California. The Professor is Greek Cypriot. His lab has Australians, Germans, Koreans, Japanese, Indians, Chinese, Czech. **It's totally international.**"

On Assimilation of Talent: "Assimilation starts when they are young. I asked this girl who came from Swatow and joined one of our schools in Sec 3: 'How was your first year in Singapore?' 'I had a tough time, my English was poor,' she said. Now she has scored A for GP. There is a boy who volunteered for National Service and became an infantry officer. **The key for us is to bring in assimilable people.** So our labs must be diversified in their scientific talent and must also be English-speaking."

A Winning Organisation!

On Winning over the Winners: "The brightest young people want to join a winning organisation. Once you have a reputation for being good, people will join you. It's more than pay. It's the fact that you're among the best. Why do top UK and US universities attract excellent students? Not because those universities give more pay or more allowances, but because the bright youngsters know they can be among the best in their domains. **The key is talent.** Plus the **ability to train the talented.** I tell our talent: 'I'm interviewing you, because I want you to be a future research leader. I'm not giving you a scholarship so that you **can be a test-tube cleaner**'. I know they can't all be leaders, but the majority *will* be leaders."