

It pays to join an alumni club

KRITI SINGH looks at the benefits offered by the various alumni associations

YOU'RE graduating from your polytechnic or your university, and the time you spent at your alma mater seems like yesterday. You want to hold on to the memories and stay in touch. You want to give something back to the school that has given you so much pride. What can you do?

Well, you can join the alumni association. Not only can you enjoy the facilities, you can also contribute to the development of your institution by working on various committees. Says Chandra Mohan, president of the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS): "One of the intangible benefits of

being a member of our alumni association is that you get the privilege to do what you can for your alma mater. "Our burning ambition is the enhancement of NUS and to promote development in Singapore and the Asean region." NUS is the oldest and largest university alumni society in Singapore. It has over 12,000 members from NUS and other recognised local and overseas universities. Mr Mohan says that the society offers networking opportunities for NUS and foreign graduates important

in the context of Singapore as it is regionalising and globalising. Apart from providing three outlets at Kent Ridge Road, Suntec City and Adam Park with food and beverage and sporting facilities, NUS aims to "create leadership qualities in members by allowing them to participate in various committees based on intellectual and political discourses".

The society also organises lectures where local and regional leaders are invited to speak on topics of global interest. The entrance fee for the society is about \$2,000 with a transferable membership. The monthly subscription is \$45.

In contrast, the Singapore Management University Alumni Association (SMUAA) is a relatively new association. Formed last year when the pioneer batch of SMU students graduated, the association goes beyond organising reunions and providing sporting and library privileges.

In collaboration with OCBC, SMUAA now offers two SMUAA-OCBC scholarships, valued at \$10,000 each for needy SMU students. "The association has also started an alumni scholarship fund within which alumni members raise funds from students, parents, faculty, staff and alumni," says Nurhana Binte Mohamad Taip, president of the alumni association.

"The three objectives of our association are: giving back to the SMU, development of the alumni, and networking. So whether we tie up with corporations for individual career development or support internal and external networking by organising fun events, we always keep the objectives in mind as the pillars for our growth," she says.

SMUAA offers two memberships for graduating students. The silver membership has an annual subscription of \$20 with a \$5 one-time administration fee. This lets members enjoy discounts at certain outlets and attend alumni events. The gold membership has an annual fee of \$120 with a \$30 admin fee. This provides members with access to

all SMU facilities. The 3,000-member strong NTU Alumni Club, on the other hand, recently moved to a brand new \$25 million club at 1 North. Boasting a spectrum of modern facilities including a pool complex, a gym and lounges, the club is targeted at young NTU graduates.

"We cater to a wide range of members, ranging from graduates to associate members who include the faculty at NTU to corporate members that are companies closely linked to our university," says R Sinnakaruppan, president of NTU Alumni Club. He says that the club offers discounts at various retail stores and also, thanks to a tie-up with OCBC, a five-year platinum card free of charge.

NTU graduates can become members of the club by paying a joining fee of \$1,000 and a \$40 monthly subscription. Graduates from other universities can also become associate members by paying a fee of \$2,000.

The Singapore Polytechnic Graduates' Guild (SPGG) is an association for Singapore Polytechnic graduates. It has an alumni base of 135,000 and has been around for over 50 years. SPGG has various alumni interest groups including an entrepreneurs' club and a club for toastmasters.

Alumni studying in local universities can apply for the Alumni Scholarship Award and the office also helps alumni look for jobs through its career portal. Along with a monthly newsletter, campus facilities and participation in events organised by the alumni office, SPGG also offers the SP-UOB platinum Visa credit card with a five-year fee waiver.

An ordinary member's joining fee is about \$2,000 and can be paid through a six-month, no-interest instalment plan. The monthly subscription is \$42, says Adrian Jay Lim, membership manager at SPGG.

Whether it is to keep your old school ties or to widen your social network, a membership at an alumni club is well worth it.

