Undergrads underdressed

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These are the best-dressed students in Singapore’s 3 universities

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UNDERGRADS UNDERDRESSED?

Which varsity students dressing the best? Style police Lionel Seah and Hazel Yong say SMU wins—marginally

The O.C.S. Schools are no fashion parade. At least not in Singapore's three universities — the National University of Singapore (NUS), National Technological University (NTU) and Singapore Management University (SMU). Try to spot these scholarly ivory towers in clothing with designer Mustangs and Melrose and sunshine from the American teen TV drama scene and maybe you should look elsewhere. After spending two and a half weeks in the three campuses, Urban arrived at a new list.

On the whole, SMU students appear marginally better dressed. This could be because of the location in Orchard Road or the nature of its business courses, which emphasize formal dressing. Correspondingly, the dress sense of NTU students, especially the males, seemingly reflects the fantasy location of the campus at Jalan Bukit and the engineering and science courses.

As for SMU fashions, the NUS and NTU student handbooks stipulate that improper attire like "indoorsively revealing shorts; headbands; attire with indifferent words or pictures; and slippers for diagnostic use are inappropriate attire.

But while the sartorial styles comply with the rules, the combination look is not one to set campus on fire.

Nevertheless, it seems one man's poison is another's elixir. Sarah Loh, an exchange student at NTU from the United States, says that dressing up in Singapore does much better than her American peers. Says the 20-year-old University of Washington student: "Back home, it's all sweatshirts and jeans. It's hard to tell people apart. Bad dress sense or not, it's usually you lose potential students. But at NTU or SMU based on how students there dress.

"Unless you're super fashionable, you won't be a social climber," quips De Chan. True. But a better dress sense could do so much for a university's image, if you ask us.

Were university students better dressed back in the good old days? E-mail your views to stur@stur.sg.

BACK TO ABC

Tired of that little sartorial conundrum of shirts and T-shirts? Check out Urban's ABC guide to dressing up for school.

1. SLOGAN T-SHIRTS

T-shirts are no fashion crime as long as they scream logo designs like "Nobody knows I'm Playing Truant" instead of NTU School of Engineering.

2. BANS

Yes, we know it's hot and humid and you're almost never beerless. But a subtle pair of skin,旗舰s can accord you student chic.

3. SHOES

There's the beyond a pair of flip-flops, lived in a pair of sneakers/Adidas, Puma and Nike. But not Birkenstock sandals. They look as much more dressed up, even with shorts and no socks. For girls, shoes with heels are so much cleaner than slippers. Save the latter for well-matched sandals.

4. BASIC GROOMING

No one needs to know what you look like when you wake up. But having bad breath, greasy face, a bad haircut or a bad body odor is definitely not what people, 5c, washing, put on some powder and lipstick.

5. PROPER CLOTHES

These provide some "practical" for when you hit the workforce.

ISAAC TAN (left), 21

First year student from NUS faculty of arts and social sciences.

"I usually wear Bermuda, sandals and T-shirt to school although I like wear pants and Oxford shoes. But I can't. I don't come in single day and there's no need to dress up since school is just a short hike away. The only time I really dressed up was the Freshman Inauguration Ceremony.

At the start of the semester where I had to wear a long sleeved shirt, pants and proper shoes.

GRACE ONG (right), 22

Freshman student from SMU school of accountancy.

"I like to wear shorts, capris, polo T-shirts, sneakers or slippers to classes even though SMU is a city campus. My clothes are all the same pattern — plain outfits in white, blue and pink. I feel happy wearing them because it reflects my laidback nature and I am what I want to be.

STEPHANIE KOH (right), 20

Second year student from NTU school of economics and social sciences.

"I'm always in a rush to take the 30-minute walk from my home to Bulatan Irama. So I usually just wear my Bermuda or pants along with a polo T-shirt. But the smell of perfume and cologne is too much for me. I don't even like perfume. I feel too old-fashioned.

I don't feel out of place in my outfit. I dress like this because sometime I walk around town.