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## Going beyond textbook learning

In an industry as people centric as media and communications, it is crucial to be more than just academically prepared. Thus, when aspiring public relations practitioner Elaine Tan was considering a path of study after completing her Australian Matriculation examinations at St Francis Methodist School in Singapore, the Management Development Institute of Singapore ([MDIS](#)) stood out as her ideal choice.

Finding that the mass communications options at Australian universities did not quite suit her needs, she chose to enrol in MDIS' [diploma programme](#) in 2009, instead. "I liked that MDIS allowed me to progress from the diploma to the degree course. I also heard that there's a lot of hands-on experience to be gained here," she told my paper.

Last month, Miss Tan embarked on her journey to obtain a [Bachelor of Arts \(in Liberal Studies with concentration in Mass Communications\)](#), which is awarded directly by [Oklahoma City University](#) (OCU) of the United States. And, indeed, she has found the hands-on experience that she sought – through the Media Communications Club at MDIS. Made up of students from the various courses at MDIS’ School of Media and Communications, the club has four units: Television, Radio, Publishing and Events. It allows students to put what they have learnt into practice.

**“It really takes me out of the classroom, so I am able to learn beyond it,” the 21-year-old, who is head of the Publishing unit, explained. “For example, we learn what it’s like to be real-life journalists by covering school events and writing about them, whether it’s for print in the school magazine, Horizon, or online through e-newsletter Campus Vibe.”**

Similarly, Miss Divyha Pridhnani, 20, has been able to get hands-on experience, in the area of events-planning. As the head of the Events unit at the Club, she has helmed major projects, such as a career seminar on MDIS-OCU programmes last October. The Jakarta-born student, who enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts (in Liberal Studies with concentration in Mass Communications) programme last June after graduating from the diploma programme, said that doing so has made her more confident. “Because we worked hard to plan the event, with input from faculty members, it meant a lot that the talk was a success,” she explained. “It also gave me a clearer idea of what I’d like to do after I graduate.”

In addition, students can participate in activities across the various units, meaning that they also learn to work outside their comfort zones. Miss Pridhnani, who is aiming to graduate in October, said: “You get to work outside your boundaries, like with the TV unit, where you learn to operate a camera, how to edit, direct and produce, and even be an on-camera talent. “These are skills that will benefit us when we enter the working world.”

**Besides the opportunity to get hands-on experience, both Miss Tan and Miss Pridhnani agreed that MDIS’ stellar reputation played a big part in their decision to enrol at the school. “The school is well-known and has the proper accreditation, which is important,” Miss Pridhnani said. Miss Tan said that her elder brother did his master’s degree in**

mass communications at MDIS, and she heard “many good things” about it. And their learning journey has only helped to cement their glowing initial assessment of the school. The small class sizes mean that each student gets individual attention from lecturers, all of whom have “been very encouraging, and played a part in developing our passion for communications”, said Miss Tan, who hopes to graduate some time next year.

As for Miss Pridhnani, she is certain that she would not have received such a well-rounded education at any other institution. “Being able to get hands-on experience on the things we have learnt is great preparation for the real world,” she enthused. “If it had been all theory, then, at the end of the day, the only thing you have to show for it is a degree. But here (at MDIS), I feel like I’ve accomplished much more than that.”

For more information on the programmes, call 6247-9111/ 6372-1000, e-mail [etc@mdis.edu.sg](mailto:etc@mdis.edu.sg), or visit [www.mdis.edu.sg](http://www.mdis.edu.sg).

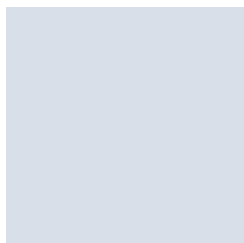
By Management Development Institute of Singapore

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