

Keep your belt on, LTA is looking into it

Issue of seat belt safety not dormant

Letter from **PHUA HOOI BOON**
Director, Land Transport Division
Ministry of Transport

I REFER to Mr Jason Chiam's letter, "In a bind over belts" (May 28).

We would like to assure him that since it was raised in Parliament in 2006, the LTA has been studying the seat belt issue with a view to

conclude and implement the findings in a timely, but effective manner.

LTA's study has shown that seat belts would be most effective in enhancing the safety of passengers of small buses, as big buses are, by virtue of their design, size and weight, better-able to absorb the impact of a collision than small buses. Hence, as announced by the Minister for Transport on May 17 2008, the LTA will mandate that all new small buses must be installed with seat belts.

Installing seat belts in existing buses is not a straightforward issue, as buses, seats and seat belts come in different designs and configurations. Experts have advised that misconceived implementation of seat belts may actually increase the potential for some injuries rather than reduce them. The LTA needs to take this into account when working out with safety experts over the next three to six months how best to retro-fit existing buses so that

the seat belts installed are effective. Moreover, the installation of seat belts would lead to a reduction in capacity in some cases, implying not just cost issues but also questions relating to availability of extra buses and drivers. LTA will therefore seek feedback on the operational impact from various stakeholders such as bus operators, schools and parents before implementation.

As to the safety of workers transported on lorries, a workgroup

co-chaired by the LTA and Ministry of Manpower has been formed to review the current practice of transporting workers, and look into ways to enhance their safety. Currently, LTA has put in place a set of rules to enhance the safety of workers transported at the rear of lorries and pick-up trucks. These rules require the workers to be safely seated at a height of not more than 3.2 metres from the ground. The speed of these vehicles also cannot exceed 60 kph.

XTRA A STUDENT WRITES

Exposure to competitions, overseas stints add to the learning experience

ESTHER TEO LI FEN

WHICH business school should I apply to? With big names like Wharton and Stanford, as well as the local business schools, to choose from, it was a tough decision to make.

To excel in today's highly-competitive business environment, a holistic approach to education is essential. Hence, universities serve three purposes for students like me: To build knowledge and intelligence, to develop skills and to build character.

I chose the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Business School, and it has opened the door to numerous opportunities for my overall development and growth.

One such avenue is through participating in global and regional business competitions. The NUS Business School gets invited to many prestigious international competitions every year. They vary in intensity and scope, and range from solving business cases in 24 hours to crafting business plans over a few months.

In the past three months, NUS business students have brought home numerous awards. Some of the notable international competitions in which we have finished in the top three positions include the IIMPact Business Plan Challenge, 10th Global Business Case Competition, 3rd USC Marshall International Real Estate Case Competition, SGX Case Competition, Cerebration and the McGill Management International Case Competition.

I was honoured and privileged to be picked as one of the students to represent my school in the McGill Management International Case Competition 2008.

It was an awesome experience. The competition brought together scholars of diverse backgrounds from 12 universities across all continents. It also gave us the chance to network and form precious friendships with one another.



FUN ON ICE (From left) Esther Teo Li Fen, Catherine Chong Ping Chek, Kelvin Teo and Epili Sagar snow tubing at Mont Avila in Montreal, Canada.

AFTER THE 24-HOUR STRESS TEST ...

Our case challenge was on social entrepreneurship, through which we discovered that, as business students, we are capable of making a difference through ingenious business ideas which are motivated by true concerns for our social and environmental well-being.

More importantly, this 24-hour competition also made me realise what I had never thought I could do. With only half an hour of sleep in 24 hours, and armed with two computers, three textbooks, four NUS business students' brains, and lots of coffee and Red Bull, we were able to craft a comprehensive strategy for a totally unfamiliar business sector and market.

We also had to anticipate questions for a Q&A session, look good even without sleep and present our case confidently to a panel of 12 judges

which comprised directors, consultants and bankers.

Case competitions like this bridge the classroom with the real business world. From the training to the competition itself, we get to experience real-life business challenges and, in the process, develop critical skills in people management, time management and resilience – the building blocks for successful business leaders.

As we transit from school to work, the textbook concepts we had learnt in school might not be fully transferable but the unique skills that we have developed will differentiate us from the rest of our peers. Ultimately, it is through putting ourselves through various stress tests that we find the strength to stand tall in this era of business challenges.

The classroom forms the basic framework for our education. But here at the NUS Business School, the world becomes the platform for our real-world learning journey as we gain immense knowledge from the various learning avenues made available to us, such as business case competitions, student-exchange programmes with prestigious overseas universities and internships with leading companies.

Looking back at my exciting campus life, case competition experience and New York University Stern School of Business exchange programme, it has been such a richly-rewarding life journey. I feel proud to be an NUS Business student.

The writer is an NUS Business student (finance), currently in her honours year.