



A passion for improving lives

SIT scholar
Aiko Seko's degree
in physiotherapy
enables her to
help others

MELISSA HENG

A KEEN interest in understanding how the human body moves and a desire to help others led Ms Aiko Seko to pursue a bachelor's degree in physiotherapy at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT). The 21-year-old says her love for softball sparked her interest in physiotherapy. She first took up the sport in primary school at the age of 11, and played competitively through secondary school and when she was studying at

Singapore Polytechnic (SP). After graduating from the polytechnic in 2016 with a Diploma in Nutrition, Health & Wellness, Ms Seko took a gap year to decide on her future plans. During the break, she worked as a softball coach at various schools, besides an internship with national defence research agency DSO National Laboratories. "My coaching experience made me realise how much I enjoyed working with people and that I wanted to pursue a sports-related career. Physiotherapy just seemed like the perfect fit."

The right choice

Ms Seko, who was on the director's honour roll during her polytechnic days and a valedictorian for her year, says she chose SIT after much research. Despite that, she had reservations about enrolling in the university as it was relatively new then. But attending its open house in 2016 and getting feedback from friends who studied there alleviated her concerns. "I came to like how much SIT supports its students, and how the lecturers and programme director try their best to prepare them for the working world," she says.

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MS AIKO SEKO
undergraduate
Singapore Institute of
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Ms Seko says the SIT Scholarship that was awarded to her early last year has been a great financial help to her and her family. Her Japanese father passed away from a heart valve failure in 2008. Her mother, who conducts Japanese cooking classes for adults and schools, is the family's main breadwinner. Ms Seko has an older and younger sister. "If it were not for the scholarship, I would not be able to pursue further studies. Being able to do so motivates me to do more to contribute to my community," she adds.

Joy of learning

The first-year undergraduate enjoys learning about the human body in her current course and appreciates how much the SIT teaching staff care about the quality of knowledge they impart to students. She says: "My lecturers put a lot of effort into planning and teaching each course. I value the lessons learnt from their rich experiences. I find my learning journey rewarding and I know what I learn now will be applicable in the future." Ms Seko says the modules she has taken so far have been enriching. Learning about anatomy and physiology has given her a deeper knowledge of the human body, while physics in biology and medicine taught her about the mechanics of the body and its muscles. "With the knowledge I gain from such modules, I will be able to improve my diagnoses and provide them with better treatment," she says. Ms Seko adds that physiotherapy students have a wide variety of resources to help them learn better, including tutorials and videos. They even get the chance to work with cadavers. The friendly and encouraging student culture at SIT also appeals to her. She says: "My coursemates are helpful and capable. I love how everyone is willing to teach one another because we know we are studying with our future co-workers and we want everyone to learn as much as they can. "I feel that we inspire one another to do better and it feels great to be in such a positive environment."