

First female winner in engineering category at skills contest

ITE student beats male peers in information network cabling at WorldSkills Singapore

Madhumita Paramanantham

Ms Shauna Tan was apprehensive about being the sole female competitor in the Information Network Cabling category of this year's WorldSkills Singapore competition, but that did not stop her from beating five of her male counterparts and winning the gold medal.

The 18-year-old electrical engineering student from the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College East became the first female to win in the category.

She was one of 91 tertiary students who received medals from Senior Minister of State for Education and Trade and Industry Chee Hong Tat yesterday at the closing ceremony of the biennial skills competition at Republic Polytechnic in Woodlands.

This year's competition was the biggest yet, boasting nine more skills categories and about 90 more contestants than the 2016 edition. Ninety-one medals – 34 gold, 30 silver and 27 bronze –

were presented to deserving contestants from the polytechnics, ITE colleges and universities.

Ms Tan, who received some of the loudest cheers from the audience when she stepped onto the stage, was a surprise winner in the traditionally male-dominated Information Network Cabling category, in which competitors must demonstrate their ability to plan, install and test network cable systems.

She said: "There are a lot of people who think girls can't do engineering, science and maths and because of this, girls are afraid to join these courses. I joined the competition to prove them wrong and be a role model to the girls."

She added that being the sole female in the competition was nothing out of the ordinary, considering that her electrical engineering cohort has a lot more male students than female.

This year also marked the first time that university students participated in the competition.

Mr Lewis Tan and Mr Toh Shu Han, both 23 and first-year engineering students from the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), were the only university students to take home medals.

The bronze medallists competed as a team in the Rapid Transit Systems category, which involved tasks related to power supply and signalling for trains.

"This competition gave us exposure to what the working industry is like so we'll be more prepared when we do enter the industry," said Mr Tan.

The top medallists will represent Singapore at the upcoming Asean Skills Competition in Bangkok next month.

The 45th WorldSkills Competition will take place in Russia in August next year.

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ITE College East student Shauna Tan with SIT students Lewis Tan (far left) and Toh Shu Han. Ms Tan is the first female to win in the Information Network Cabling category. Mr Tan and Mr Toh took the bronze medal in the Rapid Transit Systems category. This is the first time that university students are participating in the WorldSkills Singapore competition.
ST PHOTO: SONG TAO

BEING A ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN

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MS SHAUNA TAN, an ITE College East electrical engineering student, who took the gold medal in the Information Network Cabling category of this year's WorldSkills Singapore competition.