20–21

ANNUAL REVIEW

FES
SINGAPORE

RESILIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

In the first nine months of 2021, FES tried hard to innovate and adapt to new platforms, and a new generation of students. In many ways, this newness and push to innovate helped to motivate the staff and senior student leaders.

By the end of October, there was a much stronger sense of fatigue from the staff and students than ever before. We had National Conference on 24–26 September, followed closely by World Student Day on 16 October. On one hand, it was more convenient to plan for online national events as we did not have to worry about venues and food. On the other hand, it was much harder to do publicity in the face of thousands of webinars happening every day. And the Zoom fatigue had also gotten real even for the most digitally resilient of students. Yet when faced with the option of cancelling events or continuing, many students and staff felt that it was best to continue regardless of attendance and platform. It was good to have had a national conference rather than not at all. In some ways, it would have made a difference, especially for newcomers to the CFs who have yet to properly experience the corporate nature of their fellowship, and also the larger national body of FES.

This sentiment of continuing reminds me of this classic call to perseverance:

Some of participants in the FES National Conference

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. - Hebrews 10:23-25

I remember how the challenge in meeting regularly before Covid-19 had more to do with busyness and priorities. Yet today, the challenge is about fatigue and what is needed is perseverance strengthened by unwavering hope in a faithful God.

I have been encouraged and strengthened by the students and staff in their perseverance through this year. This first year being the FES General Secretary has not been marked by executing grand plans. It has instead turned out to be a year-long lesson on developing resilience and perseverance – attributes that are necessary for another year of transitions ahead in 2022. But this time, we are transitioning to an environment of openings after a whole year of closures.

Jeremiah Goh
General Secretary

ENGLISH SECTION

Prarthini M. Selveindran
Head, English Section

This year, our Christian Fellowships (CFs) demonstrated remarkable resilience and admirable aptitude in exploring different approaches and tools to engage and minister within the digital space. One commendable effort was from the Polytechnic CFs Combined Camp Committee. The committee used Gather to simulate the life of a polytechnic student, in building his 'world' over the app and allowing the CFers to enter the various spaces of his 'life'. This was to educate CFers on their position as authentic witnesses on campus and in society as well as cultivate reflexivity on being intentional in reaching out during this time. This engagement of digital space through Gather was also seen in other CFs such as SUSS CF and NTU CF for their engagement education efforts in simulating a 'university walk-through' campus prayer and outreach.

Another challenge this year was the need to engage the hybrid space – many CFs had sessions where there were a number of both online and on-site participants. Interestingly, some students had to 'learn' how to carry out a physical session, having not experienced this before! While challenges in engaging an everchanging context and leadership renewal remain, my prayer is that our CFs continue to embrace and embody hope and hospitality in their witness on campus, whether digitally, physically, or both.

CHINESE WORK

Lai Sze Khiong
Head, Chinese Work (CW)

道成了学生，Let's Go!
"The Word incarnated in students" – this was the theme of the CW annual missions evening on 18 March. Before this 'event', students were already on the move to walk the path of service and love.

A group of polytechnic Chinese CF (CCF) students sought permission from Telok Ayer Methodist Church to visit the late Rev. John Sung's Sunday School room at the top level of the church premises and thereafter, return to the FES office for a debriefing session about the different churches that John Sung had planted in Singapore.

NUS CVCF students despite their hectic schedules, went to Willing Hearts and other soup kitchens to help in meal preparations. NTU CCF always had international students regularly attending their weekly fellowship gatherings. During the recent mid-autumn festival, we saw this friendship

extended further when the international students themselves invited other international friends to join in the celebration organised by the CF. Some other CCFs showed their care for the aged and needy during a community outreach visit to a welfare home and thereafter, committed to making regular visits in the future.

We pray for the students, who will soon become graduates, to continue to be carriers of God's Word and love.

INDONESIAN MINISTRY

Darryl Andriyan Putra
Head, Indonesian Ministry (IM)

This year, the campus ministry paid greater attention to interaction and engagement on the online medium, both internally and more so externally. Concerning the latter, the NUS Indonesian Students' Christian Fellowship (ISCF) decided to hold inter-faith dialogues in place of the usual public evangelism talk. Through these talks, the CF members were able to understand better the perspectives of other faiths. As noted by the staff worker, the dialogues also sparked other collaborative efforts and initiatives, which left a positive impression on the participating students from the other religious groups regarding the ISCF.

NUS ISCF receiving a certificate of appreciation from the NUS Muslim Society for spearheading the dialogue

FES IM also explored new initiatives to better minister to the young graduates. Welcoming New Graduates, a series of equipping sessions addressing topics that commonly surface after graduation (e.g., community after graduation, money management) was launched. The staff team also prepared small group materials to encourage the new graduates to be part of a small group to journey together through this transition. We hope that these platforms may help the new graduates foster the spirit of learning and journeying together as they adjust and adapt to the new chapter in their life journey.

May God continue to guide and empower us to minister effectively, preparing future Christ-like leaders witnessing in, and to their respective times.

GRADUATE MINISTRY

Michael Kang
FES Associate General Secretary
GCF Graduate Secretary

One of GCF's strategic priorities is intergenerational ministry, and mentoring has been identified to be an effective platform for intergenerational engagement. FES and GCF are blessed with many skillful and experienced graduates who are qualified to be mentors. But to develop mentoring as a culture in our communities, there is a need to be more intentional. Thus, on top of the existing young graduates' programme, such as Classmates-to-Colleagues (C2C), GCF launched a number of initiatives this year, including producing a microlearning series on spiritual mentoring, holding a mentoring consultation, as well as offering a mentorship programme to help equip and prepare aspiring mentors. This mentorship programme will run annually for us to produce a steady intake of mentors for our graduates and students in the future.

The different alumni groups and sections under FES also maintained their efforts and came up with new initiatives to continue engaging the new and existing graduates, such as the Welcoming New Graduates series for IM's new graduates; monthly Bible studies for iCare and Guardians (polytechnic graduates); and regular Bible studies, annual camps, and retreats for the CW graduates.

ENGAGEMENT

Yvonne Choo
Head, Engagement

"I suppose that going in (MORPH), I expected to have my mindset radically changed. (However) Life is much more nuanced than that, and the first thing I learned was that mission is less about the big logistics of overseas mission and more about the daily choices within our communities."

Faith shares her experience in our missions programme (MORPH). She was in the team that engaged with Mongolian students online. Since then, we have decided to take the opportunity to pause the programme as we re-strategise missions education for our students.

Having a virtual picnic with the campers at Khovd province, Mongolia

Engagement is a new department that has been set up to handle wide-ranging strategic issues and projects that were raised through the process of re-forging strategic priorities for the coming decades. It is important to see that some of these concerns and projects are followed through and do not fall through the cracks in our campus-centred staff setup. What we would like to see is Engagement charting the way forward through prayerful thought-leadership within FES as we take on new challenges.

Meanwhile, our Meals-At-Home programme where we encourage local families to invite international students home for meals has continued despite falling international student numbers. This year, we saw 16 families hosting 32 students.

RESOURCES

Victor Wibowo
Head, Resources

A major highlight of 2021 is engagement in wellbeing matters. FES has an existing ministry partnership scheme with Singapore Bible College School of Counselling where student interns can request to have their counselling practicum with FES. This year about 12 student interns counselled more than 25 students and a few members of the FES staff team. The student interns are professionally trained and supervised for the practicum. It is encouraging to see that both staff and students have responded positively to this scheme, and we hope that more will experience the benefits of this service.

As a staff team, we had discussions using books such as *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* and *The Wounded Healer*. Internally, a small team has also been formed to explore aspects of staff wellbeing that FES should pay attention to. The team intends to come up with a questionnaire, which will be used annually beginning from 2022, to measure the overall wellbeing of FES staff. We hope that this questionnaire will give valuable feedback on workplace wellbeing to help us develop or tailor programmes that will meet the needs of the staff.

Staff discussion on emotionally healthy leaders

The FES Library continues to serve its members though there are fewer new members this year. We made videos to recommend library books and linked students with recommended resources.

FELLOWSHIP 2030

A Snapshot of Strategic Priorities for FES

In 2019, FES embarked on a three-year journey to listen to its stakeholders, discern its direction for the years ahead, and flourish in that new direction. This new direction is now known as Fellowship 2030 and comprises seven strategic priorities for the next ten years.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Digital Ministry:

FES must adapt its mindsets and methods to a new generation of students who learn, live, and love differently because of the impact of digital technologies.

Wellbeing Ministry:

FES must embrace vulnerability and be equipped to minister in the reality where mental and emotional wellbeing is now of critical concern.

Graduate Ministry:

FES must minister to present students with their impact upon graduation in mind.

INTERMEDIATE PRIORITIES

International Students Ministry:

Covid-19 impacted the number of international students in our midst. But with borders re-opening, there will be a need for ISM to pick up again.

Futures Ministry:

FES must maintain the spirit of learning to remain effective in this context of hyperchange.

Value-based Ministry:

FES must prepare to minister with and to students with a more varied range of values today.

Student Ministry (reconsidered):

As lifelong learning takes root and more adults become students again, FES might need to reconsider its scope of student ministry.

DRIVERS

Besides the seven strategic priorities, FES will continue to build upon three qualities that have always driven our approach to student ministry: student leadership, missional identity, and intergenerational fellowship.

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