

# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

| by Deanna Bonaparte



MCI offers the MCI Information Service Scholarship for those with a keen interest in government communications, and the MCI Information Service (Translation) Scholarship for those with a strong language proficiency in English and one of our mother tongue languages.

**GOH ZI YING JILLIAN**  
MCI INFORMATION SERVICE SCHOLAR

Designation:  
Assistant Manager (Media Operations), Media Operations Department/Media and Research Division

The Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) has a simple yet significant mission – to build a nation of connected and informed people. With the help of its statutory boards, MCI taps on various media platforms such as news publications and television talk shows to help the public understand Government initiatives and messages.

For instance, it has helped to develop and produce two seasons of ‘Let’s Think About It’, a talk show aired on Channel 5 and graced by various government ministers. The show addressed Singaporeans’ sentiments towards hot-button issues ranging from integration, marriage and parenthood to education.

Part of the team that made this talk show happen was MCI Information Service Scholar Jillian Goh, who was with the Public Communications

Division at the time of broadcast. She derived fulfilment from seeing her hard work pay off on the television screen. “The entire experience gave me a great sense of job satisfaction,” she tells us.

## DEVELOPING SCHOLARS

Today, Jillian is on to her second posting at the Media and Research Division. Her department helps better connect the media to the government’s communication efforts. The nature of her job is challenging, given that occurrences such as the Sabah Earthquake, Founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew’s passing as well as the haze are unpredictable.

But her scholarship has certainly primed her for her challenges and strengthened her critical-thinking abilities. Back when she was an undergraduate, Jillian communicated her interest to partake in a more

unique internship experience. With MCI’s flexibility and support, she was given the opportunity to complete her internship with MediaCorp, where she served as an intern reporter for Channel NewsAsia (CNA). She enthuses, “I was fortunate to have been given the chance to shadow reporters within my first week and cover my own story in the second! I was also given the opportunity to produce my own voice recording clips and gain soundbites from government ministers. It was interesting to have been given a glimpse into the dynamic role of a reporter.”

Apart from the Information Service Scholarship from which Jillian is benefitting, MCI also offers the MCI Information Service (Translation) Scholarship for those with an interest in government communications and translation. This scholarship with a translation component has allowed

Politics and International Studies (PAIS) student Steffi Teo to pursue her degree at UK's Warwick University.

She tells us of her course of study, "PAIS will not only help me become more informed about contemporary issues – it will also cultivate skills that are necessary for me to engage with the public back home in Singapore and communicate policies effectively. My cumulative overseas experiences both in the East and West will allow me to serve as a good bridge between both regions, and understand the nuances between both cultures."

Steffi chose the MCI Information Service (Translation) Scholarship because she felt that her disposition was more suited towards adopting innovative means to implement policies. "I find Translation such a dynamic and transformative field that is open to interpretation based on context and culture. As such, the scholarship with the translation focus was my first choice because it was something I was greatly interested in," she tells us.

### PLANNING THEIR GROWTH JOURNEY

Having been in the organisation for slightly more than a year, Jillian attests to the fact that MCI pays attention to the well-being of its scholars and staff. "We are given a lot of advice and help. Since I was in my first undergraduate year, there was always someone from the HR department checking in with me. I was allowed to indicate my preferences for my internship period, and could freely express my desire to take on an unconventional internship. Having built that relationship with HR also smoothed my transition into MCI," Jillian shares.

But Jillian shares that, inasmuch as MCI strives to facilitate the development of its scholars, the onus is on individuals themselves to take steps towards

achieving career growth. She explains, "Career development is a two-way process. You cannot expect to be developed without first having an idea of how you want to be developed, and putting it across honestly and nicely. It is important to remember that your scholarship providers are not you – you have to be clear of how you want to achieve your goals. The fact that MCI continually asks for my opinions and listens makes this easier."

On that note, Steffi has some plans set in the future to boost her personal growth. "I want to pursue a Master's degree in the same field and explore the possibility of furthering my academic research in the field of Politics. I also hope to improve government translation efforts when I enter MCI after graduation, by translating policies and government materials efficiently and effectively," she tells us assuredly.

### SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

As MCI scholars, both Jillian and Steffi are well aware of what is needed to carry out critical government communications work. Leaving her juniors with a piece of advice, Steffi shares, "If you know you have the passion in communications work and public service, take the leap of faith and give the scholarship application your best shot. If you wait until you are ready, you will be waiting for the rest of your lives. So don't wait to chase your dreams – instead *carpe diem!*"

As for Jillian, she highlights that aspiring scholars should not change themselves to match their own stereotype of scholars. She concludes, "Everyone thinks that a scholar should be a certain way. I think you should challenge that, because it will then create variety in the Ministry. MCI needs people with different talents and specialties coming into the service. The most important quality to possess is your desire to serve the country, and the belief that you can do it."



**TEO LEIGH ERN, STEFFI**  
MCI INFORMATION SERVICE  
(TRANSLATION) SCHOLAR