NUS dean to boost financial literacy here

WHEN Professor Bernard Yeung arrived here to take up the post as dean of the National University of Singapore’s Business School in July, he got news that the value of his investments in some Lehman Brothers-linked businesses had just about evaporated.

One of his goals now, as custodian of Singapore’s oldest business school, is to sharpen financial literacy here so people can avoid the mistakes which even savvy investors make.

Aged 55, the Hong Kong-born Canadian was a professor in global business at New York University’s Stern School of Business. He took over as dean from Professor Christopher Earley, who stepped down last December after 2½ years.

Meeting reporters yesterday, Prof Yeung said he aimed to make the NUS school “Asia’s global business school”.

He added that the work he did in the United States was US- or Euro-centric, and that Asia needed several institutions to generate knowledge afresh for its own context.

He also wants to foster a spirit of social responsibility in the school. His staff members are writing a series of 13 articles explaining the current financial crisis for The Straits Times.

His wife Jean, a sociologist, and 16-year-old daughter have moved here with him; his son, 21, is a student in New York University.

Now that he is in Singapore, he plans to extend his tenure and retire here because he wants to be where “the Asian Renaissance” is flowering.