NUS-Yale talks on college ‘in final stages’

SINGAPORE — Despite concerns, discussions on setting up Singapore’s first liberal arts college are in the final stages.

National University of Singapore (NUS) president, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan (picture), said yesterday that talks with Yale University are progressing well and a decision can be expected by early next year.

Speaking at the NUS State of the University address, he said the college will be a “bold and highly-strategic investment in education for the future”.

The liberal arts education model is new to Asia. For the NUS, setting up a liberal arts college will enable it to take a leadership position in the key form of education for the future and to attract even more of the brightest students.

But there have been some concerns by Yale over academic freedom and freedom of speech. The NUS said that, while such views have been heard, Yale has also received written and verbal communication from their faculty to signal enthusiastic support.

Prof Tan said: “We are making very, very good progress in our discussions with Yale university. We are at a pretty advanced stage of discussing how the key elements of this will come together, the rough size of the college, how some of the academic directions can be shaped up ... We hope that by early next year, we would be able to finalise these discussions, that we will be able to seek all the final approvals for us to proceed with this.”