本地首个博雅学院
耶鲁—国大学院
将在2013年设立

王珮琪／报道

几经波折，新加坡国立大学和美国耶鲁大学探讨联合开办的博雅学院终于有了定案。两所大学联合宣布将在2013年设立耶鲁—新加坡国大学院（Yale–NUS College），并将在近期内在我国正式签署合作协议。

这是本地首个博雅学院，也是亚洲首个结合了学习与寄宿的博雅学院，更是耶鲁首次在亚洲以外设立它的学院。在2013年开课时，第一批收生150人，到了稳定阶段，每年将收生250人，学生总数1000人，教员人数约100人。

耶鲁—国大学院

这对亚洲是有价值的，耶鲁也能从中获得创新课程中学习，并把部分知识带回耶鲁。

不是全盘移植
而是融入亚洲特色

陈教授接受采访时也说，国大对之兴奋的是，耶鲁提供的不是把耶鲁的博雅教育模式全盘移植到亚洲，而是跟国大合作，设计一个融入亚洲特色的新教育模式。

新学院将毗邻国大大学城，有住宿和教学设施，包括座可容纳300人的寄宿学院，学生将在这里学习和寄宿。新校舍将在2014年竣工，在这之前，学生将利用现有国大设施上课。

2008年，美国“扩充大学教育研究委员会”建议设立一所博雅学院，国大也提交有关设立博雅学院的报告书。它从2009年起邀请耶鲁讨论博雅教育。去年9月，教育部长黄永宏访问耶鲁时，见证两校校长签署谅解备忘录，进一步探讨合作的可能性。国大报告书表示今年初可以公布合作详情，不过最近有关大学和教育部长未有接洽，也未知何时会正式签订协议。

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First local liberal college by Yale and NUS to start in 2013

This will be the first liberal arts college in Singapore and also the first in Asia where living and learning will be integrated. It will also be the first such college Yale has established outside the United States. Scheduled to be opened in 2013, the college will accept its inaugural batch of 150 students and grow to reach a steady state of 250 new students each year. The school will eventually have a student population of 1,000 and around 100 faculty.

The plan by the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Yale University to jointly establish a liberal arts college is finally a done deal. Both universities announced the establishment of the Yale-NUS College in 2013 and an agreement will be signed in Singapore in the near future.

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The students will undergo four years of undergraduate study. Students will undergo a cross-disciplinary liberal arts program that integrates the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics in the first two years. They will then go on to concentrate on a major in arts or science subjects such as economics, history, psychology, biology and physics in the remaining two years. Students will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) or Bachelor of Science (Honours) awarded by NUS.

In a joint statement, the two universities said that the pedagogy of the liberal arts college will focus on critical thinking and classroom interaction. Most of the courses will be conducted in small-classroom settings with no more than 18 students. Students will have the opportunity to participate in exchange programs, research attachments, internship programs and special leadership programs.

NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan said that NUS has been making efforts over the past ten years to expand the University's scope of education to create more opportunities for students. This includes overseas exchange programmes and the University Scholars Programme. This is because NUS believes that future graduates
need to have a foundation that spans a breadth of disciplines in order to compete on a
global scale.

Professor Tan said, "This historic cooperation with Yale University will provide
students with another alternative for a high quality education, especially for students
who hope to acquire a broader knowledge base, have stringent academic demands,
possess the ability for critical inquiry and hope to combine this with a residential
college experience."

Yale University Professor President Richard Levin said in a telephone interview that
the liberal arts college will adopt a teaching approach that is different from traditional
Asian models. It will encourage students to think independently, be creative and
articulate their views in small classroom settings, rather than focusing on rote learning.
He believes that this can create value for Asia. Yale University can also learn from the
innovative programmes at the school and bring back part of that experience to its
campus in the United States.

Model not an "import" from the United States; to integrate Asian characteristics

Prof Tan said that NUS is excited that the concept proposed by Prof Levin is not a
complete “import” of the U.S. model for establishing a liberal arts college, but a
collaboration with NUS to design a new education model that integrates Asian
characteristics.

The new school will be sited next to the NUS University Town (UTown) and will
comprise residential and teaching facilities. It includes three residential colleges that
can each accommodate 330 students. The students will stay on campus throughout
their entire candidature of four years. The construction of the new residences will be
completed in 2014. Before the completion of the campus, students will attend classes
at the existing NUS facilities.

The Committee on the Expansion of the University Sector recommended the
establishment of a liberal arts college in 2008 and NUS submitted a report on the
setting up of a liberal arts college. NUS contacted Yale to discuss a liberal arts
education in 2009. In September last year, Education Minister Ng Eng Hen witnessed
the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NUS and Yale
University to work towards a collaboration to establish a liberal arts college during a
visit to the United States. NUS had initially said that details on the cooperation would
be announced early this year. However, subsequent media reports stated that both
universities were unable to come to an agreement on certain issues.

On the amount of investment involved, Prof Tan said that it would be sufficient to
allow the college to be competitive against similar colleges in the United States. The
college will be funded by the Singapore government.
Some reports have pointed out that the fees charged by the liberal arts college will be higher than undergraduate programs offered by regular universities. Prof Tan said that NUS will provide scholarships to outstanding students with financial difficulties. Students with financial problems will be able to receive more assistance.

As for concerns that a liberal arts education is too broad-based, Prof Tan said that more students, parents and employers have already realised that focusing on a particular specialisation is not the only way to advance one's career. Having a foundation that spans a breadth of disciplines can help one handle complex issues at work and move easily to a different industry. He pointed out that the students of the new college will have internship opportunities. The College will also continue to raise awareness of the concept of a liberal arts education among parents and students.