First liberal arts college shows Singapore’s openness to change: PM Lee

SINGAPORE — The first liberal arts college here is a reflection of Singapore’s openness to change and will further help the country adapt to a changing world, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said yesterday.

While Yale University and the National University of Singapore (NUS) had to finalise a “complicated budget” for the Yale-NUS college and there were differences in the United States and Singapore’s social and political contexts, Mr Lee believes that the college can “blossom and grow” in the society here.

Speaking at the launch of the Yale-NUS College, he said that Singapore, among the Asian countries, has the most similar ethos to Western societies and the college tie-up reflects “the ethos of the (Singapore) society to be open and connected to the world, to want to change, to want to examine ourselves, to understand what we stand for and whether we must move”.

Yale University president Richard Levin agreed Singapore was becoming more open, as it was Singapore who had initiated the idea of a joint liberal arts college.

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The architectural model of the college was also unveiled for the first time. The college will house facilities such as state-of-the-art technology for possible virtual learning with overseas universities and a performance hall. Within the three residential colleges, students can display their entrepreneurship skills, such as by running a cafe.

non-governmental organisations such as World Wildlife Fund in Washington DC to the Public Service Division in Singapore.

Deborah Ho, chief executive of asset management of DBS — one of the internship partners — said that liberal arts graduates will be able to think broadly and independently, adding that, while a chemistry graduate at the bank may have taken longer to learn the fundamentals, he has done well.

While there may be some resistance from parents to this new path of study in Singapore, multidisciplinary studies was a growing trend and will evolve, said NUS president Tan Chorh Chuan and Professor Levin.

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