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SINGAPORE'S first liberal arts college has received such a high calibre pool of applicants that it will open in August with 157 students – seven more than had been planned.

Some even turned down offers from Oxford, Cambridge and US Ivy League universities.

Ninety-seven students are Singaporean, while the rest come from 25 countries. The Yale-National University of Singapore College of Liberal Arts said that in addition to the inaugural intake, 63 male Singaporeans have accepted its offer of places to start in the next two years after they complete their national service.

In all, the college attracted more than 11,400 applications from over 130 countries.

The college said that although it based admissions on a range of

criteria, including interviews and personal essays, the final group admitted have stellar academic credentials.

The median SAT score of the incoming batch is 1,440 on the scale of 1,600.

Based on the response and high calibre of applications, the college said it is on track to grow its annual intake to 250 students over the next few years.

Yale-NUS' dean of admissions and financial aid Kristin Greene said: "Students had opportunities at every Ivy League school, as well as leading universities throughout the United States, United Kingdom and Singapore, and yet chose Yale-NUS College."

New Zealander Michael Moore-Jones, 17, who gave up of-

fers of places at New York University in Shanghai and the London School of Economics, said: "If I went to a liberal arts college in the US, I would lose the perspective of Asia and if I went to a university in Asia I wouldn't be able to do the liberal arts."

"Yale-NUS is the perfect bridge between these two things."

Singaporean Anthea Tjoa, 18, said: "Its type of education is one that is unprecedented in Singapore."

Ngee Ann Polytechnic graduate in arts business management Samantha Yap, 19, who hopes to become an arts curator, said she was drawn to the broad curriculum.

She was among the handful of polytechnic graduates admitted to Yale-NUS this year.

Yale-NUS selects 157 from 11,400 applicants

PIONEER CLASS AT A GLANCE

- **Number of students:** 157
- **Number of nationalities:** 26
- **Singaporeans:** 97
- **From the United States:** 13
- **From Canada:** 4
- **From other parts of Asia, Australia and New Zealand:** 32
- **From Europe, Britain, Africa and South America:** 11
- **Female to male ratio:** 87:70
- **SAT – critical reading (at 75th percentile):** 760
- **SAT – maths (at 75th percentile):** 780
- **Median SAT score (on the 1,600 scale) :** 1,440
- **Number of applications:** 11,400 from over 130 countries
- **Acceptance rate:** Less than 4 per cent

College founding president Perciles Lewis said: "Our inaugural class will experience a distinctive, international education in a community of learning that provides a microcosm of our globally net-

worked society."

The college has promised a broad-based education with smaller classes and an intense residential experience to nurture graduates who can think deeply and

across different disciplines.

Last month, a report by a committee formed to address Yale University professors' concerns about the Singaporean college had called for doing away with the check box on the Yale application allowing applicants to automatically apply to Yale-NUS free of charge and without submitting any additional materials.

The report said the policy "blurs the distinction between Yale-NUS and Yale".

But Ms Greene said the college will be keeping the option as the college was satisfied that the two universities have separate and independent admission processes.

"There were some students whom we rejected who were offered a place by Yale and vice versa. I know of a few of them who had offers from both Yale and Yale-NUS. So the two admissions offices operate independently."

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