Yale-NUS College to open in August with over 150 students

First cohort picked from over 11,400 applications from more than 130 countries

SINGAPORE – The Republic’s first liberal arts college, Yale-NUS College, will matriculate 157 students from 26 countries for its inaugural cohort in August this year.

These “extremely accomplished students with diverse talents and backgrounds” were picked from over 11,400 applications from more than 130 countries, Yale-NUS said in a press release yesterday. Their SAT scores at the 75th-percentile is 760 for critical reading and 780 for maths, while the median score is 1,440 on the 1,600 scale.

Although academic grades were a “primary consideration” in its selection process, Yale-NUS said “significant weight” was also given to interviews, recommendations, essays and extracurricular accomplishments.

Among the first cohort, 97, or 62 per cent, are Singaporeans, including almost 10 per cent from polytechnics. The bulk of the rest are from Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, another 63 Singaporeans have committed to start at the college over the next two years after completing their National Service.

Yale-NUS founding President Pericles Lewis said: “We are writing a new chapter in the history of liberal arts and science education for an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Our inaugural class will experience a distinctive, international education in a community of learning that provides a microcosm of our globally networked society.”

Ms Samantha Yap, who graduated from Ngee Ann Polytechnic with a Diploma in Arts Business Management and aspires to become a curator, is among the inaugural batch.

The 19-year-old chose to apply to Yale-NUS because she “felt its wide breadth of subjects and topics would satiate my appetite for knowledge”.

Another student, Mr Theodore Lai, 21, said he chose a liberal arts education because it would expose him to topics from global affairs to comparative literature, thus allowing him to “gain a much wider knowledge of the world and how it functions”.

For Ms Anthea Tjoa, who was born in Singapore, of Peranakan and Indonesian-Chinese descent, but has lived in Myanmar for the past eight years, the chance to pursue an “unprecedented” education format here was what drew her to Yale-NUS.

The college is planning to grow its class size to 250 students over the next few years.