Dialogue with Lord Chris Patten on Europe and the rise of China and India
Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore opens research building at NUS

THE T-Lab Building, a joint development between NUS and the Singapore Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), was officially opened by Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Mr Teo Chee Hean on 20 September 2010.

The $42 million building, which is 11-storey high and spans 24,700 square metres, is the first permanent home of Temasek Laboratories (TL@NUS). TL@NUS is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and the opening of its new location marked the start of a new chapter for the research institute.

Said DPM Teo at the official opening: “The cornerstone of MINDEF’s strategic partnership with NUS is the establishment of the Temasek Laboratories in 2000. Over the past decade, TL@NUS has made significant contributions to the Singapore Armed Forces with its research in selected areas of science and technology critical to Singapore’s defence and security.”

“Our collaboration with MINDEF has produced industry-specific research which has been translated into useful applications aimed at strengthening the defence and security of Singapore. The NUS-MINDEF Joint Applied R&D Cooperation Programme and the Temasek Research Fellowship are two such initiatives that have attracted outstanding researchers to undertake relevant defence-related research projects,” said NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan.

He added: “Aside from research, NUS also contributes towards our local defence industry by nurturing a strong pool of engineering and scientific talent which forms the nucleus of our engineering and R&D efforts.”

While TL@NUS occupies the North Wing, the T-Lab Building also houses in its South Wing the NUS Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Initiative, the Mechanobiology Institute, Singapore as well as research laboratories of the Division of Environmental Science and Engineering, the NUS-GE Singapore Water Technology Centre and the NUS Environmental Research Institute.

NUS Business School marks 45th year with new state-of-the-art building

THE year-long 45th anniversary celebrations of the NUS Business School reached a climax at the official opening of its new flagship building named after Dr Mochtar Riady, Founder and Chairman of Lippo Group, in appreciation of the very generous gift of $21 million made by him and his family towards the building project.

Speaking at the opening on 24 September 2010, Guest-of-Honour Dr Ng Eng Hen, Singapore Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence, highlighted key challenges in the higher education sector and how Singapore should respond to them through differentiation of its initiatives and programmes.

In line with this focus, he said: “NUS Business School has now expanded its offerings to meet the market’s increasingly sophisticated needs, from the initial batches of Business Administration Diploma graduates in the 1970s, to the wide variety of programmes available today at the Bachelor’s and Master’s levels, as well as through the Executive MBA and PhD programmes.”

“The Business School has come a long way from its modest beginnings in 1965 with just 24 students in the pioneering batch. Today, the School is highly regarded globally, and continues to grow rapidly in strength and reputation. It attracts some of the brightest students from Singapore and from around the world and offers rich and cutting-edge educational programmes,” said NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan.

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NUS and Yale sign agreement to work towards landmark collaboration on liberal arts college at NUS

NUS and Yale University have, on 10 September 2010, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work towards a collaboration to establish a liberal arts college in NUS. Singapore’s Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen witnessed the event at Yale University’s campus in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. The MOU was announced by the Ministry of Education on 14 September.

In a statement made during the meeting with the Yale leadership and its faculty, Dr Ng said: “It is timely to consider introducing liberal arts education in Singapore. Yale is a world-class university and has a strong tradition in liberal arts education. The Government is supportive of NUS’ and Yale’s efforts to develop a liberal arts model that will attract top students, and that is contextualised to Singapore and Asia.”

President of Yale Prof Richard C Levin said: “It is very exciting to contemplate collaborating with the National University of Singapore to create a new educational model for the 21st century, contextualised especially for Asia. There has never been greater need for undergraduate education that cultivates critical inquiry. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the qualities of mind developed through liberal education are perhaps more indispensable than ever in preparing students to understand and appreciate differences across cultures and national boundaries, and to address problems for which there are no easy solutions.”

Yale, a pre-eminent global university, has been widely regarded as having a major influence on the development of liberal arts education in the US. Yale’s established experience with liberal arts education is expected to complement NUS’ expertise as a global and Asian university with a strong record of successful educational innovations.

Said NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan: “Our University’s strong and warm partnership with Yale has resulted in several innovative programmes over the last few years. We look forward, with excitement, to further extending our collaborations to an area that is very important for the future, for Singapore and beyond. This MOU with Yale brings us a step closer to making the vision of a liberal arts college in Singapore and at NUS a reality.”

Prof Tan, in a circular to the NUS community on the NUS-Yale MOU, wrote that NUS had been seriously studying the feasibility of establishing a liberal arts college within the University.

“With the rise of Asia, we have been interested particularly in how a residentially-based broad-based educational model may be introduced, developing liberal arts education for the 21st century, contextualised to Asia,” he noted.

Prof Tan added that the NUS team led by Prof Lily Kong, Vice President (University and Global Relations), would continue to work with Yale colleagues on the details of the landmark collaboration.
Dialogues with Lord Chris Patten on Europe and the rise of China and India

CHINA and India are two giants to be reckoned with and Europe observes the rise of the two countries with considerable interest. The Right Honourable Lord Chris Patten of Barnes, Chancellor of the University of Oxford and former Governor of Hong Kong, was speaking at a brunch dialogue at NUS on “Europe and the Rise of China and India” hosted by Singapore President and NUS Chancellor His Excellency Mr S R Nathan on 5 September 2010. Chairing the dialogue was internationally renowned Chinese historian Prof Wang Gungwu, Chairman of the East Asian Institute, NUS.

Some 100 guests comprising key opinion leaders, faculty and students from NUS attended the dialogue session. Lord Patten presented the historical context behind the rise of China and India, but cautioned that Asia should not be too proud about the emergence of the two economic giants. In fact, though Asia was home to three-fifths of the world’s population, it was only responsible for one-fifth of global consumption, compared to the United States’ share of 30 per cent, he said.

On how the Europeans viewed the rise of China and India, Lord Patten shared about a recent visit to India with British Prime Minister David Cameron. The latter had recognised that India today was investing more in Britain than Britain in India, which was indicative of the economic capabilities and advantages possessed by emerging countries such as India.

He also fielded questions on the European Union’s (EU) role in sovereignty issues, the possibility of forming a trans-Atlantic free trade alliance, EU’s plan to recognise China’s economy, and whether Europe would align itself with the US with the rise of China and India.

Nobel Laureate Prof Edward Prescott speaks on “Asia Booming, US Depressed, Europe Stagnating”

Nobel Laureate in Economics Prof Edward Christian Prescott, W P Carey Chair, Arizona State University, gave a public lecture at NUS on 16 August 2010 in his capacity as Lim Chong Yah Professor at NUS’ Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

He spoke on the topic “Asia Booming, US Depressed, Europe Stagnating” before a packed audience. He traced the growth of certain Asian economies which were swiftly catching up with the United States and Western Europe, and commented on the US’ present experience of a minor depression as well as how the 2010 financial crises in the Euro Zone could lead to positive change.
NUS scores well in Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore 2010

DESPITE a continued downward slide in customer satisfaction for the Singapore education sector (from 68.4 in 2009 to an all-time low of 65.5 in 2010), NUS was the only university which saw better results in this aspect (from 69.0 in 2009 to 71.0 in 2010). These results were reflected in the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) 2010 released by the Institute of Service Excellence at SMU (Singapore Management University) or ISES.

For the education sector, the scores were tabulated based on a survey conducted with students currently enrolled in the respective universities/schools. NUS scored well especially for questions on overall satisfaction with the university, overall ability of the university to meet students’ expectations, and how the university compares to the students’ ideal university. ISES also disclosed that a key driver for NUS’ improved score was an increase in value provided in the form of better educational facilities and higher teaching and administrative standards.

On the results, NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan said: “We believe strongly that we must provide our students with a rich, distinctive and memorable experience in NUS, and we are heartened by the positive response from our students in this survey. The NUS community has worked hard to create an environment that is vibrant and student-centred, for example, by streamlining student services, enhancing physical facilities such as the new Student Hub at Yusof Ishak House, the Centre For the Arts and the forthcoming University Town, and by providing a myriad of exciting options in sports, culture and the arts. We are seeing many positive signs that students who have had positive experiences in NUS want to continue to be part of our community, to participate, contribute and help.”

MARK OF EXCELLENCE

• Prof Goh Thong Ngee from NUS’ Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering was presented with the prestigious Harrington-Ishikawa Medal at the Asia-Pacific Quality Organisation’s (APQO) 16th International Conference in Nepal from 18 to 20 September 2010.

This award is given by APQO annually to a Quality professional selected from numerous candidates worldwide who has made exceptional contributions to the advancement of Quality in the Asia-Pacific region.

To Prof Goh, “This award is not just for an individual; it is a recognition of the outstanding academic and professional contributions from NUS. I am but one member of the NUS community that is always striving for excellence.”

• Shaw Visiting Professor of the NUS School of Computing Ramesh Jain won the 2010 Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group in Multimedia Award for outstanding technical contributions to multimedia computing, communications and applications. He was recognised as a visionary researcher, entrepreneur and an inspiring leader who had transformed multimedia information processing to enhance the quality of life.

Prof Jain, who is also Donald Bren Professor in Information and Computer Sciences at the University of California, Irvine, said: “I am very honoured and delighted to receive this award. As usual, such recognitions come to people owing much to the support of many students, co-researchers and colleagues in the field.”
NUS team produces world’s first abdominal simulator

SIMULATORS are widely used during clinical examination in medical training. While there were simulators developed to perform cardiac and respiratory examinations, deliver a baby and perform surgical and endoscopic procedures, there was no simulator for examination of the abdomen until Abe the Tummy Dummy (TD) was developed.

The idea of creating Abe, the world’s first abdominal simulator, was mooted by Senior Consultant Neurologist at NUS’ Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Assoc Prof Erle Lim. He said: “Anyone who studies needs something to experience. You can’t just read or learn from a book; you need to actually practise. And a lot of studies have shown that simulation training is as good for the experience as handling a real-life patient. Students have found that role-play using a simulator is very realistic and they are very happy that they can practise, even take their time and make repeated tries, without fear of causing the patient pain.”

The first prototype of the TD was a low-cost abdominal simulator built using plaster of paris and fiberglass by Assoc Prof Lim and four of his former medical students – Lim Lian Kiat, Sharif Mahaboob, Ho Quan Yao and Ng Chew Lip.

In April 2009, the completion of the prototype coincided with the outbreak of H1N1 influenza which restricted contact between medical students and patients, leading Assoc Prof Lim and his team to pilot a trial of the TD on a group of 44 second-year students who were taking their clinical skills foundation course.

Responses to the TD trial turned out to be very positive, which encouraged Assoc Prof Lim and his team to collaborate with Director of the Design Incubation Centre Mr Patrick Chia and Head of the Division of Industrial Design Assoc Prof Yen Ching Chiu, both from the NUS School of Design and Environment, to improve the design of the TD. The team developed the second-generation TD in early September 2010.

Going forward, the team plans to incorporate more features in the TD to make the teaching tool even more realistic. They also hope to collaborate with manufacturers to mass produce the TD for medical schools and hospitals worldwide.

Two award-winning engineering projects

PROF Lim Chwee Teck and Prof Neal Chung from NUS’ Faculty of Engineering won the IES (Institution of Engineers Singapore) Prestigious Engineering Achievement Award this year.

Prof Lim was recognised for having invented, together with his PhD student Mr Tan Swee Jin, a microchip that can extract rare circulating cancer cells from blood with high isolation efficiency and purity. He had also won the Merit Award for the Open Category of the Tan Kah Kee Young Inventors Award 2009 for the device.

Prof Chung was recognised for his project “Membrane Science and Technologies for Sustainability in Energy and Water and for Better Quality Life”. His membrane research had also led him to win other awards this year, including the Hyflux-SNIC (Singapore National Institute of Chemistry) Award in Environmental Chemistry and IChemE (Institute of Chemical Engineers, UK) in Singapore Innovation and Excellence Award for Sustainable Technology.
Eminent diplomat and renowned China historian to helm Singapore’s first residential colleges

NUS announced the appointments of Prof Tommy Koh and Prof Wang Gungwu as Rectors of its University Town’s (UTown) first two residential colleges on 9 September 2010.

Serving a three-year term, the College Rector will provide strategic directions, help define the academic tone of the colleges, and work closely with the College Master to build a sense of community and belonging among residents and Fellows. The College Rector is a non-residential, non-executive head of the College.

Prof Koh, who is currently Ambassador-At-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is also Special Advisor of the Institute of Policy Studies and Chairman of the National Heritage Board. He is on secondment from the Faculty of Law, NUS.

Prof Koh will be working with College Master Assoc Prof Gregory Clancey, an expert in Japan’s history as well as technology and culture in the Asia-Pacific.

Helming the other residential college is Prof Wang Gungwu, Chairman of the East Asian Institute and NUS University Professor, who was conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the University of Cambridge in June last year, in recognition of his contribution as a historian of China and the Chinese.

This residential college will house the NUS University Scholars Programme (USP), a multidisciplinary programme catering to talented students from six partner faculties. Its College Master is Prof John Richardson, USP Director and an expert in English Literature.

Ten good years and more ahead for University Scholars Programme

THE NUS University Scholars Programme (USP) celebrated its 10th anniversary with a series of programmes which included a dinner celebration at the Grand Hyatt Ballroom on the evening of 11 September 2010, attended by some 250 local and overseas guests.

Among the special guests in attendance were USP patrons Dr Lee Shiu and wife, Mrs Jennie Lee, of the Lee Shiu Centre for Intercultural Learning Summer Programme in Hong Kong; and founding Dean of the USP Prof George P Landow and Mrs Ruth Landow.

On the USP, its current Director Prof John Richardson said that the programme “provided students with an environment for exploration, collaboration and creative discovery with unique modules designed to develop interdisciplinary thinking. Learning extended beyond the classroom through a wide range of interdisciplinary research, internship, community involvement and study abroad opportunities.”

First university in Southeast Asia to join iTunes U

NUS joined iTunes U on 25 August 2010 and became the first university in Southeast Asia to leverage on the platform’s capabilities, along with many other top universities around the world which were already part of the iTunes U community.

Director of NUS Computer Centre Mr Tommy Hor said: “Joining iTunes U not only simplifies and speeds up the process of producing digital content, it enables the swift delivery of portable content to the students anytime, anywhere.”

JOINING THE CELEBRATIONS: (From left) Present USP Director Prof John Richardson, founding Dean Prof George Landow, former USP Director Assoc Prof Peter Pang

RECTORS AND MASTERS OF UTOWN’S FIRST TWO RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES: (From left) Prof Tommy Koh, Prof Wang Gungwu, Assoc Prof Gregory Clancey and Prof John Richardson

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Launch of Isabel Chan Professorship in Medical Sciences

THROUGH the generous donation made by Chief Justice of Singapore Chan Sek Keong and his wife Mrs Elisabeth Chan, the Isabel Chan Professorship in Medical Sciences was established in September 2010. The donation was eligible for the dollar-for-dollar matching grant by the Singapore Ministry of Education.

The Professorship, which serves to advance academic medicine and research in the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM) leading to improved health care, was set up in memory of the Chief Justice’s late daughter, Ms Isabel Chan.

Ms Chan passed away from breast cancer on 1 September 2008. Commemorating the second anniversary of her death, the University, in consultation with Chief Justice Chan, announced on 1 September 2010 the first Isabel Chan Professor in Medical Sciences – eminent oncologist and Dean of YLLSoM Prof John Wong. Prof Wong, who is also the Deputy Chief Executive of the National University Health System and Director of the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore, will be holding the professorship for a term of three years.

“The University is deeply appreciative of the generosity of Chief Justice Chan and Mrs Chan in making this gift to the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine,” said NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan. He added: “Inspired by this gift, we will work hard through the Isabel Chan Professorship in Medical Sciences to make a significant contribution towards the advancement of health care in Singapore. At the same time, the Professorship will help to keep the memory of Ms Isabel Chan alive for generations to come.”

IMPACT OF GIVING

Fostering a deeper understanding of banking and finance between Singapore and China

SINGAPORE and China are set to benefit from a greater understanding of the issues each country faces in the areas of banking and finance, thanks to a generous gift of S$3 million from the Chairman of the United Overseas Bank Dr Wee Cho Yaw and his family.

The gift led to the establishment of the Wee Cho Yaw Singapore-China Finance and Banking Forum under NUS Global Asia Institute (NUS-GAI). The Forum aims to provide China and Singapore with new and more integrated insights into critical issues in banking and finance in both countries, thus enhancing their competitiveness in those fields.

The Forum kicked off with an inaugural lecture on “Liveability and Livelihood – The Twin Mission of Urbanisation” in Beijing by renowned Singapore architect-planner Dr Liu Thai Ker, who is also Adjunct Professor at both the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and School of Design and Environment, NUS. Dr Liu shared his wealth of experience in the development of urbanisation of Singapore. He stressed the importance of taking a very long term perspective in the entire urban planning process to ensure high-quality city living.

Set up in September 2009, NUS-GAI aims to take the lead in research and scholarship directed at topics pivotal to Asia’s future. It creates a platform for integrative research, bringing together experts from NUS and other universities, particularly those with expertise in India and China, to find solutions to complex problems in many areas from public policy to technology.

To find out how you can support NUS Global Asia Institute, please contact Mr Andy Loo at andy.loo@nus.edu.sg or telephone 6516-5761.