Sneak preview of Singapore’s first residential colleges
KNOWLEDGE ENTERPRISE

SINCE February 2011, the NUS University Town (UTown) has started to accept applications from prospective and current students for its first two undergraduate residential colleges, Cinnamon College and Tembusu College; and the response has been very positive. Both colleges, together with a graduate residence, will open in August this year.

UTown’s innovative model of learning and living on campus is the first of its kind in Singapore’s higher education landscape. Undergraduates who stay in its residential colleges will enjoy not only the convenience of campus living, but also multi-disciplinary and peer group learning in a vibrant and diverse setting, which fosters independent critical thinking and good communication skills.

UTown is about a community. One important aspect of this community is its diversity, in terms of three dimensions: the different nationalities and cultures of the students within it, different disciplines they major in, and varying levels of seniority. I would call this a learning community – one that not only engages within itself but also extends to other stakeholders.

Tembusu College awarded its first Honorary Fellowship to noted philosopher and historian of science Prof Sir Geoffrey Lloyd at a recent celebration of the college’s inauguration.

Sir Geoffrey, the former Master of Darwin College, Cambridge University, is currently a Senior Scholar at Cambridge’s Needham Research Institute.

Applications open for Singapore’s first residence
Learning and living in UTown …

Curriculum
Offering both formal and informal learning, UTown courses complement the regular curriculum in NUS Faculties and Schools, and will apply over a two-year residency period.

Accommodation
Cinnamon College and Tembusu College can each accommodate 600 undergraduates, with a choice of single room or six-bedroom apartment.

The Graduate Residence can house up to 1,700 residents, with units for single and married graduate students.

UTown, when completed in 2013, will comprise two other residential colleges and accommodate some 4,000 students, faculty and researchers.

Facilities
Other facilities at UTown include a state-of-the-art Education Resource Centre and EduSports Complex.

The National Research Foundation’s Campus for Research Excellence And Technological Enterprise (CREATE) will also offer many opportunities for students and faculty to interact with top researchers from around the world.

Good turnout at NUS Open House 2011

MORE than 17,000 prospective students and members of the public visited the NUS Open House 2011 at the Kent Ridge and Bukit Timah campuses over the 12 and 13 March weekend.

The two-day event provided visitors with many opportunities to find out more about NUS’ courses and programmes at faculty booths as well as admissions and faculty talks. The visitors also caught a glimpse of the vibrant campus environment through guided tours, colourful exhibits and lively performances showcasing student life and activities.

A special highlight during Open House was the visit to UTown, which was open for its first public viewing. The UTown tours were greeted with much enthusiasm by the visitors who enjoyed a sneak peek at its facilities, Cinnamon and Tembusu Colleges and graduate residence.
NUS launches first Executive Master in engineering programme

THE Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE) at the NUS Faculty of Engineering launched a new Executive Master in Systems Engineering and Management (ExecMaster) on 1 February 2011 – the first such programme in Singapore.

Head of ISE Prof Tang Loon Ching said the programme is tailored for mid-career senior engineers and managers to manage system complexity through systems thinking and design. He added that while current Master’s programmes in ISE focus on methodologies and upgrading of engineering skill sets, the new ExecMaster programme aims to develop thought leaders in systems engineering.

The programme has begun accepting applications and will see its first intake of students in May 2011.

New Graduate Fellowship in Science

THE Tan Ean Kiam Graduate Fellowship in Science, commencing in 2013, was recently established by the NUS Faculty of Science. Enabled by a generous donation from the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation, the scholarship will be awarded to one deserving PhD graduate every four years.

Expressing his appreciation for the gift on behalf of the Faculty, Dean Prof Andrew Wee said that the Fellowship will spur further developments and recognise achievements of graduate students in Science.

The late Tan Ean Kiam was a successful rubber magnate and banker known for his philanthropic contributions to society, particularly in the areas of education, health and heritage preservation.

NUS-SHRI partnership opens up employment and internship opportunities

A joint collaboration between NUS and the Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) will provide NUS students and alumni greater access to employment and internship opportunities. The two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding on this collaboration during the opening of the NUS Career Fair 2011 on 27 February.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, NUS Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost Prof Tan Eng Chye affirmed that the partnership is an avenue for recruiters to reach out to NUS graduates. He said: “SHRI will allow our students to access the vast range of human resource programmes on people and interpersonal skills that it offers. SHRI will also be a valuable advisory resource for our graduates looking to pursue a career in human resource.”

Executive Director of SHRI Mr David Ang said: “We would like to deliver value to both NUS graduates and SHRI members by providing the platform to bring both parties together and helping our members to build a pipeline of talents to fill their jobs and internship positions.”

Under this collaboration, NUS Career Centre and SHRI will also conduct joint research on human capital and career related issues.

Organised by NUS Career Centre, the two-day NUS Career Fair 2011, which involved 145 employers offering 4,200 job opportunities, was the largest the University had ever held.
NUS ranked amongst world’s most reputable universities

NUS has once again been ranked amongst the leading universities in the world, according to the first-ever World Reputation Rankings published by *Times Higher Education* magazine in March 2011. In this newest ranking that identifies institutional reputations for world-class performance in teaching and research, NUS was placed 27th amongst the world’s top 100 universities and 3rd in Asia.

NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan said: “We are delighted to be placed amongst the best universities in the world by our peers. This latest ranking is a positive affirmation from the international academic community of the world-class quality of education and research being produced at our University.

The 2011 World Reputation Rankings is based on the most comprehensive worldwide survey of academics ever undertaken. It reflects the responses of 13,388 experienced academics from 131 countries. The average respondent had been working at a higher education institution for more than 16 years and published more than 50 research papers.

On the significance of the Rankings, its editor Mr Phil Baty said: “In an ever more competitive global market for students, academics and university administrators, and at a time when the answers to the world’s most pressing problems will come from putting together the best brains wherever in the world they may be based, a university’s reputation for academic excellence is crucial.”

NUS MBA within top 25 in Financial Times’ Global Rankings

THE NUS Business School’s Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme has been ranked 23rd in the world in the Financial Times (FT) Global MBA Rankings 2011. This is the highest FT ranking ever achieved by any Singapore MBA programme.

In terms of employability, the School saw 93 percent of its graduates employed within three months of graduation. The post-MBA salary increase of its graduates registered 140 percent, an indication of the value-add of an NUS MBA. NUS MBA graduates also ranked ninth in the world for international mobility and 12th for international experience.

While recognising that rankings are just indicators, Dean and Stephen Riady Distinguished Professor of NUS Business School Bernard Yeung said that the School was nevertheless very encouraged by the news. He added: “We are devoted to providing top quality teaching and memorable educational experience for our students, and undertaking rigorous research that benefits both practitioners and academics. We are very glad that the quality of our programme is acknowledged.”

"We are today a leading global university centred in Asia, and will continue to develop high quality education and research programmes that will contribute to Singapore, to Asia and to the world.

– Prof Tan Chorh Chuan
Prestigious partnerships for Faculty of Law

THE NUS Faculty of Law is the first in Asia to partner the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the World Bank to offer two prestigious fellowships respectively for law graduates. ICJ and World Bank have existing programmes with only select North American and European law schools such as New York University, Yale University and University of Oxford.

In addition, NUS and Boston University (BU) have also teamed up to offer a new Master’s degree programme. Come August 2011, the first two students on this programme will head to BU for a year to pursue a Master’s in Law. Selected BU students, in turn, can spend a year at NUS and graduate with a Master’s degree.

According to Dean Prof Tan Cheng Han, the BU programme is the first of six partnerships that NUS hopes to forge with top overseas law schools over the next two years. He stressed the importance of greater global exposure for law students, given that the law profession is transforming from a domestic to a transnational one.

As for the fellowship programmes which begin this year, he said that they “offer our graduates an outstanding opportunity to gain experience in the most important international legal institutions.” The World Bank’s two-year Legal Associates Programme includes the opportunity to work in the World Bank Legal Vice Presidency, while the ICJ programme puts a successful applicant in the chambers of one of the judges.

International student design competition tackles urbanisation issues

THE NUS Department of Architecture, together with an international philanthropic organisation World Future Foundation Ltd (WFF), launched a Vertical Cities Asia International Competition and Symposium early this year. To be held annually over a five-year period, the competition and symposium are supported through generous funding from WFF.

The competition will encourage design explorations into the prospects of new models of urban architecture, taking into consideration factors such as density, liveability and sustainability. It is open to students of architecture and related disciplines from 10 participating universities in Asia, Europe and the USA, namely, Delft University of Technology, ETH Zurich, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Tokyo University, Tongji University, Tsinghua University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Michigan and University of Pennsylvania, including NUS.

For the annual competition, a one square kilometre territory housing 100,000 people living and working within the space will be the subject of study. The inaugural competition kicked off in January and will end in June 2011.

Looking at the growth rate of the world’s population, especially in Asia where urbanisation is rampant, a new paradigm of sustainable and land-efficient urban growth must be sought to cater to the growing needs of the people. One solution is to construct transit-oriented vertical cities.

– Dean of NUS School of Design and Environment Prof Heng Chye Kiang explaining the competition’s focus on vertical cities in Asia
New spin-off company developing novel electrocardiogram chip

MEDICAL device start-up company, Clearbridge VitalSigns, will develop and commercialise an NUS invention – a novel, ultra-low powered electrocardiogram (ECG) chip that will be less cumbersome and expensive, and more durable and accurate in capturing sporadic abnormal heart episodes than current cardiac ECG recording devices. With this invention, the new NUS spin-off company is set to enter the US$8 billion global patient monitoring market.

The chip, created by Prof Lian Yong from the NUS Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and his team, can be developed into an extremely thin, self-adhesive “Digital ECG Plaster” that is adhered to a patient’s chest.

Prof Lian Yong co-founded Clearbridge VitalSigns with his partner Mr Johnson Chen who handles the business, while he devotes himself to research and development of the chip.

Clearbridge VitalSigns is incubated by Clearbridge Accelerator, one of the high-technology incubators supported by the National Research Foundation’s Technology Incubation Scheme. Research on the ECG chip was funded by Singapore’s Agency for Science, Technology and Research through its Thematic Strategic Research Programme.

Our goal is to develop a range of extremely low-powered wireless biomedical chips that can monitor a wide array of human vital signs and are also comfortable to wear, robust and sensitive. - Prof Lian Yong

Speech translation at your fingertips

ASSOC PROF Ng Hwee Tou and Dr Sim Khe Chai from the NUS School of Computing developed a useful iPhone application which could carry out speech translation from English to Mandarin and vice versa, as well as from Malay to English. The researchers had earlier learnt that only three similar iPhone applications that could perform speech translations were available in the market, but these had limitations, which included the inability to translate Malay speech.

Aided by a S$4 million funding over five years by Singapore’s Media Development Authority, the research which began in mid 2008, was carried out in collaboration with the China-Singapore Institute of Digital Media.

The researchers are currently working on the robustness and scalability of their application so that it can handle thousands, even millions, of users.

Future research on this application may include versions that can be deployed on other mobile phone platforms such as Android and Blackberry, and its extension to support other languages in the region.
New home for Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies

THE Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies (ALCNS) of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM) marked its move to the Clinical Research Centre, Block MD11, with a simple opening ceremony on 14 February 2011.

Among the 300 guests and students in attendance were Chairman of the D S Foundation Dr Della Lee, NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, NUS Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost Prof Tan Eng Chye, Dean of YLLSoM Prof John Wong, and Chief Nursing Officer at the Ministry of Health Ms Pauline Tan.

Giving the Welcome Address, Head of ALCNS Prof Sally Chan said that the Centre is proud of its role in educating future generations of nurse leaders in healthcare delivery and public service, and in the professional development of nursing in Singapore and the region.

At the ceremony, it was also announced that the Lee Foundation had made a generous donation of $5 million to the “Lee Foundation Critical Care Programme” of the National University Health System. The gift will help address the pressing needs of a rapidly greying population in Singapore and provide better quality care.

Honouring our benefactors

NUS has unveiled a Donor Wall and a series of wall panels to recognise and honour the many benefactors who, through their generosity and passion, enabled the University to transform itself from a small medical college in 1905 to the leading global university it is today. The Donor Wall and panels take pride of place at the University Hall Atrium.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, which was attended by members of the University’s Board of Trustees, senior administrators and friends, NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan said that the University’s enduring tradition of philanthropy and growing support from the community and beyond were heartening. The Donor Wall is “a symbol of deep gratitude for the support and help which has enabled the University to develop”, he said, pointing out that ample space has been left on the wall to accommodate the names of future benefactors.

Prof Tan expressed his appreciation to all who have supported the University, among them NUS alumni, noting that their gifts grew by nearly 50 percent last year. There has also been an increase in giving among staff and faculty. Prof Tan thanked the Board of Trustees, who are some of the University’s major benefactors, for sharing their personal expertise, energy and connections in helping to shape the direction of the University and raise philanthropic support.

If you wish to know more about giving to NUS, please call Ms Ho Yuen Kwan at (+65) 6516 5755 or email askdvo@nus.edu.sg.