NUS honours Prof J Y Pillay
NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan and six other faculty from the University attended the 42nd World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, from 25 to 29 January 2012.

The 2012 meeting centred on the theme of “The Great Transformation: Shaping New Models”. It brought the global leaders back to their core purpose of defining what the future should look like and aligning stakeholders around that vision.

Prof Tan facilitated three sessions, “Leveraging Human-Machine Collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University”, “From Concept to Commerce with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute” and “What If All Known Antibiotics Lost Their Effectiveness?”. He also led a discussion group at the brainstorming session, “Business, Governance and Leadership – New Pressures and Realities”, and attended the Winter Meeting of the Global University Leaders Forum.

Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY School) Prof Kishore Mahbubani, who has been attending the Annual Meeting for over 10 years now, starred in the one-on-one interview, “An Insight, An Idea with Kishore Mahbubani”. He also spoke at a session on “Pundits, Professors and their Predictions” and moderated two other sessions, “ASEAN: Collaboration through Connectivity” and “The Future of American Power in the 21st Century”.

Also in Davos were Prof Deng Yongheng, Provost’s Chair Professor and Director of the Institute of Real Estate Studies at NUS, who was on the panel of the session entitled “China’s Economic Outlook”; as well as four NUS experts who presented breakthrough ideas and concepts at the “New Models of Healthcare with the National University of Singapore” session, introduced by Prof Tan Chorh Chuan and moderated by Associate Fellow from University of Oxford Dr Richard T Pascale.

The four presenters were Prof John Wong, Vice Provost (Academic Medicine) and Isabel Chan, Professor Professor in Medical Sciences; Prof Wong Tien Yin, Head of the Department of Ophthalmology and Director of the Singapore Eye Research Institute; Prof Chua Kee Chiaing, Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; and Assoc Prof Chong Yap Seng from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

The topics they addressed were, respectively, “Nature’s Experiments: Developing Personalised Cancer Therapy”, “Eyes Predict Heart Disease and Stroke”, “Cloud-connected Body Sensor Networks for Future Healthcare” and “Putting Women and Children First in Our Fight Against Obesity and Diabetes”. Following an open debate involving all participants, the presenters also led small group discussions to brainstorm challenges and solutions to critical issues raised.

First held in 1971, the WEF Annual Meeting is a gathering of global leaders at the start of each year to discuss the most pressing and important world issues, devise innovative strategies and catalyse solutions to meet those challenges.

Key insights from Kishore Mahbubani

LKY School Dean Prof Kishore Mahbubani was among 21 influential thought leaders selected to share their insights on the single most important transformation that will occur in the 21st century at the one-on-one high impact sessions running throughout the Davos meeting.

He was interviewed by Associate Editor and Chief Foreign Affairs Commentator of Financial Times Mr Gideon Rachman at the session, “An Insight, An Idea with Kishore Mahbubani”.

On his key proposition, Prof Mahbubani said: “The main idea I put across was that even though power was shifting to Asia, the West should not be alarmed by this shift of power. The Asian states want to work with the Western states to create a stable and prosperous global order that would benefit both the East and West.”

He noted that many Asians are not aware of the rising level of anxiety in the West, both among the policymakers and the general population, over the shift of power to Asia. Confidence in the future that both the Europeans and Americans used to have is disappearing; and there is a real danger of protectionism emerging in the West. In view of this, he said: “The time has therefore come for Asians to stop being passive and to start providing more global leadership.”
New initiatives in honour of J Y Pillay

NUS announced several new initiatives in January 2012, which were established in tribute to eminent national policymaker and corporate leader Prof J Y Pillay. The initiatives comprised two distinguished professorships, a fellowship and bursary at the Yale-NUS College (Yale-NUS), and a research centre at the NUS Global Asia Institute (NUS-GAI).

The initiatives were made possible through generous gifts, amounting to S$12.9 million, from a group of corporate and private donors led by Singapore Airlines and Singapore Exchange. S$11.9 million will go towards supporting initiatives at Yale-NUS and S$1 million will be used for the new research centre at NUS-GAI. The government’s matching grant will bring the total funding to S$49.6 million.

Thanking the donors, NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan said: “Our goal is for the high-impact programmes established through these gifts to serve the needs of Singapore as well as the Asian and global communities.”

He also said that the University is grateful for the opportunity to honour Prof Pillay, a remarkable Singapore pioneer who serves as a role model for current and future NUS students.

In the civil service for more than three decades, Prof Pillay had been Permanent Secretary of the Ministries of Finance, Defence and National Development. He also made significant contributions to Singapore’s economic growth while helming key government-linked companies and institutions.

In 1999, he led the merger between the Stock Exchange of Singapore and the Singapore International Monetary Exchange and became the founding Chairman of Singapore Exchange, a position he held until 2010. He is also well known for leading the transformation of Singapore Airlines from a small company with a modest fleet of 12 aircrafts to the global industry leader it is today.

The Chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisors since 2005, Prof Pillay is currently also the Rector of the NUS University Town’s third residential college and an Adjunct Professor with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

Donors
- Singapore Airlines
- Singapore Exchange
- BinjaiTree
- Low Check Kian
- Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara
- John Tan Kwang Kherng
- Deutsche Bank
- ACR Capital Holdings
- Allen & Gledhill
- Nicholas Kong
- Schroder Investment Management (Singapore) Ltd

There are other donors who have chosen to remain anonymous.

New initiatives
- J Y Pillay Global-Asia Programme at Yale-NUS comprising two distinguished professorships, a fellowship and a bursary
  
  The first J Y Pillay Distinguished Professorship was awarded to visiting professor Sir Peter Crane, a renowned evolutionary biologist and Dean of Yale University’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. He gave a lecture on “The Future of Plants: Conservation and Use in the 21st Century” at the launch of NUS’ new initiatives to honour Mr Pillay.

- J Y Pillay Comparative Asia Research Centre and a fellowship at NUS-GAI
  
  Prof Gavin Jones, an internationally recognised demographer well-versed in research on Asia, was appointed Director of the J Y Pillay Comparative Asia Research Centre. The Centre will provide a cross-disciplinary environment for researchers to study issues pertinent to China, India and Indonesia.
Yale-NUS College to offer two new degree programmes

Yale-NUS College (Yale-NUS), a landmark collaboration between Yale University and NUS, has unveiled two new degree programmes that it will offer. On top of an honours degree in arts or science, eligible Yale-NUS students could graduate with a second bachelor’s degree in law from NUS or a master’s degree in environmental studies from Yale, with an additional fifth year of study.

The other five-year programme, offered by Yale-NUS and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (YFES), is a concurrent degree programme for students interested to pursue careers in an environmental field. Eligible students will graduate with a Yale-NUS Bachelor of Arts (Honours) or Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree, and a Master of Environmental Science or Master of Environmental Management degree from Yale University. They would have spent one semester taking upper level courses in Yale College in the United States, and also worked in an environmentally-related position for one year following their graduation from Yale-NUS prior to matriculating at YFES. The programme will start accepting students in December 2016.

The five-year Bachelor of Arts (Honours) - Bachelor of Laws (Honours) Double Degree Programme offered by Yale-NUS and the NUS Faculty of Law will combine liberal arts education with legal professional training for prospective lawyers. Graduates with this double degree qualify to be admitted to the legal profession as Advocates and Solicitors of the High Court of Singapore.

About 15 to 25 students will be admitted into the programme each year, starting from August 2013. They will reside at Yale-NUS for the first four years and enjoy the full benefits of a residential college experience. As part of the programme, they will also have the opportunity to study abroad for a semester and take up internship overseas.

NUS Law School partners Tsinghua University in degree programmes

The law schools of NUS and Tsinghua University have teamed up to establish new programmes that will enable students to earn degrees from both institutions. NUS Faculty of Law signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tsinghua University to seal this partnership, its first such collaboration with a Chinese University, on 14 December 2011.

The concurrent degree programme will be based on a “3+1” model, with selected students from both law schools spending part of their course time at the partner institution and receiving a Master of Laws (LLM) degree. Each home institution will send five of its current Bachelor of Laws (LLB) candidates who have completed at least three years of study at their home institution to spend a minimum of one year at the other institution.

Opportunities may be available for the faculty of both law schools to teach at the partner institution. The two law schools will also be discussing cooperation at the graduate level, including a possible joint LLM degree.

Prof Stephen Girvin, Vice-Dean of Research and International Programmes at the NUS Law School, said the new programmes will provide participating students with excellent networking opportunities and tremendous exposure to Chinese legal practitioners, as well as deepen their understanding of Chinese law.

The two new degree programmes we have developed combine the breadth and depth of liberal arts education with the depth that comes with specialisations, whether in law or environmental studies. We are confident that these opportunities will appeal to high-achieving students at Yale-NUS.

– Prof Lily Kong

The five-year Programme

Not only are Yale-NUS and Tsinghua University offering new degree programmes, but they are also working together to provide students with opportunities to study abroad. The programmes allow students to spend one semester at the partner institution, giving them valuable exposure to different legal systems and cultures.

The concurrent degree programme is unique in that it provides students with a comprehensive education in both arts and law. This allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the legal systems and legal issues they will face in their careers.

The programmes are open to students who are high-achieving and motivated to pursue advanced degrees. They require a strong academic background and a passion for the field of study.

The programmes are challenging and demanding, but they offer students a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience and knowledge. They are sure to appeal to students who are looking to further their education and prepare for a successful career in law or environmental studies.
Philip Yeo kicks off U@live 2012

The NUS U@live forum got off to a rousing start in the new year with Singapore pioneer Mr Philip Yeo, a straight talker with an incredible portfolio of accomplishments. The forum held on 18 January was the 12th instalment of the monthly speaker series featuring outstanding members of the NUS community who have been indefatigable in championing causes that make a difference to society.

An extraordinary leader in civil service who had played a big role in the development of Singapore’s information technology, semiconductor, chemical and biomedical sciences industries, Mr Yeo is best known for his contributions towards nurturing talents and creating jobs for Singapore, most notably while he was serving in the Economic Development Board and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research.

Sharing his experiences at U@live, Mr Yeo talked about his work in growing Singapore industries and taking them beyond the local shores. He also commented on various issues facing the Singapore society, and answered candid questions from the audience ranging from controversies stirred by his provocative remarks, the competitive edge of Singapore engineers, the entitlement mentality among young Singaporeans today to the recent debate on ministerial salary review.

Forum moderator Mr Viswa Sadasivan, Chairman of the U@live organising committee, found Mr Yeo’s frankness refreshing and described him as a person who is “passionately patriotic; a firm believer in the Singaporean talent”.

Currently the Chairman of SPRING Singapore, Mr Yeo is also the Senior International Advisor at SingBridge International Pte Ltd, and Chairman and Director of SingBridge International Investments Pte Ltd.

A recipient of many prestigious awards and accolades, Mr Yeo, who holds a Master of Science (Systems Engineering) degree from the University of Singapore, was conferred an Honorary Doctor of Letters by NUS last year, in recognition of his distinguished service and outstanding contributions to Singapore.

U@live, which is webcast live, aims to provoke thought, ignite passion and inspire action by the NUS community in pursuit of worthy causes. Initiated by the Alumni Advisory Board, the forum is spearheaded by alumni and the Office of Alumni Relations.

International law expert Mr Gary Born was appointed the first Kwa Geok Choo Distinguished Visitor. He gave his inaugural lecture titled “A New Generation of International Adjudication” on 19 January 2012, where he also fielded questions on accountability, transparency and diversity in international tribunals during the Question and Answer session chaired by Singapore’s Attorney-General Mr Sundaresh Menon.

Widely regarded as the world’s pre-eminent authority on international commercial arbitration and litigation, Mr Born is currently Chair of the International Arbitration Practice Group in WilmerHale, an international law firm, as well as a Visiting Professor at the NUS Law School.

The Kwa Geok Choo Distinguished Visitors Programme is one of four key initiatives by NUS to honour the late Madam Kwa Geok Choo, wife of former Singapore Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew. Under the programme, prominent law academics will be invited to Singapore annually to teach a course at NUS and/or deliver public lectures on highly topical legal issues.

The Centre for International Law (CIL) Fireside Chat Series on International Law and Diplomacy kicked off on 13 January 2012 at the NUS Bukit Timah Campus, with former Deputy Prime Minister Prof S Jayakumar holding the inaugural session on “Diplomacy and International Law: A Singaporean Perspective”. CIL Chairman and Ambassador-at-Large Prof Tommy Koh chaired the session, which was attended by students from NUS, Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Management University.

The Chat Series, hosted by Prof Jayakumar and Prof Koh, will feature leading international lawyers and diplomats who will share legal and political considerations that shape a state’s conduct in international relations.

AT A GLANCE

- International law expert Mr Gary Born was appointed the first Kwa Geok Choo Distinguished Visitor. He gave his inaugural lecture titled “A New Generation of International Adjudication” on 19 January 2012, where he also fielded questions on accountability, transparency and diversity in international tribunals during the Question and Answer session chaired by Singapore’s Attorney-General Mr Sundaresh Menon.

- The Centre for International Law (CIL) Fireside Chat Series on International Law and Diplomacy kicked off on 13 January 2012 at the NUS Bukit Timah Campus, with former Deputy Prime Minister Prof S Jayakumar holding the inaugural session on “Diplomacy and International Law: A Singaporean Perspective”. CIL Chairman and Ambassador-at-Large Prof Tommy Koh chaired the session, which was attended by students from NUS, Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Management University.

The Chat Series, hosted by Prof Jayakumar and Prof Koh, will feature leading international lawyers and diplomats who will share legal and political considerations that shape a state’s conduct in international relations.
Senior public officials obtain MPAM degrees at NUS

The Master in Public Administration and Management (MPAM) programme, offered by the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and NUS Business School, celebrated the graduation of its second batch of students at Shangri-La Hotel Singapore on 4 January 2012. This Class of 2011, comprising 75 leaders from China’s central, provincial and municipal authorities and two senior Taiwanese public officials, was much larger than the 55-strong inaugural batch who graduated in December 2010.

At the valedictory dinner, the graduates and guests also celebrated the longstanding and close collaboration between Singapore and China, particularly in the field of higher education. Singapore Minister for Education Mr Heng Swee Keat graced the event as Guest-of-Honour. Also in attendance were China Ambassador to Singapore His Excellency Wei Wei and Deputy Director General Dr Wang Xintang from China’s Central Organisation Department, who made a special trip from Beijing to attend the dinner.

Giving the welcome address, NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan said: “The MPAM programme is very much in line with NUS’ vision to be a leading global university centred in Asia. While aiming at creating high research impact internationally, we are also placing a strong focus on pioneering innovative programmes to engage Asia, particularly China, India and Southeast Asia.”

He ended his speech in Mandarin with words of encouragement and well wishes to the graduands. Inviting them to visit often, he said that NUS is honoured to have them as part of the University’s community and he hoped they would continue to show concern and support for NUS, their alma mater.

Conducted entirely in Mandarin, the 10-month long MPAM programme was initiated following an agreement between the Singapore and Chinese governments, endorsed by Chinese President Hu Jintao. The programme, inaugurated in April 2010, provides training to senior Chinese public officials with the aim of sharing principles of good public governance and policy and offering exposure to the Singapore experience.

MARK OF EXCELLENCE

NUS business student Lim Heem Wei made history by becoming the first Singapore gymnast to qualify for the Olympics. She will compete in the Games held in London this July.

Said Singapore Gymnastics General Manager Fionna Thong: “Heem Wei has shown great determination and grit in pursuing her Olympic dream. The sacrifices she made for the sport have truly paid off.”

The gymnastics individual all-event, which Heem Wei qualified for, is a highly demanding sporting discipline. On the secret of her success, Heem Wei revealed: “No matter how big or small a dream may be, it is all about dedication, staying focused, taking calculated risks and daring to chase that dream.”

NUS Business School and the Office of Student Affairs have been working closely in the past few months with the Singapore Sports Council and Singapore Gymnastics to support Heem Wei in both her academic and sporting pursuits.
Quantum physics enables perfectly secure cloud computing

Computer data processing and storage are increasingly done in the “cloud”, connecting users over a network to a powerful server. A challenge is to ensure that users’ data remain private.

Research carried out by Dr Joseph Fitzsimons at the Centre for Quantum Technologies (CQT) at NUS, together with scientists in Austria, Canada and the UK, may offer a solution. The team demonstrated a “blind quantum computation” in which the input, data processing and output remained unknown to the computer. Results of this experiment were published in the 20 January issue of Science.

The technique works for advanced quantum computers that exploit the properties of quantum physics. Such computers are expected to play an important role in future information processing since they can outperform classical computers at many tasks.

The new scheme offers users a way to securely access quantum computers when they become available as specialised facilities, like today’s supercomputers, and also promises security for any future quantum “cloud”.

“Blind quantum computation” combines the power of quantum computing with the security of quantum cryptography. “Unless there is a fundamental mistake in the present understanding of physics, the ‘blindness’ is perfect,” said Dr Fitzsimons. “There is no way to attack it.”

Dr Fitzsimons and his theoretical colleagues first described the idea in a 2009 paper. They have now collaborated with an experimental group from the Vienna Center for Quantum Science and Technology at the University of Vienna and the Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information in Austria to perform a proof-of-principle demonstration using photons or particles of light to encode data.

Along with their paper, Science also published an independent “Perspective” article on the results by Prof Vlatko Vedral from CQT and the University of Oxford, UK.

NUS-Stanford study to ease overcrowding in Singapore trains

Researchers from NUS and Stanford University have embarked on a six-month trial project since 10 January 2012 to encourage off-peak travel on Singapore’s rail network. The web-based study, known as INSINC (“Incentives for Singapore’s Commuters”), offers a reward system where commuters earn credits proportional to the distance they travel on the Mass Rapid Transit and Light Rail Transit, with extra credits for shoulder-peak trips. The travel timings and distances will be tracked through the commuters’ EZ-Link cards, and the credits awarded can be exchanged for prizes or chances to win monetary rewards.

The study, which aims to involve some 20,000 commuters, is led by Prof Balaji Prabhakar from Stanford University, Assoc Prof Mehul Motani and Prof Chua Kee Chaing from NUS, with Ms Naini Gomes, a PhD student at Stanford. In addition to the Land Transport Authority of Singapore, it is also supported by EZ-Link, Amazon Web Services, the Stanford Center for Societal Networks and the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit.
Remembering the Holocaust

What is the historical significance of the Holocaust to Europe and the world? What implications does it have for our struggle against racial discrimination and for human rights?

These were some of the issues raised during a special session of the Tembusu Forum on 27 January to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day. More than 200 guests attended the event, including some 16 ambassadors, religious leaders as well as staff and students.

The invited speakers at the forum were Her Excellency Angelika Viets, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Singapore; Mr Richard Magnus, Singapore’s Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights; Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, former Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Dr Mahdev Mohan from the Singapore Management University’s School of Law, who is also an international civil party lawyer in the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

Tembusu College Rector Prof Tommy Koh, who is also Ambassador-At-Large at Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that he convened the forum to set out the facts about the Holocaust which many young Singaporeans seemed ill-informed about. He hoped the forum will increase awareness and strengthen respect for human rights.

First held in October 2011, the Tembusu Forum which features experienced policymakers, diplomats and intellectuals, seeks to promote informed and lively exchange of views on important global and regional issues.

Dr Tahir gives S$30 million to Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

Prominent Indonesian businessman and philanthropist, Dr Tahir, has made a new gift of S$30 million to NUS’ Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. With government matching, the value of the gift is expected to reach up to S$75 million.

NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan said: “Dr Tahir is a very strong supporter of NUS. His latest gift to the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine will allow us to advance medical education and research which will benefit Singaporeans and others in the community. As an alumni donor of the University, Dr Tahir inspires us with his passionate belief in the University’s ability to influence the future and positively impact the lives around us. We are deeply appreciative of his gift and his kind generosity.”

As a 1976 graduate of Nanyang University, which later merged with the University of Singapore to become NUS, Dr Tahir has been a long-standing supporter of the University, where his son is also an alumnus. Dr Tahir has made previous gifts to establish scholarships and bursaries at NUS Business School and University Town. With this new gift, Dr Tahir is now NUS’ largest international alumni donor.

Dr Tahir said that education is one of the most important causes one can support and that NUS offers a world-class education. He hopes that his gesture will inspire other alumni and friends of NUS to continue to support the University. This will, in turn, have a positive impact on society, especially for ASEAN countries.

As a 1976 graduate of Nanyang University, which later merged with the University of Singapore to become NUS, Dr Tahir has been a long-standing supporter of the University, where his son is also an alumnus. Dr Tahir has made previous gifts to establish scholarships and bursaries at NUS Business School and University Town. With this new gift, Dr Tahir is now NUS’ largest international alumni donor.

Dr Tahir is the Founder and Executive Chairman of the Indonesia-based conglomerate, Mayapada Group, who owns one of Indonesia’s biggest privately owned banks, Bank Mayapada. He was recently awarded the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2011 Indonesia. The Group also has interests in the country’s property, retail and healthcare industries.

To know more about making a gift to NUS, please contact Ms Ho Yuen Kwan at 6516 5755 or email askdvo@nus.edu.sg.