"It takes a University to engage alumni. Alumni engagement should not be a functional discharge but a holistic endeavour."

MR BERNARD TOH (ARCHITECTURE ’84), DIRECTOR, NUS ALUMNI RELATIONS

A HEROINE FOR ALL HUMANITY
MS SELLY AMALINA MUZAMMIL
(ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ’09)

CHARTING HIS OWN COURSE
MR MARTINO TAN
(PUBLIC POLICY ’09)

CREATING LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

IS IT TIME TO RETHINK THE SINGAPORE DREAM?
ALUMNI TALK ABOUT OUR COLLECTIVE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

HOW NUS IS ENGAGING ALUMNI MEANINGFULLY FOR MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL IMPACT.
Dear alumni and friends,

As we usher in 2020, my colleagues and I also extend our warmest wishes for an auspicious, blessed Chinese Lunar New Year!

This year, we are commemorating our University’s 115th year. Our University was set up in 1905 to nurture skilled graduates — our alumni — who would help build our nation. Despite the many rapid changes around us, NUS has evolved in lockstep with Singapore’s needs, visions and dreams.

Perhaps a measure of Singapore’s growth success is by you, our alumni and your collective contributions. Recently, we recognised and celebrated the achievements of 21 alumni at the NUS Alumni Awards 2019 (pages 4-5) at a ceremony held at our very own Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum. Our award recipients, who hail from diverse backgrounds — from the civil service to the cinematic arts — have distinguished themselves both locally and globally, and believe whole-heartedly in service to the community.

There are many inspiring examples of alumni making great impact through work — demonstrating a deep commitment to excellence, a value we instil and uphold at NUS. NUS continues to be very proud of all her alumni, and we hope you will stay closely connected with your alma mater.

This issue’s cover story, “You, Me and Our University” (pages 14-19) is a reflection about the healthy state of alumni relations at NUS. Alumni have always been important to the University — and now feature as a strong centerpiece of our University’s connection to industry, policy-making and communities at large. There is a strong collective effort to build ties with our alumni — demonstrated by our most senior NUS leaders, at the faculty and department levels, as well as my team here who are committed to staying connected with you. We can achieve more — by bringing together the University community, and bringing benefits to alumni keeping in mind your professional and lifelong learning needs.

Once again, have a blessed, joyous and prosperous Chinese Lunar New Year! My colleagues and I are looking forward to engaging once again with you at one of our many alumni events, and online at nus.edu.sg/alumnus or one of our social channels.

Warmest wishes,
Mr Bernard Toh
(Architecture ’84)
Director, Alumni Relations
The programme will run in two phases for a total of six months. Under Phase 1, participants will form a team to identify and validate a business idea. At the end of Phase 1, teams will be evaluated for an investment of US$100,000 (about S$140,000) by Antler. Companies selected by Antler for investment will enter Phase 2 to further develop their prototype and business case to be market-ready. At the end of Phase 2, companies will be evaluated for a further funding of S$100,000 by NUS. Total funding for the two phases adds up to about $240,000.

Mr Mike Nikou, Partner for Capital at Antler, said many entrepreneurial talents are tied by “golden handcuffs” to their jobs in leading corporates, late-stage start-ups, or universities. “They want to start their own companies but are unable to take the ‘leap of faith’ and quit their jobs; at least not before building their teams, validating their ideas and securing initial investments,” he added.

Professor Freddy Boey (Engineering ‘87), NUS Deputy President (Innovation and Enterprise), noted that Singapore has committed more than $30 billion in investments, “We also have a strong scientific base with more than 8,000 PhDs, 50% of which are trained locally every year. With a strong talent pool and substantial R&D investment, Singapore and NUS have the potential to build more and greater deep tech companies.”
OUTSTANDING ALUMNI HONOURED

Paying tribute to those who have made a difference to the nation as well as the University.

UNDER THE IMPOSING SHADOWS OF PRINCE, APOLLO AND TWINKY — the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at NUS' three sauropod dinosaur skeletons — 21 outstanding alumni from diverse backgrounds were honoured at the NUS Alumni Awards 2019 on 27 November.

EMINENT ALUMNI AWARD

The University conferred the Eminent Alumni Award on two NUS alumni who have distinguished themselves nationally for their exceptional and sustained contributions and achievements — former Chief Justice Dr Chan Sek Keong (Law ’91), who is also Pro-Chancellor of NUS, and former top civil servant and former Pro-Chancellor of NUS Mr Ngiam Tong Dow (Arts ’59).

Dr Chan was the first Singapore law graduate to be appointed Attorney-General of Singapore and subsequently Chief Justice of Singapore. He is regarded by his peers as one of Singapore’s and Asia’s most brilliant and respected Judges. Even after his retirement as Chief Justice in 2012, Dr Chan has remained active in the law as a Distinguished Fellow at NUS Law and regularly speaks with students.

Mr Ngiam was one of Singapore’s first civil servants, beginning his career a few months after Singapore’s first cabinet was sworn in on 5 June 1959. During his 40 years in public service, he served as Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office, and the Ministries of Finance, Trade and Industry, National Development, and Communications. Mr Ngiam was directly involved in policies that shaped Singapore.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

The Distinguished Alumni Service Award went to six recipients who have demonstrated impact in their respective fields as well as rendered excellent and sustained service to NUS, its predecessor institutions and the community. They are:

- Dr Jeremy Ez Jan Wen (Engineering ’05), NUS Alumni Advisory Board member and NUS Day of Service chairperson;
- Ms Guan Dian (Computing ’10), Co-Founder and Vice President, PatSnap;
- Dr Li Jingmei (Science + University Scholars Programme ’05), breast cancer researcher;
- Mr Mustafa Izzuddin (Arts and Social Sciences ’98), economist and academic;
- Emeritus Professor Edwin Thumboo (Arts ’57 ’70), poet, scholar and academic leader;
- Mrs Ann Wee (Affiliate Alumnus ’19), former head of NUS Social Work.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Ten young alumni and a three-member team who have distinguished themselves in their chosen field also received accolades at the awards ceremony this year. They are:

- Ms Siely Amalina Muzammil (Arts and Social Sciences ’09), Regional Government Partnerships Officer, United Nations World Food Programme;
- Mr Soh Yi Da (Arts and Social Sciences + University Scholars Programme ’14), NUS Alumni Student Advancement Committee member, and Assistant Vice President of Investor Relations, UOB;
- Ms Kirsten Tan (Arts and Social Sciences ’94), film director;
- Mr Veerappan Swaminathan (Engineering + University Scholars Programme ’11), Founder, Sustainable Living Lab;
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IN MEMORY OF: Mrs Ann Wee passed away peacefully on the morning of 11 December 2019 at the age of 93. We celebrate and will fondly remember Mrs Wee’s impact and great contributions to Singapore, and the joy she has brought to so many of us at NUS.

Opportunities await the ready learners. Having a curious mind and thirst for knowledge keep us young and relevant — so do embrace lifelong learning, regardless of your age.

Professor Tan Eng Chye, NUS President

Congratulating the honourees, NUS President Professor Tan Eng Chye (Science ’85) said he hopes every alumnus will be inspired by their stories and embrace lifelong learning.

“Opportunities await the ready learners. Having a curious mind and thirst for knowledge keep us young and relevant — so do embrace lifelong learning regardless of your age. And with new knowledge, insights and skills, we enrich our perspectives and enhance our capacities to contribute,” he said.

Now in its eighth edition, the biennial NUS Alumni Awards was established on the occasion of NUS Centennial Celebrations in 2005 to honour alumni who have distinguished themselves through significant and impactful contributions to their alma mater, society and the world.

This article was first published on 28 November 2019 in NUS News at news.nus.edu.sg/highlights/outstanding-alumni-honoured and has been edited for The AlumNUS.
CAMPUS UPDATES

WORKERS’ MENTAL HEALTH

A PLEDGE TO SUPPORT

NUS joins other key organisations in affirming the need to pay greater attention to the psychological wellbeing of employees.

NUS CHAIRMAN MR HSIEH FU HUA (BUSINESS ’74) is among the 19 CEOs and key leaders from both the private and public sectors who signed a joint pledge on 17 October 2019 to prioritise mental wellbeing within their organisations, and the wider Singapore workforce. The signing took place at the end of the inaugural CEOs + Leaders Breakfast Dialogue held at PwC Singapore. The Dialogue was organised by the WorkWell Leaders Workgroup, a volunteer-run ground-up initiative made up of leaders who champion workplace mental wellbeing as a strategic priority.

Said Mr Hsieh, who was the special guest speaker at the event, “The WorkWell Leaders Workgroup CEO + Leaders Breakfast Dialogue was a positive and enriching experience. Mental health issues are much more widespread than what we think and leaders need to accept that they are prevalent in the workplace. As with all change, it begins with the leaders and they should ‘walk the talk’. This morning’s dialogue and pledge signify our commitment to champion and prioritise mental wellbeing within our organisations, and the wider Singapore community. Some of us are further along in this journey, and some may be just starting — what’s important is that we are collectively taking a step in the right direction on this vital issue.”

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Mr Hsieh speaking at the inaugural CEOs + Leaders Breakfast Dialogue, held at PwC Singapore. (Photo: PwC Singapore)

This article was first published on 17 October 2019 in NUS News at news.nus.edu.sg/highlights/pledge-support-workers-mental-health and has been edited for The AlumNUS.

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Mr Hsieh speaking at the inaugural CEOs + Leaders Breakfast Dialogue, held at PwC Singapore. (Photo: PwC Singapore)

BLOC71 expands to Vietnam

NUS takes another step forward, in its bid to cultivate a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region.

NUS ENTERPRISE, THE ENTREPRENEURIAL arm of the National University of Singapore (NUS), on 25 November 2019 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Becamex IDC Corporation (Becamex) — Vietnam’s leading industrial infrastructure developer — to establish BLOCK71 in Vietnam with the aim of cultivating a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in country and beyond.

The MOU was signed by Professor Freddy Bovy (Engineering ’67), NUS Deputy President (Innovation & Enterprise) and Mr Nguyen Van Hung, Chairman of Becamex, at the Horasis Asia Meeting held in Binh Duong New City.

The joint initiative will support a two-way flow of talent, technologies and start-ups with the aim of promoting innovation and entrepreneurship development in both countries. Vietnamese and Singaporean start-ups may use BLOCK71’s global network of resources and contacts to kickstart their entrepreneurial journey and gain access to international markets. At the same time, the initiative will facilitate greater information exchange, connectivity and access to programmes between Singapore, Vietnam and the region. Block71 Vietnam is scheduled to open in the second quarter of 2020. For more information, visit block71.co.

Mr Hsieh (7th from left) with 18 other leaders who signed a pledge to champion and prioritise mental wellbeing at the workplace. Ms Anthea Ong (8th from left), founder of the WorkWell Leaders Workgroup and a Nominated Member of Parliament, is holding the pledge. (Photo: PwC Singapore)

This article was first published on 25 November 2019 in NUS News at news.nus.edu.sg/highlights/block71-expands-vietnam and has been edited for The AlumNUS.

MEMOIRS OF A FLYING TIGER: THE STORY OF A WWII VETERAN AND SIA PIONEER PILOT

By Captain Ho Weng Toh with Mr Jonathan Y. H. Sim (Arts and Social Sciences ’13)

This book is a poignant story of a small-town boy, who stumbled into a lifelong flying career spanning 38 years as a pilot. Now at 99, Captain Ho Weng Toh, one of the last few remaining Flying Tigers, recalls the many events that shaped his life. It takes the reader through his journey of good and bad years, the trials and tribulations encountered, his journey from being a refugee student to becoming a Chinese Air Force B-25 bomber pilot, his will to live, the burning desire to contribute towards the WWII effort, and the trials and hardships that he had to endure alone and often in silent solitude.

Available at major bookstores and online. To order or learn more about the book, visit worldscientific.com/worldbooks/10.1142/11417.

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THE ALUMNUS

CHINA FILM FESTIVAL 2019

A RECORD OF CLOSE TO 1,300 alumni, staff, students and guests, including NUS President Professor Tan Eng Chye (Science ’85) and Co-Chairman of NUS Alumni Advisory Board Mr Johnny Tan (Science ’82), attended the 8th annual China Film Festival held from 23 to 25 October 2019 with a special screening on 31 October. Guests were treated to a recital by the Chinese Orchestra of NUS Chinese Society. The Festival, which was jointly organised by the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China (the Embassy), Singapore China Friendship Association (SCFA) and NUS Alumni Relations, featured a diverse genre of acclaimed films – Shadow, The Wandering Earth, How Long Will I Love You and The Captain. At the end of the screening each night, some members of the audience also went back with attractive lucky draw prizes including an air ticket, kindly sponsored by the Embassy and SCFA.

PHILIPPINE FILM FESTIVAL 2019

THE INAUGURAL PHILIPPINE FILM FESTIVAL opened on 12 November 2019 with a screening of Mr and Mrs Cruz and was graced by His Excellency Joseph Del Mar Yap, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Singapore. Guests also had the opportunity to meet and hear from the film’s director, Ms Sigrid Andrea Bernardo (right photo). The Festival continued over the next three nights and also featured Seven Sundays, Bakwit Boys and Siargao. More than 600 alumni and guests attended the Festival organised by the Embassy of the Philippines in Singapore and NUS Alumni Relations, and supported by the Film Development Council of the Philippines and Star Cinema, in celebration of 50 Years of Singapore-Philippines Friendship and 100 years of Philippine Cinema. Audience members also stood a chance to win lucky draw prizes kindly sponsored by the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines, Philippine Airlines, Metro Remittance Singapore Pte Ltd and AFreight Singapore.

TECH TALK

5G DEVELOPMENT & USE CASE

5G NETWORK MARKS THE NEXT GENERATION of mobile internet connectivity and its application is wide and varied. At the Tech Talk held on 20 November 2019, close to 200 alumni and guests heard from Mr Justin Saw, Solution Architect at Huawei Singapore Wireless Network, on the driving force and industry trend of 5G. Mr Saw also shared on the opportunities made possible by the speeder and more reliable connections of 5G network, in areas such as remote emergency medical treatment, unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), autonomous driving and mobile live broadcast.

28th NUS Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament 2019

THE ANNUAL GOLF EVENT organised by NUS Alumni Relations in collaboration with NUS Society (NUSS) took place on 10 October 2019 at Keppel Club. 142 golfers comprising NUS alumni, staff and friends spent an enjoyable afternoon at the golf course catching up with old friends and making new ones. The group adjourned to NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House in the evening for the Prize Presentation Dinner.
OAR HIGHLIGHTS

AT THE HEALTH & WELLNESS session held on 20 September 2019, Associate Professor Wilson Wang touched on issues that are important to an ageing society – osteoarthritis, Parkinson’s disease, and conditions that have significant effects on mobility. A Senior Consultant at National University Hospital (Division of Hip & Knee Surgery, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery University Orthopaedics, Hand & Reconstructive Microsurgery Cluster), Assoc Prof Wang also shared with alumni on the common causes and ways to improve mobility functions.

DID YOU KNOW?

SQUATTING PLACES SIX TIMES MORE STRESS ON YOUR KNEES THAN STANDING.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

FUNCTIONAL MOBILITY AND ENABLING TECHNIQUES

TRISTTY THURSDAYS

Networking with the Stars

THE LATEST SESSION OF LUNCH DIalogues held on 25 October 2019 at NUS Society (NUSS) Suntec City Guild House featured renowned CNA presenters Ms Glenda Chong (Arts and Social Sciences ‘07) and Mr Steven Chia (Member of the NUS Communications & New Media Industry Advisory Council), and moderator Mr Gurpreet Singh (Engineering ‘07). Attendees got up close and personal with the pair of media veterans who shared their perspectives and insights on the impact of digitalisation on media and news reporting such as the Thailand Cave rescue case.

NUS Alumni Relations organises regular movie screenings for members of the NUS community, ranging from all-time classics to family favourites. Join us for Movies On The House, friends and family members are welcome too!

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© & TM 2019 MARVEL.
© 2019 Sony Pictures Animation Inc. All Rights Reserved.

THURSDAY, 7.30PM
AUDITORIUM, SHAW FOUNDATION ALUMNI HOUSE

Register at: alumnet.events/MOTHq1

THIRSTY THURSDAYS

Networking with the Stars

MORE THAN 120 ALUMNI AND FRIENDS attended a star-studded Thirsty Thursdays on 5 December 2019 at Sunset Bar. Renowned CNA presenter Mr Steven Chia; actor and singer Buzn (Arts and Social Sciences ’14); singer-songwriter Yokez (Ms Yap Yoke Ling) (Arts and Social Sciences ’17); and co-founder of Hitmaker Global Academy Ms Chang Hong (Music ’07) mingled with the guests and shared candidly on their lives as public figures and the challenges that come with it, and offered advice for young alumni who aspire to become stars.
**January**

**Indian Film Festival 2020**

Back by popular demand, and showcasing the very best of Indian films jointly brought to you by the High Commission of India in Singapore and NUS Alumni Relations.

**Godzilla: King of the Monsters (PG13)**

*Movies On The House*

When ancient god-sized monsters rise again, the crypto-zoological agency Monarch faces off against Godzilla, Mothra, Rodan and King Ghidorah as they all vie for supremacy.

**Spider-Man: Far From Home (PG)**

*Movies On The House*

Following the events of Avengers: Endgame, Spider-Man must step up to take on new threats in a world that has changed forever.

**February**

**Collaboration – The New Buzzword!**

**Future-ready Workshops**

Speaker: Mr Jasbir Singh, Head of Learning & Development at the Centre for Future-ready Graduates

In this inaugural workshop, you will explore different mindsets that can either facilitate or hinder collaboration in both your personal and professional relationships.

**Celebration of Love & Giving**

If both you and your spouse are NUS alumni, we invite you to celebrate Valentine’s Day with us.

**How AI is Changing Cybersecurity**

*Tech Talk*

Speaker: Ms Angela Huang (Science ’85), Principal Lecturer and Consultant, Digital Strategy and Leadership Practice, Institute of Systems Science, NUS

Discover more about emerging technological breakthroughs and how they can impact or disrupt our lives. This talk will provide food for thought in the areas of security of AI systems, AI-powered attacks and the use of AI in cybersecurity.

**March**

**Climate Change - Are Tomorrow’s Needs More Important Than Today’s Reality?**

U@live

Can countries, and the world, find that critical balance – in the climate change debate – between addressing today’s realities and the needs of tomorrow?

**The Angry Birds Movie 2 (PG)**

*Movies On The House*

The flightless angry birds and the scheming green piggies take their beef to the next level in The Angry Birds Movie 2!
The late Dr Chee Phui Hui (Medicine '83) was instrumental in successfully lobbying for the return of the historic Bukit Timah Campus — where he had attended classes as a student — to NUS. This spirit of giving back to the University is being kept alive today, even thousands of miles away, by the likes of individuals such as Mr Anuj Jagannathan (Business '10), Chairperson of NUS Alumni San Francisco Chapter since July 2019. "My goal is to revive this dormant chapter and bring together alumni from all schools and faculties who are living in the San Francisco Bay Area," he says. "It's a challenge, but one that I enjoy. I'm glad to help in whatever way I can to maintain the connection between alumni and our alma mater."

NUS' main conduit for forging ties with its 312,000-strong global alumni community is its Office of Alumni Relations (OAR). However, Alumni Relations Director Mr Bernard Toh (Architecture '84) remarks that it is "insufficient" for OAR alone to look after the entire alumni base. Paraphrasing the proverb that "it takes a village to raise a child", Mr Toh says, "It takes a University to engage alumni. Alumni engagement should not be a functional discharge but a holistic endeavour. There has to be an integrated University-wide effort, where everyone contributes in his/her own way to furthering alumni relations." And he has a plan to make it happen.

**BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Promoting alumni engagement has been a priority for each of the last three NUS Presidents. At the 2007 Commencement Dinner, then-President Professor Shih Choon Fong said, "I asked three things of our alumni: to believe in the aspirations of alma mater, to speak well of alma mater, and to give to alma mater." His successor, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan (Medicine '83), likewise said in his 2008 State of the University Address: "Today, our alumni form the third pillar which holds our University proudly up, joining the other two pillars formed by our faculty and staff, and our students."

Under NUS' current President Professor Tan Eng Chye (Science '80), attention is being paid to the enduring relationship alumni can enjoy with the University, with lifelong learning now a cornerstone of NUS Vision, Mission and Values. "The relationship between an alma mater and her alumni is transitioning rapidly, from 'once upon a time' to lifetime learning partners, and we hope to have an opportunity to renew and strengthen our bonds before too long," said Prof Tan during his 2019 Commencement Dinner speech.

Formed in 2003, OAR arose out of a restructuring exercise that also led to the creation of a separate NUS Development Office (DVO). DVO is tasked with attracting 17,000 attendees globally. "Today, our alumni form the third pillar which underpins our University, with lifelong learning now a cornerstone of NUS Vision, Mission and Values. "The relationship between an alma mater and her alumni is transitioning rapidly, from 'once upon a time' to lifetime learning partners, and we hope to have an opportunity to renew and strengthen our bonds before too long," said Prof Tan during his 2019 Commencement Dinner speech.

OAR organises about 80 events a year across a variety of categories, attracting 17,000 attendees globally. • Thought leadership – e.g. NUS Alumni Leaders Forum, U@live • Lifelong learning – e.g. Future-ready Workshops • Arts and culture – e.g. Film Festivals • Networking – e.g. Thirsty Thursdays, Breakfast/Lunch Dialogues, Alumni Dialogues, NUS President’s Dialogue Lunch • Sports and wellness – e.g. NUS Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament, UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament, Health and Wellness talks • Homecomings – e.g. Bukit Timah Homecoming, Kent Ridge Alumni Family Day • Appreciation – e.g. NUS Alumni Awards • Community Service – e.g. NUS Day of Service • OAR offers physical and digital perks to alumni • NUS Shaw Foundation Alumni House (SFAH) has several dining options, and venues and meeting rooms open to booking • AlumniNUS Card holders enjoy exclusive privileges from more than 120 merchants

**DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS**

Building social capital is the essence. NUS alumni naturally have myriad reasons and preferences for reconnecting with one another and with the University. "Any touchpoint is a good start. In anything we do, we try to instil a sense of belonging and pride in our alma mater." says Ms Florence Neo (Arts and Social Sciences '93), Director and Head, Alumni Communications and Engagement, OAR.

NUS alumni span different phases in life:
• 40 per cent are young alumni (aged 40 and below)
• 39 per cent are prime alumni (aged 41 to 60)
• 12 per cent are senior alumni (aged 61 and above)

OAR offers:

**OAR offers:**

- **Markets and Insights**
  - e.g. NUS Alumni Market Insights Report
  - e.g. NUS Alumni Insights Forum

- **Dining:**
  - e.g. NUS Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament, NUS Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament, UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament, Health and Wellness talks

- **Homecomings:**
  - e.g. Bukit Timah Homecoming, Kent Ridge Alumni Family Day

- **Appreciation:**
  - e.g. NUS Alumni Awards

- **Community Service:**
  - e.g. NUS Day of Service

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**YOU, ME AND OUR UNIVERSITY**

NUS’ alumni engagement has been on an upward trajectory in recent years. Whether it continues to rise depends in large part on the alumni themselves, and everyone else affiliated with the University.

**TEXT BY WANDA TAN**

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**TEXT BY WANDA TAN**

**DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS**

Building social capital is the essence. NUS alumni naturally have myriad reasons and preferences for reconnecting with one another and with the University. “Any touchpoint is a good start. In anything we do, we try to instil a sense of belonging and pride in our alma mater,” says Ms Florence Neo (Arts and Social Sciences ’93), Director and Head, Alumni Communications and Engagement, OAR.

NUS alumni span different phases in life:
• 40 per cent are young alumni (aged 40 and below)
• 39 per cent are prime alumni (aged 41 to 60)
• 12 per cent are senior alumni (aged 61 and above)

OAR offers:

**OAR offers:**

- **Markets and Insights**
  - e.g. NUS Alumni Market Insights Report
  - e.g. NUS Alumni Insights Forum

- **Dining:**
  - e.g. NUS Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament, NUS Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament, UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament, Health and Wellness talks

- **Homecomings:**
  - e.g. Bukit Timah Homecoming, Kent Ridge Alumni Family Day

- **Appreciation:**
  - e.g. NUS Alumni Awards

- **Community Service:**
  - e.g. NUS Day of Service

- **OAR offers physical and digital perks to alumni:**
  - NUS Shaw Foundation Alumni House (SFAH) has several dining options, and venues and meeting rooms open to booking
  - AlumniNUS Card holders enjoy exclusive privileges from more than 120 merchants

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LEARNING NEVER ENDS

Greater emphasis has been placed on lifelong learning at NUS following the establishment of NUS School of Continuing and Lifelong Education (SCALE) in 2016, and especially after Prof Tan’s appointment as NUS President in 2018. That year, SCALE rolled out a novel NUS Lifelong Learners (L²) initiative for alumni, which offers a wide array of skills-based, industry-relevant courses necessary to stay competitive in their respective fields. As of August to November 2019, the programme has reached a stage where we want deeper levels of engagement. Our aim is to promote intellectual discourse and cultivate more alumni volunteers.

AAB members have become increasingly proactive in the last decade, and the University is also more open to their ideas. Instead of just attending or supporting OAR-organised events, we are seeing more alumni-led activities. As part of SCALE, Mr Yeo Keng Joon (MBA ’85) helps raise funds for the NUS Alumni Bursary Fund Campaign. In 2015, Mr Yeo and his wife, Mdm Kong Yuet Peng (MBA ’86), set up the NUS Campus Couples Bursary Fund in conjunction with the NUS Campus Couples Alumni group was launched.

“Want to appeal to people who, like us, met their spouses on campus and have had good careers and families. Because NUS was where it all started, many of them are grateful to the University and happy to contribute,” he reasons.

However, raising funds for bursary needs is not the sole intent of NUS Campus Couples Alumni. “The majority of alumni couples are youths, like me and my husband,” says its current Chairperson, Ms Sarah Ong (Nursing ’12). “Because we’ve still establishing our careers and starting a family, most of us are not in a position to give back financially. Instead, we organise activities to help strengthen bonds between young couples, and for them to meet other NUS couples. Our focus is on people and relationships.” The group’s annual NUS Campus Couples event, which takes place around Valentine’s Day, is billed as a Celebration of Love and Giving—an appreciation dinner for those who donated to the Fund, while doubling as an opportunity to fit in some ‘couple time’.

NUS Day of Service (DOSS) has grown progressively in scale and scope since it was launched in 2016. With each passing year, more and more alumni, students, staff and family members—both in Singapore and abroad—are signing up to either champion or participate in the goodwill activities to help strengthen bonds between young couples, and for them to meet other NUS couples. Our focus is on people and relationships.”

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Apart from his continued involvement with NUSBSA, Mr Sonny Yuen (Business ’85) is also the founding President of Raffles Hall Association and current Chairperson of NUS Alumni Leaders Forum. These experiences have enabled him to witness the multifaceted benefits of staying connected to one’s alma mater — not just career-wise through the network of professional contacts, but on the most deeply personal level, too. When a friend from Mr Yuen’s Raffles Hall days was recently diagnosed with a terminal illness, the entire cohort rallied to lend moral and financial support. Other cohorts also pitched in to help cover the family’s expenses, and one younger alum even offered the friend a full-paying job while he was in the hospital ward. “The two of them were more than 10 years apart in age and didn’t know each other, but they had one thing in common — being a Rafflesian,” says Mr Yuen. “Such is the power of bonds among alumni.”

In a bid to further encourage alumni volunteerism and enhance Board diversity, Mr Tan reveals that the selection process for the next term of the AAB — typically only appointed by the NUS President — has been changed. Starting January 2020, NUS staff and alumni can also nominate worthy candidates to be AAB members. “This will open up the selection process and help us to achieve a better mix of members with different professional backgrounds, and who cover the spectrum in terms of age and gender,” says Mr Tan. Up to three candidates will be chosen through this process. Their term will begin in July 2020 and last two years.

TO ENGAGE AND EXPAND
Acting as a sort of liaison between OAR and alumni are the Associate Directors for Alumni Relations, each attached to a specific faculty, school, department, hall or residential college. All 28 Associate Directors are responsible for engaging their respective alumni sub-communities, and they meet with OAR staff on a quarterly basis to share updates.

“Within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), this role is filled by its Vice Dean (External Relations and Student Life), Associate Professor Loy Hue Chieh (Arts and Social Sciences ’98). FASS runs a number of alumni engagement initiatives that are complementary to those organised by OAR. These include the FASS Mentorship Programme, which pairs successful FASS alumni with undergraduates; the ‘My FASS Family’ Host Programme, where FASS alumni host and benefit international students staying in Singapore; and the FASS STARS Awards, which recognises the achievements of distinguished staff and alumni.

Ad hoc engagement opportunities are also available. “When creating our Philosophy, Politics and Economics major in 2017, I interviewed 14 senior HR managers from public and private organisations to get their feedback, and at least half of them were alumni. More recently, when fleshing out the details for our new FASS 2.0 Industry Tracks programme, we spoke to alumni working in each of the identified industries. Their feedback helped us shape our programme,” says Prof Loy. Close to 300 alumni also attended the FASS50 Gala Dinner in November 2019 to celebrate the Faculty’s 50th anniversary.

Mr Loy’s counterpart at NUS Business School, Head of Alumni Relations Mr George Heng (Computing ’86), notes that Business alumni are very active in the professional networking scene. “Besides the usual networking drives, we will be organising talks with an intellectual element so that our alumni get more value out of the interactions,” says Mr Heng. The School also offers lifelong learning programmes through its Executive Education unit, as well as in partnership with SCALE.

For those who want to get more involved, Business alumni can contribute in multiple ways, such as speaking at recruitment fairs, hosting company visits, and assisting in the interview-screening process of postgraduate candidates. This leads to a win-win scenario, as Mr Heng explains: “By contributing their time and resources, alumni can raise their profiles and visibility and widen their networks, while the University also benefits.”

Over at NUS UTown, Tembusu College’s Director of Student Affairs Dr Kuan Yee Han (Engineering ’10) serves as its Associate Director for Alumni Relations. Several events have been initiated to draw Tembusu alumni back to the residential college, such as ‘Past vs Present’ exhibition matches organised by the College’s frisbee and touchball interest groups; ‘AlumChats’, or sharing sessions by alumni to the community gives members — most of whom are retirees — a sense of self-worth,” says Ms Loo. NUSBSA has been involved in DOS since 2017, with members volunteering to pack and distribute food to needy families in Singapore. This is on top of regular activities such as business networking sessions, CEO talks, and mentorship and internship programmes.

“Volunteering allows us to add value or make a difference in someone else’s life. We also gain a morale boost in knowing that our effort was meaningful, which increases our own happiness,” says Mr Yuen.

NUS alumni can benefit from the vast networks that they can tap on. As nurturing alumni, they can provide guidance or impart knowledge and skills to juniors.

Dr Kuan Yee Han, Associate Director for Alumni Relations, Tembusu College.

Subsequently, the Building and Estate Management Alumni (BEMA) group organised a charity golf game and raised more than $600,000 for the newly-launched SDE Development Fund. The Fund will be used to support the future development of SDE’s facilities and curriculum. About 1,200 alumni also attended the SDE50 Gala Dinner in October 2019. “We’ve made a conscious effort to expand alumni outreach by updating our websites and social media platforms, resulting in greater web traffic,” adds Prof Lam.
Out of the $19,000 people making up NUS alumni community, roughly 87 per cent live in Singapore. The rest are spread out all over the world and some have formed Overseas Chapters, stretching from Vancouver in the west to Auckland in the east.

The NUS Alumni London Chapter organises a mix of social and professional events throughout the year, with the latter proving especially popular. “Our Professional Forum Series — which deals with hot topics like gender equality, Brexit and fintech — is well-attended now into its fifth series this year and is well-attended.”

Although the Associate Directors are mostly preoccupied with their own alumni sub-communities, many are starting to look beyond their respective loci and take part in University-wide initiatives such as DOS. Alumni from FASS, NUS Business and Tembusu College have come on board as DOS champions in recent years to help community service projects. OAR’s Ms Neo is heartened by this trend, as it indicates a concerted effort to strengthen and deepen alumni relations across the University.

As we grow as a University, our alumni network and activities become not just a social avenue to have fun together, but a support structure for careers and professional livelihoods.”

Dr James Geng (Public Policy ’11), an AAB member, has chaired the NUS Alumni Shanghai Chapter since 2015. “In a ‘non-governmental ambassador’ capacity, our Chapter carries out a large number of high-profile and influential non-governmental diplomatic activities, often in cooperation with the Consulate-General of Singapore in Shanghai,” says Dr Geng. Many alumni have benefited from the improved bilateral relations as a result, with Singapore alumni-owned enterprises doing well in China and vice versa.

Currently, only three of the 19 Overseas Chapters are located in ASEAN countries — Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. In light of NUS President Prof Tan’s publicly-stated desire to focus on Southeast Asia, Ms Neo discloses that OAR aims to build up its regional presence over the next few years and reach out to alumni in those ASEAN cities which lack representation. Even if the alumni are unable to set up Overseas Chapters, they can form smaller Alumni Circles or be appointed as Global Ambassadors.

Mr Toh makes one final point about alumni engagement: “The alumni journey begins at the point of matriculation, not at the point of graduation. We have to think about engaging them from their first day as undergraduate students.” Some small steps that have been taken in this direction include the roll-out in 2014 of a helpline email account for undergraduates, as well as a new student essay competition under the revamped ULife.

Another platform for alumni—student interaction is the NUS Alumni Leaders Forum (ALF), where alumni and student leaders exchange ideas and best practices on taking NUS to the next level. For ALF committee member Mr Ouyang Xiuzhang (Business ’99), this means helping the University produce graduates who are prepared to handle emerging workplace trends in today’s VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. “NUS has given me the education and qualifications to advance in my career,” says Mr Ouyang, CEO of a leading global commodities merchant. “Helping future graduates by giving back a bit of time and effort is the least I can do.”

A new entrant into the alumni community, Mr Benjamin Loo (Computing ’19) had, as the former President of NUS Students’ Union (NUSSU), engaged with alumni at the Kent Ridge Alumni Family Day, and also at the NUSUSS and NUSU Alumni Bursary Dinner. With those positive experiences still fresh in his mind, he decided to become a Class Ambassador for his graduating class. “I’m looking forward to provide opportunities for my batch mates to meet and catch up with each other,” says Mr Loo. “The importance of alumni relations cannot be underestimated, especially in a small country like Singapore where we need to depend on one another for help.”

NUS Alumni leaders and staff are also exploring ways to use the networks alumni have set up overseas to contribute to their alma mater. Dr Hamidah Salleh, Senior Associate Director (Communications) at OAR, notes that alumni from different countries can form smaller Alumni Circles or be appointed as Overseas Champions. If the alumni are unable to set up Overseas Chapters, they can form Alumni Circles or be appointed as Global Ambassadors.

The framework rests on the quality of data. People can change jobs, levels of alumni participation (low, medium or high).

Mr Toh is a Board member and also serves on the global CASE Commission on Alumni Relations. “Relationship work is hard to measure. Unlike money, relationships are not quantifiable. It’s more of a palpable feeling,” says Mr Toh. Through his involvement with the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) — NUS is a member institution of CASE — Mr Toh is also a Board member and also serves on the global CASE Commission on Alumni Relations.

Once this framework is well implemented, other metrics to be included could be alumni participation levels (low, medium or high), the success of the framework rests on the quality of data. People can change jobs, get married, move house etc. at any time, and they may not think to update their particulars, but this will take time, “ says Ms Hamidah, OAR has launched a new, user-friendly IT system which makes it easier for alumni to update their particulars online themselves, which will hopefully bring about greater two-way participation.

Once this framework is well established, more data has been collected, possibly in two years’ time, a weightage component can be included to assign levels of alumni participation (low, medium or high). However, the success of the framework rests on the quality of data: a challenge that vexes all universities. “The problem with building a good database is that it’s hard to maintain the integrity of data. People can change jobs, get married, move house etc. at any time, and they may not think to inform us about it,” says Ms Hamidah. “It must be easy for alumni to update their particulars online themselves.”

Infrastructure. “For a long time, each faculty managed its own alumni database system. We’re now trying to combine all of the disparate systems into one integrated database, but this will take time,” says Ms Hamidah. OAR has launched a new, user-friendly IT system that makes it easier for alumni to update their particulars online themselves, which will hopefully bring about greater two-way participation.

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From Day One

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The challenge is even harder for a university as large as NUS and still as NUS, with its legacy
But with the new realities of today, and changes in our society and values, are the markers of success still the same in this country? The relentless quest for the 5Cs — cash, career, car, credit card, condo — has been an all-consuming pursuit of many Singaporeans in recent decades. But with the new realities of today, and changes in our society and values, are the markers of success still the same in this country?

What is your understanding of the ‘Singapore Dream’?

EAN YEO: I was born in 1963, before independence. As a child growing up in a one-room flat, the Singapore Dream back then was simply being able to survive, and progress through an education. That said, even while studying in Raffles Girls School, I wasn’t thinking of going to university: I certainly played quite a lot and didn’t feel a pressure to excel. One simply moved on however they could, one step at a time.

JASON NG: I was born when Singapore gained independence, and to me, the Singapore dream was to be a graduate — and own a HDB flat. At the time, getting a flat in a place like Pasir Ris was like striking lottery. It wasn’t about credit cards and all the other 5Cs — but now even those are passe.

ADELINE THIA: Going to university was something expected of my siblings and I as our uncles — who we looked up to — were graduates. The path was pretty much set out. And after that it was the 5Cs: studio apartment [condo], car, career, etc. But for my son, who is 20 years old now, the Singapore Dream is about being able to chart a career overseas. The expectations and standards are different.

And looking back, the real Singapore Dream wasn’t about us gaining recognition as individuals, but as a part of the nation. — MR KENNY ENG

Why do you think is shaping the changing aspirations of Singaporeans?

KENNY ENG: Our parents worked hard so that we wouldn’t have to suffer. Yet my mother also told me to pick the Normal rather than Express stream in secondary school because it would be less stressful. Going to NUS wasn’t a dream: it was simply the path that was laid out nicely before me. And looking back, the real Singapore Dream wasn’t about us gaining recognition as individuals, but as a part of the nation. Growing up, I relished screaming and cheering for the Singapore team during the Malaysia Cup. And when I went to Penn State University in the US as part of an exchange during my NUS days, I fiercely wanted to be identified as a Singaporean, for the locals immediately assumed that we were from Japan or China. As a people we’ve come to realise that Singapore is our home and we have to build it up.

JANNY HUYNH: When I first moved from Vietnam to Singapore to study at NUS, the dream was to get a better education, a good job and repay my student loans. But the real dream was when I met Imran and started a family. As we became parents, I came to realise that the dream now is to provide our children with the environment and experiences to grow emotionally — to connect with nature and people around them, and recognise what they want for themselves, rather than what I want for them.

IMRAN MOHAMAD: My mum and dad were both born in 1957 and went to Raffles Girls and Raffles Institution respectively. When I was born in 1984, the structure of the society and what was expected of one were all in place. There was a very clear path for me, given my parents’ educational background, and my position as the eldest son in the entire extended family. My parents certainly projected their dreams on me: studying overseas, scholarships, doing a doctorate… and I lived with that responsibility to fulfill the dream. I grew up very angry because I could...
THE RICH LIST
Credit Suisse Research Institute’s annual Global Wealth Report, released in October 2019, states that the average Singaporean’s wealth (based on financial and real assets) tripled from around US$115,000 in 2000 to about US$300,000 in 2019 – making Singaporeans the second-richest people in Asia.

On the whole, half of all Singaporeans are in the world’s richest 10%.

Source: Credit Suisse

never choose the subjects, schools or even extracurricular activities for myself. I asked myself what the point was of following the route and decided to figure out my purpose in life. I started to read and talk to people and develop my own ideas. Business intrigued me, and NUS allowed me to earn credits through real world experiences rather than solely through classes, and in that way I was able to put myself on the path to being an entrepreneur. Our aspirations are changing partly because our parents have put us in a position where we don’t have to worry about survival issues, thus allowing us the kind of headspace to think about such things – but it is also because the world is changing. We cannot be following old paths in a new world.

It is not all about making big money, for is the material dream worth the cost of the nation spending $3.1b treating stress-related disease annually? – MR IMRAN MOHAMAD

KENNY: Change is the only constant and disruption is a key thing now. Older folks had experiences which they use to guide the younger generation – but whatever happened in the past may not be relevant today. Success today doesn’t have to be measured in dollars and cents, but the social impact we make.

JANNY: Having moved away from ‘survival’ mode, success is really not about rising in socio-economic status anymore. Success would be to work on myself holistically and live a life that sets a positive example for my children, to know that success is not about leading a “better” life (by somebody else’s standards), but to figure out what their life is.

IMRAN: Success is different for everyone – the moment you prescribe one thing, there will be zero tolerance for everyone else who doesn’t subscribe to the same notion. We need to have many pathways to success.

What can Singaporeans do to support each other in this evolving dream?

KENNY: I was once asked by a minister what I felt the government should do to steer Singapore into the future. And my answer was this: to ‘do’ less and encourage more. Given the rapid rate of change, there is no predicting what academic course would be the most useful in the future, or which profession would be in demand. The disruption in the world is beyond any political party’s ability to predict, so we can no longer use past successes as a guide to navigating the future. The companies that did that – such as KODAK – have failed, and it would be very troubling if we continue to apply old structures in the changing world. I have to emphasise that community is the key to our future – only as a collective can we change the structure.

JASON: The system can be more encouraging of risk-taking, or doing things out of the box. I once witnessed a group of junior college students doing an unorthodox fundraiser at Bugis Junction being questioned by the police in a rather high-handed manner. Some of them would have lost all aspirations of entrepreneurship that day. We need to allow people to dream and do things differently.

IMRAN: To move forward, we need give people space. The young entrepreneurs are motivated by a passion to find solutions to the challenges ahead – it is not all about making big money, for is the material dream worth the cost of the nation spending $3.1b treating stress-related disease annually?

ADELINE: While coaching, I met a lot of people in their 50s going through depression because their success was defined by their career – which has been disrupted. That is why I expect my son to be agile and grow. And for myself, I’ve been setting aside a part of my income to learn for the last five years: and I am starting a new job in a fintech company next week, at my age! Having a growth mindset is very important.

What is your outlook for 2020?

IMRAN: Janny and I just had a chat and we decided that 2020 is going to be awesome – because this year, we will choose how we are going to feel and we are going to do what we need to feel that way. We have to have that optimism especially in a time when there is a lot of doom and gloom. If you centre yourself and realise who you can be and what you can do, you will have the fluid strength to think out of the box, and work for the common good.

JASON: If you look at everything that is happening in the economy, it will be challenging year. Yet it could also be a turning point that will present a lot of opportunities for individuals and the country.

EAN: How 2020 will turn out is in the hands of everyone. Everyone can have their definition of a good year and it is our hands to overcome and mitigate the challenges. With resilience we will navigate the changes and disruptions. I think that Singapore has a strong foundation, so we don’t short change ourselves in our ability to face up to adversity. The threats are real, but we can look at our strengths and issues and go forward. And we need every hand on board to do this.

JANNY: What is your outlook for 2020?

What then are the markers of “success” – have they changed too?

ADELINE: My personal definition of success has changed at graduation the common markers of success were the 5Cs, but now, it is about happiness and being agile and adaptable to changes. I know how fast the economy changes and how disruptive the changes can be. I have seen those with a good degree not ‘make it’ in life because they weren’t resilient and, at the same time, O’Level holders who are very successful. I realise that strong values and a good character are more important than academic achievements: good results are a bonus, but it is your mentality and positive mindset that will take the individual – and this country – forward.

It is not all about making big money, for is the material dream worth the cost of the nation spending $3.1b treating stress-related disease annually? – MR IMRAN MOHAMAD
When Tradewinds Get Rough

The new Dean of NUS Business School Professor Andrew K Rose takes a look at the thinking behind policies that has drawn the world to the brink of a global trade war.

The Trump presidency has invoked a strong response from various quarters from across the world – for a multitude of reasons. From your perspective, what areas should we be concerned about with regard to his economic policies?

Singaporeans should be most concerned about Trump's trade policy, and we should all thank the heavens that he doesn’t meddle with much more than that! I'm an international economist, someone who believes strongly that the international exchange of goods, services, capital, people and ideas almost always benefits all concerned. I think my initial fears about Trump – the catalyst for my move to Asia – were justified. Ignoring the other ills he has perpetrated, Trump has single-handedly undermined the international rules-based system of international commerce, and unleashed a trade war. Indeed, my recent research shows that countries that raise tariffs suffer reduced growth and productivity within a few years, along with increased unemployment and inequality. That should not be much of a surprise, since tariffs are just taxes on imports, which are things that foreigner produce more cheaply than we can do domestically. And that's ignoring the effects on other countries, along with their retaliation!

But if tariffs raise the price of foreign imports, don't people tend to buy more domestic goods instead, raising employment, the trade balance and output?

Well, tariffs do indeed raise the price of imports. Research has shown that's the chief reason that most Americans have lost from Trump's tariffs; they pay more for Chinese goods, which are particularly used by those with lower incomes. But tariffs also tend to lead to an appreciation of the foreign exchange rate, which harms export competitiveness, and offsets any effect on the trade balance. That's exactly what I find in my research, and it's consistent with common sense. In the past few years the US dollar has risen considerably, while the American balance of trade has actually worsened since Trump was elected from around US$45 billion a month to around US$55 billion now.

So why do countries launch tariff wars if they tend to lose from them?

It's important to remember that countries usually don't launch trade wars! This is really the result of one man – who unfortunately happens to be President of the United States! It's hard to see why Trump started his tariff war, and even more difficult to figure out how it will end; he hasn't said what victory would consist of, or what his objectives are. But it's unsurprising (at least to an economist like me) that the United States is losing from protectionism; that point was made by Adam Smith almost 250 years ago in The Wealth of Nations.

President Trump has said that it's really about bringing industries back to American soil, thus creating jobs, and relying less on foreign imports, etc. And ultimately to revive the US economy and allow it to negotiate from a stronger position. What is the key flaw of such thinking, given the realities of today's global economy?

It's ludicrous to think about returning industry to America when the American unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 50 years! America doesn't need more jobs; it needs more productivity growth, and the one good way to spur innovation is through competition – including foreign competition.

America doesn't need more jobs: it needs more productivity growth, and the one good way to spur innovation is through competition – including foreign competition.

Imagine how poor Singapore would be if it closed itself off from international influences! America should become more like Singapore in my opinion, and less like the countries led by Trump's current friends which include North Korea and Russia.

What about China, the target of President Trump's trade war?

Of course, other countries also lose from the American trade war, including American rivals like China, and, unfortunately, allies like Singapore. Indeed, one of the key aims of American foreign policy over the 70 years after World War II was to create an international trade system that liberalised trade between the United States and its allies, binding them together in a network that reinforced security and commercial ties. Singapore is a perfect example of a country that has benefited enormously from the system that is now under threat. As international trade shrinks, ports like Singapore lose.

This being said, are any of President Trump's allegations about China's economic/trade policies possibly "justifiable"? I.e. Do China and/or other countries share the blame for this trade war? Or is this a purely an American doing? America has been long concerned with bad behaviour on the part of the Chinese government, most especially the forced transfers of technology from foreign companies which are often the price of doing business in China. Indeed, there was a strategy to handle this: America formed a coalition of like-minded countries that are important to China, and negotiated a treaty to try to force China to shape up. But Trump dropped out of that – the Trans-Pacific Partnership – as literally his first action as president, simply because it had been negotiated by Barack Obama. Indeed, many of Trump's actions are intended merely to reverse Obama's policies. That's not a sensible way to be president!

WEB EXCLUSIVE

Read our online interview with Prof Rose on his new role as Dean at nus.edu/2qH22g0

Professor Andrew K Rose has served as Dean and distinguished professor of the NUS Business School since 1 June 2019. Prof Rose has published over 150 papers including, over 90 articles in refereed economics journals. His research addresses issues in international trade, finance and macroeconomics, and has received more than 45,000 citations.
THE GIFT OF MUSIC

The Ho Hwee Long Music Score Commission Fund ensures that school bands have a wider selection of newly-commissioned, royalty-free musical compositions to perform with.

MR JEFFREY TAN, Marine Engineer and NUS Wind Symphony President (Engineering’13)

“I have played under Prof Ho since my National Junior College days in 2002. Prof Ho is like a father figure to us. His concern for his students extends beyond concert and band music. During rehearsal, he was strict yet very positive to his students. Playing music was difficult back then but he continued to encourage and help us to be more proficient.

One of the most memorable experiences I had of Prof Ho was the NUS Wind Symphony’s 50th anniversary concert in 2018, which featured a good mix of musicians from different generations. Prof Ho took the opportunity to tell us stories about band music ‘back in the day’, and how some of the seniors looked and behaved then. It was a very pleasant rehearsal experience.

That concert reinforced my love for band music, as it was not just about giving a good performance but also about fostering relationships with all the band members. Just like how Prof Ho has been teaching band music for the last five decades, I will also play my part to find more performance opportunities for the alumni band so that we can create new memories with everyone.”

Prof Ho is no stranger to Singapore’s wind band scene. The former Music Director and Resident Conductor of NUS Wind Symphony (2008-2018) was among the first batch of band instructors trained to start the Singapore School Band Project in 1967 and has taught generations of Singaporeans, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his wife Madam Ho Ching (Engineering ’76) during their school days. Fifty years on, he is still guiding student bands and inspiring young minds.

To celebrate Prof Ho’s 80th birthday, a special fundraising concert was held on 9 November 2019 at the University Cultural Centre to support the Ho Hwee Long Music Score Commission Fund. Alumni from the NUS, National Institute of Education (NIE) and National Junior College bands—who all previously trained under Prof Ho—came together to present the Celebrations concert. Over $15,000 was raised from the event. OMA aims to raise another $10,000 so that students can fully benefit from the initiative.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Ho Hwee Long Music Score Commission Fund or other arts initiatives, visit http://bit.ly/ProHoMusicFund

MR LAWRENCE SIAO, Teacher and NIESB Concert Master (Arts and Social Sciences ’97)

“I joined the NIE Symphonic Band (NIESB) in 1988 and learnt under Prof Ho when I enrolled in the Specialist Diploma in Band Directing course conducted by NIE and NTU in 2008. I continued learning from him as I played with the NIESB Alumni and when I became the NIESB Concert Master.

What inspired me most about Prof Ho is his gentle nature, which manifested in two ways. One, the way he deals with musicians: he never once raised his voice at us, not even when we didn’t manage to get the music right. Two, his style of conducting: the elegance and aura he exudes as he waxes his baton, particularly in the soft or slow passages of the music we played.

Prof Ho’s disposition has motivated me to emulate him in my own teaching career—not to yell at students and musicians to get what I want from the music. However, this does not mean that Prof Ho has no standards. It is perhaps the quiet confidence he has in us that has very often propelled us to realise harder and, ultimately, deliver the music to the audience.

Prof Ho can also get very philosophical at times. This is evident in his teaching and rehearsals. I remember once when we were discussing the topic ‘The meaning of music’ and he asked us in return, ‘What is the meaning of the meaning of music?’”

How AI is Changing Cybersecurity

“AI is the new electricity!” proclaims Mr Andrew Ng, co-founder of Google Brain. Just as we need to know how to harness electricity safely, we also need to know how to deploy AI securely to power our businesses. In some scenarios, the security of AI systems is a matter of life and death. Hence, it is imperative that AI systems developed are robust and resilient against malicious, insidious and misuse. On the flip side, cyber-adversaries can also exploit AI and we need to understand how to counter them.

This talk will provide food for thought in the areas of security of AI systems, AI-powered attacks and use of AI in cybersecurity.

Speaker: Ms Angela Huang (Science ’85)
Principal Lecturer and Consultant, Digital Strategy and Leadership Practice Institute of Systems Science, NUS

18 February 2020 (Tuesday)
7.30pm
Coriander, Shaw Foundation Alumni House
Register at alumnet.events/TSfeb20

How AI is Changing Cybersecurity

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A Heroine for all Humanity

The 2004 Boxing Day tsunami launched Ms Selly Amalina Muzammil’s (Arts and Social Sciences ’09) lifelong mission to fight hunger globally. The NUS Alumni Awards 2019 winner talks about her passion to save and transform lives.

WHO IS SHE?

A 2010 NUS Alumni Awards winner, Ms Selly Amalina Muzammil started working with the United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP) in 2005. In 2007, she embarked on a master’s degree in international studies at NUS. She now heads WFP’s governmental partnerships unit at the regional bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

“IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE 2004. I was flying back to Indonesia from Egypt with my grandmother when our plane hit one of the worst instances of turbulence ever. Thank God we landed well but just days later, the Boxing Day tsunami happened.” Ms Selly Amalina Muzammil, 36, is recounting the incident that changed her life. The native Indonesian felt compelled to help in the relief efforts, but knew that donating money or items was not enough in such a disaster. “I volunteered with World Food Programme,” she says. “I joined the emergency team and we worked 8am to 11pm daily. The damage was unprecedented; we were also on the go, day after day. Knowing that there were people on the other side suffering, that kept us going.” The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance arm of the United Nations and the world’s largest humanitarian organisation that delivers food in emergency situations. It also works with communities to build resilience. “That experience gave me great satisfaction and it still does,” says Ms Muzammil. “The impact is almost immediate: we bring food to the disaster area, to people who are entirely without resources. It’s also an excellent way to meet people from international communities, and he would sometimes have us at events where we got to meet people from international communities, and the understanding had been for her to return to the Jakarta office, assisting Iraqi refugees. As its Public Information and Reports Officer, Ms Muzammil’s task was to ensure that information on emergency and development projects was accurately conveyed and in a timely manner. But as she explains, everyone in the office works together toward a common cause.

FILLING STOMACHS, NOURISHING SPIRITS

One of the most significant initiatives Ms Muzammil helped to conceptualise was a “SMS food distribution” strategy that served to revolutionise food aid. WFP provided monthly food assistance to Iraqi refugees, so we gave out boxes of food, and at the same time, in 2009, we piloted a new programme in places where markets were viable. Instead of handouts, we created an opportunity for people to choose what they wanted to eat. Everyone had a phone, and WFP used that platform to send US$22 worth of food vouchers to registered Iraqi families living in Damascus. They would use these vouchers at partner organisations who could provide fresh food, get their nutritional intake as well as protect their dignity — and it supports the economy. That was a pioneering move, now it’s global.” This programme is now employed in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, parts of Yemen and across the Middle East region.

One happy outcome of this scheme is the way it has empowered women. “When we first started giving out cash-based transfers, it was the men collecting aid. With the vouchers, we saw the Syrian and Iraqi women coming. Food is really important; being able to cook the simplest rice and salad is everything. For them to be able to buy an egg and cook it for their kids, that’s priceless.” For Ms Muzammil, who is married with two children, aged 5 and 4, being a mother and a foodie (she cooks Indonesian cuisine to relax, hoping in her kids) makes this situation all the more urgent. “I relate to mothers not being able to feed their children,” she says. “Being hungry is not nice.” Another thing WFP does is school feeding through programmes like Food For Education, she explains. “We see early marriages, because there’s nothing in it for families to send their girls to school. But education is a basic right for girls. We also run female literacy programmes, because many of the women and girls are illiterate. Knowing that these programmes keep girls in school instead of ending up as child labour has kept me grounded and appreciative of the fundamentals of why we do what we do. They look in your eyes and say thank you — that’s what we convey to our donors, when talking about the value of our work.”

Managing donor relations at WFP’s Regional Bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, Ms Muzammil is passionate about the vision and mission — which is Number Two of the UN’s list of Sustainable Development goals — to end world hunger by 2030. We are supporting the ones who are furthest behind,” she declares. While she recognises that the 2030 target is unlikely to be met “unless there is peace”, she is determined to stay focused on stewarding partnerships with donors towards that aim. WFP works purely on a donation basis; while its biggest donors are, naturally, governments around the world, it is also supported by companies and individuals.

Knowing that these programmes keep girls in school instead of ending up as child labour has kept me grounded and appreciative of the fundamentals.
Mr Martino Tan (Public Policy ‘09) today Mothership.sg has proved it to set up a news website — and job when the opportunity came took a leap of faith and quit his by the feedback they received from their then-small audience. on “a long-running experiment” on the content of the site, shaped way of looking at Singapore-related news and stories,” Mr Tan to inform, educate and entertain our audience by presenting a new in the US, inspired by the ideals of openness, inclusiveness and as well as the idea of creating a site, “in the style of Buzzfeed satirical site New Nation. “Bear in mind that it was a year after door, proposing a digital-only platform for young managing Facebook posts for Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, when fund manager Mr Lien We King came knocking on his Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), also served as Head, New Media, Media Relations at the He previously worked in the Prime Minister’s Office. and Managing Editor at Mothership.sg, an online news platform. Mr Martino Tan is the Deputy Managing Director and WHO IS HE? A former civil servant, Mr Martino Tan (Public Policy ‘09) took a leap of faith and quit his job when the opportunity came to set up a news website — and today Mothership.sg has proved it was worth the gamble. Despite their differences, the men shared this same view, as well as the idea of creating a site, “in the style of Buzzfeed in the US, inspired by the ideals of openness, inclusiveness and creatively.” As writers just starting out, Belmont and I simply hoped to inform, educate and entertain our audience by presenting a new way of looking at Singapore-related news and stories,” Mr Tan elaborates. “On some level, we hoped to make Singapore ‘more exciting’ for Singaporeans to read and better understand, more about this place we call home,” he explains. They embarked on “a long-running experiment” on the content of the site, shaped by the feedback they received from their then-small audience. By June 2013, Mr Tan had resigned from the PMO and embarked on Mothership.sg (as the site came to be known!) full time, building the website, speaking to freelancers, then sharing content on Facebook and Twitter. “We observed what worked and what didn’t,” he says. This beta phase was not easy, but Mr Tan remained hopeful. “We had a shoestring budget. The website crashed a couple of times, but we each had some experience in creating and managing online content — more importantly, with national-level types of interactions and vitally — so we were unfazed by the volume and intensity of the reactions to our content,” he explains. “All that said,” he admits, “this was still a hefty risk. Although I was optimistic, I sought permission from my wife Denise to leave the civil service. We had gotten married the same year that I embarked on this adventure. I told her that I would give it my best shot for two to three years. It was a big move for the both of us.” A FINGER ON THE PULSE The site was finally launched in February 2014. At a time when the popularity of traditional journalism was beginning to fade, Mothership.sg hit the right note with the public. The first story it ran was titled “48 Reasons Why You Still Feel For Singapore” and it attracted so many readers that the website crashed. That marked the beginning of Mothership.sg’s magnetic appeal to Singaporeans. Mr Tan’s and his team’s ability to capture the pulse of what moves Singaporeans at any given moment, and their dedication to keep evolving to meet the interests of their readership is what has kept Mothership.sg growing the last six years. Among their most enticing features are hilarious video interviews with the likes of Speaker of Parliament Mr Tan Chuan-Jin (who famously starred in Motherhood’s “How To MP” series of videos). More recently, their IG Asks with Gurmitt Singh was played 260,000 times, while their “Motherhood Hits the Streets” episode on the Bubble Tea phenomenon episode drew 800,000 views. Today, Mr Tan, 38, is the Deputy Managing Director and Managing Editor of Mothership.sg, which is the most successful digital-only media platform in Singapore. Each month, the website attracts more than 42 million unique users, creating over 18 million page views a month. Mothership.sg has also been quick on the uptake when it comes to consumption of news on mobile, offering users news and entertaining content that invites social sharing. Admittedly, Mothership.sg has some unique connections — such as links to two very important Mr Yoss, neither of whom are involved in its day-to-day operations. Former Foreign Affairs Minister Mr George Yes, a friend of Mr Lien’s, serves as “Non-Executive Advisor.” Mr Tan shares, “He meets with us from time to time to share his views on big world moves. In our interactions with him, we are reminded of the importance of being sensitive to the larger forces at work.” Mr Philip Yeo is the “non-executive chairman” of The Fishermen Project, which funds Mothership.sg. He receives regular updates on Mothership.sg’s progress from Mr Lien. A NURTURED WORLDVIEW The father of a toddler named Francesco Jon, Mr Tan had previously worked mostly in social and political organisations. While pursuing his Masters in Public Policy, Public Management and Governance at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYPSS), he served as a legislative assistant in Parliament, helping ministers to draft parliamentary speeches and questions. From 2009 to 2013, he managed media relations at the then-Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts, before joining the PMO in Feb 2012 to handle online communications for the Prime Minister. He has also served as a legislative assistant at the Asian Women’s Welfare Association (AWWA), Oxfam and The Washington Center. Mr Tan credits his years at LKYPSS for helping shape the way he sees the world. “The diversity in my classroom helped me appreciate differences in viewpoints, as well as the differences that exist in a multicultural society like Singapore,” he explains. “The academic at LKYPSS guided me in thinking about policy dilemmas and challenged me to appreciate and make sense of complex issues. This allowed me to better communicate these issues to our readers,” he says, adding that “My colleagues often say that I am really ‘making good use’ of my postgraduate degree, too — by making GIFs and writing about Pokemon runs at Motherhood!” Mr Tan credits Associate Professor Kenneth Paul Tan, Professor Viktor Mayer-Schonberger and Associate Professor Suzanna Kadi (Arts and Social Sciences ’91) for being “amazing” teachers and mentors. “Suzanna helped me better understand the role of women and female leaders in Southeast Asian countries, and Kenneth provided his class with an excellent understanding of state-society relations in Singapore,” he explains. “I was extremely honed when I was invited to moderate a dialogue session with Kenneth on his new book Singapore: Identity, Brand, Power. “Professor Mayer-Schonberger, who is currently teaching at Oxford University, was one of the best teachers I have ever met. He helped me think clearly and critically about internet-related issues, such as Internet governance.” TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS In an industry where strong, editorial-led websites have folded due to lack of funding, Mothership.sg is a happy anomaly, thanks to a wise shift in funding structure. Having calculated in 2015 that they would have to close down within a year if they did not venture out commercially, Mothership.sg was re-registered as a private limited company in January 2016. Mr Tan and the team professionalised their operations and introduced business and creative services teams. This shift paid off. Today, Mr Tan is also the Business Development Director at Mothership.sg. “We grew from a social-political blog backed by a social enterprise, to a fully commercial media business. We are now profitable and have expanded our content offerings to become a news and lifestyle media business,” he says, adding that the next challenge is to “grow Mothership to become a platform that helps our readers think clearly, reflect constructively, and act ethically on the issues that concern our daily lives.” There are plans to venture beyond Singapore. He sums up his vision for Mothership.sg with this: “If our readers have two hours of free time, they would probably watch Joker. If they have an hour free, they’d watch Brooklyn Nine-Nine on Netflix. But we hope it is that if our readers have 10 free minutes, they would read or watch Mothership.sg content.”

STEERING DIALOGUE Mr Tan was invited to be the moderator at the inaugural Business China Youth Forum in June 2013. Theme: “The World of Tomorrow: Sustainability starts with you”, the forum, organised by the Business China Youth Chapter, brought together promising students from pre-university and tertiary institutions in Singapore and across the region for a series of discussions on this trending topic.
A SHOWCASE OF SOLUTIONS

THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF NUS ALUMNI WEEKENDS was held on 2 November at SDE4, Singapore’s first new-build net-zero energy building. Alumni and their families went on a guided tour and learned about water, wellness, tropical architecture, hybrid cooling, net-zero energy and biophilic design behind the award-winning SDE4 building. Other programmes included a Technology Project Showcase where participants got up close with NUS Engineering students’ bionic glove and autonomous wheelchair projects. There were also information sessions conducted by the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), Land Transport Authority (LTA), Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), NUS Libraries, and SDE (School of Design and Environment).

From sustainable design to a display of future-forward tech, alumni got to see and experience a range of innovations in the latest installment of this series.

Sharing/Engagement Sessions jointly conducted by BCA, LTA and URA.

Mr Justin Lim (Engineering ‘11), Senior Manager, Strategic Planning Office, BCA.

Mr Vance Ng, Director, Land Transport Master Plan / Private Transport, Policy & Planning Group, LTA.

Mr Shawn Tan (Arts and Social Sciences ‘08), Senior Planner, Physical Planning Group, URA.

Alumni on a guided tour of SDE4.

Attendees checking out the autonomous wheelchair by NUS Engineering.

Alumni at a session on Lifelong Learning in the Built Environment by Associate Professor Kua Harn Wei (Science ‘96), Assistant Dean (Academic), SDE.
The Evolution of Eldercare

Nursing homes need to respond to the changing social and healthcare needs of our seniors, and a multi-agency team featuring researchers from NUS has risen to the challenge.

The interdisciplinary "Designing Future-ready and Sustainable Nursing Homes for Person-centric Care Models in Communities" study combines expertise from the fields of architecture, industrial design, sociology and medicine to develop design principles for future nursing homes. Organisations that NUS collaborated with include the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Ministry of Health (MOH), MOH Holdings Pte Ltd (MOH Holdings), Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), Geriatric Education Research Institute (GERI), National University Hospital (NUH), Ren Ci @ Ang Mo Kio, Building and Construction Authority (BCA) and CoNEex Systems Pte Ltd.

Nursing homes are often thought of as gloomy places (institutions of treatment and rehabilitation) where old people spend their days lying in bed in a cold, hospital-like setting, isolated from the rest of society. Although newer nursing homes have addressed some aspects of public perception, a team of researchers hopes to radically change this prevailing image, which contributes to the stigma of living in one. The elderly are in reality, a very diverse group with the whole gamut of nursing and social needs. Recognising the need to respond to the evolving needs of seniors in Singapore, the researchers have formulated design principles for building innovative nursing homes based on an extensive study they conducted. Associate Professor Fung John Chye (Design and Environment ’82), Director of the Centre for Ageing Research in the Environment (CARE), from the NUS Department of Architecture, who led the study says, "We want to change the way care is delivered in nursing homes by shifting the focus from medical treatment to the fulfilment of psychosocial needs. Design plays an important role in attaining this aspiration. Called "Designing Future-ready and Sustainable Nursing Homes for Person-centric Care Models in Communities", the interdisciplinary study investigated human-centred design, person-centric care, integration with community and deployment of relevant technologies, and it aims to provide guiding principles for reference in designing future nursing homes.

EMBRACING NEW WAYS OF CARE

The interdisciplinary and multi-agency team (see box) did a comprehensive study of five local nursing homes using various investigative methods. Researchers studied the physical environment of the homes, including sensory aspects such as temperature, lighting and sound levels. They profiled their users, which include residents with varied needs, family members and friends, professional caregivers and volunteers. Through ethnographic observations of how the different user groups interact with one another and with the environment, they analysed workflows and mapped activities in relation to the space and time they were carried out. Through focus group discussions with various stakeholders (such as nursing home staff, operators and residents, residents’ families and healthcare experts), researchers gained a better understanding of the current conditions, challenges, unmet needs, aspirations and emerging ideas in this area.

Researchers also visited nursing homes and other aged care facilities in Japan and Australia, which have many features and practices that local homes can potentially adopt. Assoc Prof Fung shares, "In one nursing home we visited in Japan, to facilitate community engagement, the front is open to the public and features a candy store shopfront, while activities that promote interaction between residents and community are also organised." Among the many unconventional practices other elderly care facilities employ is allowing seniors to plan their own schedule instead of requiring them to follow a stipulated one. It also has a flight of stairs that connects two levels to encourage ambulant residents to be more active. Another centre has a no-money-involved casino where seniors can play as part of their care plan. Instead of encouraging a dependence on dependencies, one home adopts a no-drip policy and toilet-trains its residents to maintain their dignity and promote self-reliance.

In the nursing homes they visited in Australia, family members of residents are not only encouraged to maintain familial bonds over free lunches and birthday celebrations but also allowed to sleep over. They take the goal of empowering residents seriously and actively discourage a culture of dependency. For instance, residents make
drinks for themselves at a self-service station, help to answer phone calls in the homes and find information on topics of their interest for display in the homes’ public spaces. The research team’s hard work culminated in the formulation of four key design principles that are recommended for nursing homes in the future. These principles are based on person-centric care to promote self-reliance, engender purposeful social relationships, support different users and cater to future change.

PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Putting these principles into practice will pave the way for the construction of a new generation of nursing homes that are a far cry from their current versions. Instead of the hospital feel due to their traditional role of rehabilitation, they will feel more like home, giving residents a sense of normalcy. To encourage self-reliance, residents will have more autonomy over their environment. One way this can be done is to allow them to adjust the lighting and temperature of their rooms. Instead of self-contained spaces, future nursing homes will be more open and inviting. This will facilitate interactions between residents and the communities their nursing homes are located in. "We want to dissolve boundaries between the residents and the community, and this can be done by introducing soft boundaries such as barriers," Assoc Prof Fung says, adding that future nursing homes should also offer flexibility in space modification, such as changing the configurations of bedroom spaces so as to accommodate different numbers of residents.

Two architectural firms, FARM architects, and designer and global affairs advisor Thomas Hanley International, were ultimately selected to develop pilot nursing home designs using these principles. At the heart of FARM Architects’ design is the notion that home is where people feel the most comfortable. In its version returns to the fundamentals that make a home rather than making it more advanced. Silver Thomas Hanley, on the other hand, envisions a space with the kampung spirit. Both designs reiterate the belief that nursing homes – both in current care settings and future change. Nursing homes are recommended for non-traditional care models”. Community engagement is also important to integrate nursing homes into the community.

While operational costs ultimately depend on features and the degree of person-centredness of these homes, Assoc Prof Fung thinks technology can mitigate manpower costs in the long term. What is more of a challenge than resources, he says, is changing mindsets. Stakeholders have to be willing to adopt these ideas and “potentially residents and their family members have to be mentally prepared for non-traditional care models”. Community engagement is also important to integrate nursing homes into the community.

This material is based on research work supported by Singapore’s Ministry of National Development and National Research Foundation under the L2 NIC Award No. [L2NICTDF1-2017-5]. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Singapore Ministry of National Development and National Research Foundation.
THE CONSEQUENCES OF RHETORIC

Ms Birrell offered her own take on the potential consequences of the phenomenon, which built on her opening remarks. “Western structural Islamophobia fuels Islamic radicalism’s cause. Acts of Islamic radicalism also increase Islamophobia, revealing the vicious cycle of this divisive problem. Both labels thrive on fearmongering and rely on grossly unsubstantiated mistruths about the other.”

Assoc Prof Maznah noted that Islamophobia has become a tool “to justify the irrational hate towards certain groups.” Taking the Rohingya example (that was raised by Mr Viswa), she explained that the enmity had been there for a long time, “so why is it that we now say that it is Islamophobia?”

Taking the conversation in a different direction, Mr Tong addressed a question about what happens when leaders adopt the rhetoric of Islamophobia, or any other generalised hatred. “It doesn’t help when world leaders come up with speeches that fan (Islamophobic) sentiments. What are the people of the US and the UK to think and do, with their leaders making such statements…and getting away with it?” Mr Tong was pointing out there are real dangers associated with such rhetoric, and Ms Pandith backed this up. She noted that such public statements by world, or even community, leaders are a part of the permanent record, thanks to the Internet, and can be used by extremists to serve their own ends.

Addressing a related question from the audience, Assoc Prof Maznah said that we must be responsible even when addressing perpetrators of violent acts in the name of a religion. She highlighted that terrorists who happened to be Muslim were not Islamic but Islamist, meaning that they were motivated by ideology rather than religious teachings.

Mr Tong brought the discussion back home, relating the matter of three domestic workers who were detained by Singapore security forces because they had been radicalised online. While broadly agreeing with Assoc Prof Maznah, he noted that these types of incidents raise concerns among citizens about the supposed profile of extremists, and who could be identified as a potential extremist. On the other hand, Ms Pandith cautioned that extremist acts are related to one another, drawing a connection to Ms Birrell’s earlier remarks. “Whether (the extremists) are white supremacists in Christchurch or Oslo (versus the Sri Lankan terrorists who struck on Easter Sunday), these groups are learning from one another, in terms of impact.” As the conversation progressed, Mr Viswa added that he hoped such open discussions would lead to “a process that heals,” even if it did occasionally raise negative sentiments. “The fact that we can sit here and talk, openly, shows that there is a certain level of trust.”

When the discussion opened up for Q&A, the panellists spoke candidly, offering fact-based responses even during the rancorous Q&A session. This was entirely in-line with moderator and U@live Chairman Mr Tong's opening remarks, suggesting that despite the sensitivity of the topic, the panellists would power through and arrive at “a confluence of ideas.”

The discussion opened with Mr Tong, who went on to address what he saw as the main problem with Islamophobia, which he characterised as an irrational fear of “the other.” “Because a Muslim is the only tangible representation of (Islam), I think a lot of fear, anger and distrust is directed at that person.” Ms Pandith added that the world is “reeling from an ‘us versus them’ set of ideologies,” that complicates what we are. Further, Mr Tong said that the problem is the adoption of ideas that people of the US and the UK often use to promote harmony.

Mr Edwin Tong outlined Singapore’s strategies in promoting harmony.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF RHETORIC

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The discussion opened with Mr Tong, who went on to address what he saw as the main problem with Islamophobia, which he characterised as an irrational fear of “the other.” “Because a Muslim is the only tangible representation of (Islam), I think a lot of fear, anger and distrust is directed at that person.” Ms Pandith added that the world is “reeling from an ‘us versus them’ set of ideologies,” that complicates what we are. Further, Mr Tong said that the problem is the adoption of ideas that people of the US and the UK often use to promote harmony.

Mr Edwin Tong outlined Singapore’s strategies in promoting harmony.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF RHETORIC

Ms Birrell offered her own take on the potential consequences of the phenomenon, which built on her opening remarks. “Western structural Islamophobia fuels Islamic radicalism’s cause. Acts of Islamic radicalism also increase Islamophobia, revealing the vicious cycle of this divisive problem. Both labels thrive on fearmongering and rely on grossly unsubstantiated mistruths about the other.” Assoc Prof Maznah noted that Islamophobia has become a tool “to justify the irrational hate towards certain groups.” Taking the example of the Rohingya (that was raised by Mr Viswa), she explained that the enmity had been there for a long time, “so why is it that we now say that it is Islamophobia?”

Taking the conversation in a different direction, Mr Tong addressed a question about what happens when leaders adopt the rhetoric of Islamophobia, or any other generalised hatred. “It doesn’t help when world leaders come up with speeches that fan (Islamophobic) sentiments. What are the people of the US and the UK to think and do, with their leaders making such statements…and getting away with it?” Mr Tong was pointing out there are real dangers associated with such rhetoric, and Ms Pandith backed this up. She noted that such public statements by world, or even community, leaders are a part of the permanent record, thanks to the Internet, and can be used by extremists to serve their own ends.

Addressing a related question from the audience, Assoc Prof Maznah said that we must be responsible even when addressing perpetrators of violent acts in the name of a religion. She highlighted that terrorists who happened to be Muslim were not Islamic but Islamist, meaning that they were motivated by ideology rather than religious teachings.

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SDE Celebrates Golden Jubilee with International Accolade

NUS School of Design and Environment (SDE) celebrated its 50th anniversary at its SDE50 Gala Dinner on 2 October 2019 at the Resorts World Sentosa Ballroom. The event was graced by President of the Republic of Singapore and NUS Chancellor Madam Halimah Yacob (Law ’78). Close to 1,200 alumni and guests attended the dinner, including NUS Chairman Mr Hsieh Fu Hua (Business ’74), NUS President Professor Tan Eng Chye (Science ’85) and NUS Provost Professor Ho Teck Hua (Engineering ’85).

To add icing on the cake, the newest SDE building SDE4 — Singapore’s first new-build net-zero energy building — was awarded the WELL Certification at the Gold level by the International WELL Building Institute. This makes it the first university building in the world, and the first building in Singapore, to achieve this prestigious certification in recognition of features that support and advance human health and wellness.

“The theme for tonight’s dinner is “Well and Green”. I am heartened that SDE and NUS have also moved beyond the focus on going “green”, to concurrently embrace “wellness” in your mission,” said Madam Halimah Yacob.

SDE started in 1969 as the Faculty of Architecture at the then-University of Singapore, offering degree programmes in Architecture, and Building and Estate Management. Over the years, SDE’s more than 17,000 alumni have made significant contributions to Singapore’s nation-building efforts, and played key roles in innovative and iconic projects such as Kampung Admiralty and Our Tampines Hub.

As Dean of SDE Professor Lam Khee Poh said, SDE is earnestly pursuing the twin-pronged “Well and Green” strategic approach in all its educational and research programmes to support Singapore’s national agenda of creating “an endearing home and a distinctive global city”. “As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, I sincerely invite our alumni, staff, students, colleagues from other academic units and the healthcare and building industries to join in this next phase of our exciting and challenging journey, to continue to build a well and green future for our community,” he said.

Several SDE alumni and staff were presented with tokens of appreciation for their contributions to the celebrations. They included Mr Choo Meng Foo (’88), Professor Heng Chye Kiang, Associate Professor Hans Tan (’05), Dr Teo Ho Pin (’88) and Ms Tia Boon Sim (’79). Professional baritone Mr Alvin Tan (’14) serenaded the gathering with four operatic songs.

Collaboration – The New Buzzword!

With tools like Dropbox, Google Drive and other cloud solutions, collaborating across borders has never been easier. However, technological solutions alone will not make you a better collaborator. In this inaugural workshop, you will explore different mindsets that can either facilitate or hinder collaboration in both your personal and professional relationships.

Future-ready Workshops is a series of workshops that aims to support young alumni in their career development amidst a rapidly changing world.

Date: 14 January 2020, Tuesday
Time: 7.30pm
Venue: Coriander, Shaw Foundation Alumni House
NUS Engineering’s Alumni Mentorship Programme

NUS Engineering’s Alumni Mentorship Programme began its third run on 30 September 2019. It is an initiative to build a strong and dynamic relationship between the student and alumni communities – and one that is mutually beneficial to both parties professionally. The programme aims to provide opportunities for engineering students to learn about work and life outside university, from accomplished NUS Engineering alumni. Together with 15 mentors, the 38 student mentees form its largest intake to date.

Calling all Engineering alumni interested to join the programme as mentors? Please register your interest at bit.ly/updateofcontact.

BIZALUMingle “to-lager”, Oktoberfest Networking Night

“Willkommen zum Oktoberfest”

The Munich Oktoberfest lays claim to being the world’s largest folk festival (it’s not just about drinking bier), but not everyone is lucky enough to celebrate it in Germany! Through the Global Alumni Network Office (GANO), the NUS Business School brought the festival to its alumni and association members. It was a full house at the event, held at Brotzeit, Vivocity, on 24 October 2019, which saw over 130 alumni, association members, faculty and administrators reconnecting, and feasting over the obligatory Bavarian Pork Knuckle, Schnitzel, Bratwurst and many more!

Climate Change - Are Tomorrow’s Needs more Important than Today’s Reality?

The climate change and sustainable development debate is very much defined by the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report. The key thrust of the Report is about the dilemma of “meat[ing] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The spirit of this Report lives on in the latest supranational climate change agreements and agendas, including the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Yet, adaptation and mitigation to climate change are highly costly endeavours. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that adapting to climate change would cost US$500 billion per year, by 2050. These costs will pose a financial strain for countries the world over. This is especially so for countries that are just emerging from the clamp of poverty, and beginning to see improvement in their population’s quality of life.

Can countries, and the world, find that critical balance – in the climate change debate – between addressing today’s realities and the needs of tomorrow? This means taking into account issues of parity, ethics and accountability to future generations.

The NUS MBA Mentorship Kick-off

The NUS MBA Mentorship Kick-off is a professional development programme that brings the NUS MBA students and alumni together in an exchange of knowledge, insights and experience. 61 NUS MBA mentors and 105 NUS MBA mentees from 2019’s intake signed up for the event on 9 October 2019, which was filled with great energy and buzz as mentors and mentees mingled and got to know one another.

25 March 2020 (Wednesday), 7.30pm Auditorium, Shaw Foundation Alumni House

Essay Competition for Alumni and Students

You are invited to submit a 1,000-word essay articulating your views about “Climate Change - Are Tomorrow’s Needs more Important than Today’s Reality?”

Stand a chance to win a smartphone and a seat on the panel!

For more details and to register, visit alumni.events/ualive
ALUMNI HAPPENINGS

Events

Introduction of Nominated Alumni Advisory Board Members

The NUS Alumni Advisory Board (AAB) has reached out to leaders of Alumni Groups and Associate Directors for Alumni Relations to nominate suitable NUS alumni into the AAB. The board, presently consisting of 11 members, provides advice and counsel to the NUS President on alumni matters.

Through their alumni leadership, the AAB helps advance the interest of the University and the alumni community.

Mr Johnny Tan (Science ’82), who is the AAB Co-Chairperson as well as Chairperson of the AAB Selection Committee, along with Selection Committee members Dr Intan Azura (Science ’98) and Mr Jeremy Ee (Engineering ’05) briefed about 50 meeting participants on the role of a board member.

Attendees of the meeting were asked to put forth suitable candidates when the nominations open from January to February 2020. These nominated Alumni Advisory Board members will provide wider representation and participation from the alumni body at the board level.

The person we are looking for should:
• preferably have demonstrated leadership and / or service to the University and / or wider community
• embrace and embody the University’s values of innovation, resilience, excellence, respect and integrity
• be committed to advancing the interest of the University and the alumni community
• be an alumnus of this University

If you have any questions or interest, please contact aab_secretariat@nus.edu.sg

SPEC-DATING 2019

Pioneered in January 2019 and coupled with positive feedback from students and alumni, Spec-dating returned with a larger scale on 16 October 2019.

Spec-dating was established with the mission to help current year 1 and 2 students with the understanding and choosing of each specialisations and industries, using the concept of speed dating. Students were given the opportunity to network with the alumni, have a glimpse into the different fields and gaining valuable insights.

Organised by BizConnect and supported by NUS Business School Global Alumni Network Office, the organising committee connected with 15 NUS alumni across NUS Business School, School of Computing and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to provide insights and advice to the 100 Business students who signed-up for the session.

Alumni present were: Ms Jeanette Chan (Business ’95), Mr Lin Yi Hong (Business ’10), Mr Lee Ming Hui (Business ’08), Ms Elyse Lim (Business ’10), Mr Raghav Garg (Business ’18), Mr Jenny Liu (Business ’10), Ms Tay Shu Lin (Business ’15), Mr Abhinav Roy (Business ’17), Ms Wu Keyuan (Business ’16) and Mr Andrew Toh (Arts and Social Sciences ’15).

Dialogue session with young alumni

The NUS Chinese Studies Alumni Association organised a dialogue session on 8 November 2019, for young alumni from the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences class of 2014 to share with current students on the multiple career pathways available ahead. The candid and insightful session attracted about 20 undergraduates who heard the perspectives and experiences of alumni in the media industry, in academia and enterprises.

Besides sharing on how they landed their first jobs, and moving on to pursue their careers and passion, the alumni also shared on relevant topics such as managing people dynamics and achieving work-life harmony.

The discussion panel include alumni Ms Amarylis Chen Yanxi from Amazon; Ms He Yingshu from Yale-NUS; Ms Sow Lei Wei and Ms Zhang Jingyu from Mediacorp; and Moderator Ms Celeste Chew.

Celebration of Love & Giving

Calling all alumni couples! Join the NUS Campus Couples Alumni and Celebrate Love this Valentine’s Day!

Register at albunet.events/LoveAndGiving20 Email: campuscouples-alumni@u.nus.edu for more information.

The AlunNUS thanks all contributors for the articles and photos in Alumni Happenings, showcasing our vibrant alumni community. Please submit your articles at nus.edu.sg/alumnet/TheAlumNUS/AHSubmit.
PRIVILEGES ON CAMPUS

Bar Bar Black Sheep
Enjoy 20% off North Indian, Thai and Western à la carte food menu.
bbs.com.sg

Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum
Enjoy 10% discount on single entry tickets as well as for both individual and Family membership.
lkchhm.nus.edu.sg

NUS Libraries
Complimentary entry to all NUS Libraries upon presenting the AlumnUS card.
Annual subscription fee at $139.10 (Usual Price: $353.10) or a 5-year membership package (exclusive for NUS alumni) at $460.10.
ilibportal.nus.edu.sg

Food and Beverage
Bangkok Jam
10% off total bill.
bangkokjam.com.sg

Horse’s Mouth Bar
15% off total bill.
horsemouthbar.com

Fashion and Retail
Flower Advisor
20% off for new users and 15% off for existing users.
floweradvisor.com.sg

Shaw Foundation Alumni House
20% off venue rental.
nus.edu.sg/alument

Lee Kong Chian Museum
Museum
museum.nus.edu.sg

The Bud Box Singapore
10% off all flower boxes.
TheBudBoxSG.com

Flaming Don
10% off total bill.
flamingdon.com.sg

Suki-Ya
10% off total bill.
suki-ya.com.sg

Beauty and Wellness
Dancing with Friends Singapore (DWF)
• 25% off all class packages.
• 1 for 1 promotion when you sign-up with a partner.
dancingwithfriends.sg

Healthcare
Farrer Park Hospital
10% off the Consultation Fees at Farrer Park Hospital 24HR Emergency.
farrerpark.com/hospital/Pages/Home.aspx

The Bud Box Singapore
10% off all flower boxes.
TheBudBoxSG.com

Healthway Medical
• GP Consultation at $17, additional surcharge of $10.70 applies for consultation after 9.30pm and $16.05 applies for consultation on a Public Holiday.
• Seasonal Flu Vaccination at $25 per dose (3-in-1) and $38 per dose (4-in-1).
• Basic Health Screening Services at $98 (Pink Package) and $168 (Silver Package).
• Dental Services, consultation fee at $21.40 (waived if treatment is done). Privilege rates for various dental treatments.
• Executive Health Screening Packages at $243 (Lite), $540 (Classic Plus), $810 (Deluxe Plus).
healthwaymedical.com

Education and Self-Enrichment
Catalk
Total 60 minutes free usage thereafter.
20% discount to transcribe.
catalk.ai

Toofdoctor Dental Surgeons
Exclusive rates for dental treatments.
toofdoctor.com.sg

Keynote Learning
Water of administrative fees ($30) and subject material fees ($15) for a full term.
keynotelearning.com

Creative Edge Learning
10% off CreativEdge Learning’s weekly programmes for a full term.
creativelearning.com.sg

NUS Museum
20% discount on all NUS Museum’s publications and catalogues.
$29 for NUS Museum guided tour of 20 pax maximum per group (Usual Price: $50).
museum.nus.edu.sg

Alternative Selection
10% off with minimum spending of $20 for butchery products.
5% off with minimum spending of $10 for other products.
10% off total food bill (excluding beverages).
ryangrocery.com

Shaw Foundation Alumni House
20% off venue rental.
nus.edu.sg/alument

Typwoon Café
10% off total bill.
typhooncafe.com.sg

UMa UMA Ramen
10% off total bill.
umaumaramen.com

Suki-Ya
10% off total bill.
suki-ya.com.sg

Flaming Don
10% off total bill.
flamingdon.com.sg

Burger Plus
10% off with minimum spending of $20.
burgerplus.com.sg

UMA UMA Ramen
10% off total bill.
umaumaramen.com

Suki-Ya
10% off total bill.
suki-ya.com.sg

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flamingdon.com.sg

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umaumaramen.com

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suki-ya.com.sg

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flamingdon.com.sg

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burgerplus.com.sg
A PASSION FOR COOKING, entertaining and experimenting with new flavours led Mr Ashish Poddar, a marketing and strategic planning professional, to start a business so he could do just that. The result? A private home dining experience company named Chef’d CLUB, in which Mr Poddar isn’t just the founder, but also its chef and orchestrator. “It’s about engaging the guests, both through the food as well as by adding an element of surprise and delight,” he says.

Friends and family weren’t especially surprised when Mr Poddar, who holds an Executive MBA from NUS, took the plunge. “Although not formally trained, I’ve spent some 22 years cooking and hosting lavish dinners for my nearest and dearest,” explains Mr Poddar. “Their consistent positive feedback coupled with frequent urging that I consider a business in F&B, motivated me to host my first tasting session for six guests.”

And with that, Chef’d CLUB was born in March 2019. The concept is simple: Mr Poddar creates and conceptualises the menu — usually a five-course meal of progressive Asian cuisine — tries it out and publicises it on the company’s Facebook page at least a month and a half in advance. Keen diners reserve a spot. Up to 10 guests per sitting are able to enjoy this intimate home dining experience, which is hosted up to four times a month. “To date, our menu has not been repeated,” says Mr Poddar, who now works with a core team of five, which assists him with cooking, plating and other operational tasks.

As team leader of this growing enterprise, Mr Poddar found his EMBA course useful in many aspects. “Having culinary skills is key. But knowing how to plan and execute an effective marketing strategy helps me stand out,” he says. “This is crucial if I hope to sustain the business.”

From time to time, Chef’d CLUB holds free tasting events and the team also accepts requests for cooking workshops or private dinner gatherings among family or colleagues, which Mr Poddar considers as opportunities to attempt even more dishes. “As Singapore’s food culture continues to mature, my own experiments with Asian and Indian flavours have also grown,” he says. “And though the buzzword here is authenticity, creativity has never been far behind.”

The late Mrs Trynjte Dina Margaretha Williams (1917 – 2018), known to all as “Etta”, came to Singapore from Indonesia in 1946 after being held in a Japanese internment camp for five years. She began her lifetime career as a stylist beautician in 1950. She operated in shops located at the former Cold Storage in Orchard Road, Mandarin Hotel, Hilton Hotel and lastly, at Jelita Cold Storage.

Mrs Williams outlived two husbands. She had three stepchildren from her last husband, Mr John L Williams from the United States of America (USA).

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She retired to lead a quiet life at the age of 75, travelling yearly from Singapore to the United Kingdom and her birthplace Holland for several months each year until her passing at the age of 101 in 2018.

In her will, she gave a small amount of her estate to her relatives overseas, a few friends in Singapore, several hospices and a few charities in Singapore. A large balance was given to help needy Singaporeans fund their university education in the form of a bursary. At NUS, the Margaretha Williams Bursary was established with a generous bequest from Mrs Williams. The first awards are expected to be made in Academic Year 2020-2021.

NUS is indeed grateful for the generosity of friends like Mrs Williams, whose legacy gift has enabled the University to help even more financially needy students.
FILM FESTIVAL

To reserve your seat, please register online at alumnet.events/IFF20

11 – 13 March 2020 | 7.30pm
Wednesday – Friday

Auditorium,
Shaw Foundation Alumni House