

Higher Education Conference in Singapore 2025
Welcome Address by Prof Tan Eng Chye
Wednesday 10 Dec 2025, 8.45 am, UTown Auditorium 1

Guests, Fellow Educators, Colleagues and Friends

On behalf of the National University of Singapore, I would like to warmly welcome you to the NUS campus this morning. I am glad that you are able to join us for the 2025 edition of the Higher Education Conference in Singapore, or HECS, organised by the NUS Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

The HECS is in its second year; it was formerly known as HECC, or Higher Education Campus Conference. The name change was really to open the space beyond autonomous universities and to involve other institutions of higher learning in Singapore.

HECS 2025 has received 137 proposal submissions. Submissions from autonomous universities have doubled from 2024. This speaks of the passion and dedication of our educators, who are curious and constantly exploring new ways to improve teaching and learning. Educators in Singapore are keen to meet and exchange ideas and practices, building communities and relationships to support and spur each other on.

This year, HECS has introduced the **Signature Pedagogies Workshops** conducted by NUS and our AU colleagues. As part of this series, there will be a Learning Through Play installation that runs throughout the conference. At the close of the conference, conference proposals that have achieved a perfect score from reviewers will be presented with the Reviewers' Choice Awards to commend their excellence.

The theme for HECS 2025 is “**Building Relationships in Teaching and Learning**”. The theme is a call to action that resonates deeply with the national vision for education that was articulated by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong (PM Wong) during the recent debate on the President's Address. PM Wong emphasised that education must move beyond the relentless rat race and narrow definitions of success. Instead, education should empower every learner to discover and develop their unique strengths, foster dignity in diverse pathways, and serve as a springboard for lifelong growth.

On lifelong growth, I would add that in today's operating context, where industries and job requirements are rapidly being transformed by AI and other developments, higher education plays a very critical role in helping individuals to stay confident and competent to adapt and take on new challenges, across diverse functions and settings.

It is thus most fitting that HECS 2025 is championing the human dimension of education. This focus on relational teaching aligns with PM Wong's call to broaden meritocracy, creating environments where learning is joyful, fulfilling, collaborative, inclusive, and future-ready. Even in this era of rapid technological change and skills-based hiring, strong educator-learner relationships, trust, and community remain the foundation for meaningful learning.

The conference programme is an intensive one, with many interesting workshops being lined up. We will be adjourning upstairs to the workshops, which are being run on a first-come, first-served basis. Hence, do stake or 'chope' your seat quickly at the sessions you are keen on.

On this note, I wish you a fruitful and enriching day of discussions and connecting with one another. Thank you so much.