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2015 Honorary Graduates

JUL-AUG 2015

NUS NEWS
Commencement 2015 heralds new beginnings

NUS NEWS

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During the Main Commencement Ceremony on 6 July, Singapore President and NUS Chancellor Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam conferred the Honorary Doctor of Laws on Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong; the Honorary Doctor of Letters on Professor Saw Swee Hock, President’s Honorary Professor of Statistics and Biomedical Sciences Initiative Director; and the Honorary Doctor of Science on Sir Richard Brook Sykes, Chairman of the Biomedical Research Council’s International Advisory Board under the Agency for Science, Technology and Research.

Delivering his speech as Principal Speaker at the ceremony, Mr Goh drew analogies from a river to describe life. “It begins as a trickle, then becomes a stream...and eventually journeys its way to the ocean. But as it goes around obstacles and overcomes challenges, it also shapes the environment and sustains life.”

Mr Goh’s long dedicated service to the nation was underscored in a citation by Professor Brenda Yeoh, Dean of the Faculty of Arts in his citation. Sir Richard is the first to receive the Honorary Doctor of Science from NUS in more than 40 years.

Sir Richard led the research leading to the discovery of the world’s first monocyclic β-lactam antibiotic, aztreonam. Since 1987 when he was global head of Research and Development at Glaxo, he has been involved in the biomedical sciences landscape in Singapore.

Through a $50 million scholarship scheme and the GSK-EDB trust fund, Sir Richard enabled more than 350 local students to study abroad. He also assisted in launching Singapore’s Biomedical Sciences Initiative in 2004 as co-chair of the International Advisory Council. He was presented the President’s Award for Philanthropy in 2013 and named as one of 48 Heroes of Philanthropy in the Asia-Pacific region by Forbes Asia magazine.

Distinguished luminaries receive honorary degrees

No matter how lofty your ambitions, how grand your dreams, how fast your river of life flows, always remember its source and treasure it.

Mr Goh Chok Tong, Emeritus Senior Minister

NUS News Commencement this year celebrated very special milestones — it commemorated the University’s 100th year of founding, together with Singapore’s Golden Jubilee.

Held over 23 ceremonies from 6 to 14 July, a total of 10,219 graduates went through this rite of passage — 6,316 of whom received bachelor degrees while 3,903, including this rite of passage — 6,316 of whom received bachelor degrees while 3,903, received bachelor degrees while 3,903, received doctorates on three remarkable individuals at the Main Commencement Ceremony on 6 July. It has been more than 30 years since the University conferred honorary degrees.

Mr Goh (left) receiving the honorary degree from Dr Tony Tan.

The Honorary Graduates were Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong (Doctor of Laws), President’s Honorary Professor of Statistics at NUS Professor Saw Swee Hock (Doctor of Letters) and Chairman of the Biomedical Research Council’s International Advisory Board under the Agency for Science, Technology and Research, Sir Richard Brook Sykes (Doctor of Science). They were recognised for their many distinguished accomplishments in service of Singapore, as well as to the local and international community.

Singapore President and NUS Chancellor Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam presided over the main ceremony, which featured graduates from the NUS Business School’s Department of Accounting. The NUS Business School is also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

In his Commencement speech, NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan noted that NUS is still a “vigorously youthful institution” at its core, in spite of its distinguished history.

“In my view, it is this rich blend of enduring old and vigorous new qualities and innovations that enables our University to continue to excel, and to make a consequential impact,” said Prof Tan, before adding that the Honorary Graduates illustrated this point well.

Following the conferment of the honorary degrees, Mr Goh, as Principal Speaker, offered the new graduates some advice in his speech titled “The River of Life.”

From personal experience, he learnt that while the future cannot be predicted, one certainly can: “scan and prepare for the terrain ahead” to control some parts of life. However, one should not be “a languid river”, but rather “be bold and carve out new paths”.

Mr Goh also reminded the graduates not to forget their duty to family and country. “We have gotten to where we are today not just because of our individual talent and effort, but also because our country and family have enabled us to do so. Without them, you have no identity, no roots, no sense of belonging, no warm home to come back to. No matter how lofty your ambitions, how grand your dreams, how fast your river of life flows, always remember its source and treasure it,” he said.

An ensemble from the NUS Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music performed Malaks on Water, composed by alumnus and Conservatory Lecturer Mr Chen Zhangyi, at the main ceremony. One of the musicians, 19-year-old Churen Li, was the youngest graduate for undergraduate programmes this year.

A celebratory dinner on 24 July at University Town capped off Commencement season.

Five pioneer programmes were awarded:

- Bachelor of Environmental Studies
- Faculty of Science, and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
- Master of Science (Business Analytics)
- School of Design and Environment
- Master of Technology (Enterprise Business Analytics)
- Institute of Systems Science
- Faculty of Engineering
- Master of Science (Audiology)
- Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

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Prof Saw’s key contributions to the field of Statistics and students. At NUS, a bursary fund he and Social Sciences. Prof Yeoh related how the NUS Emeritus Alumnus first started out as an Administrative Service officer in the Economic Planning Unit in 1964.

Mr Goh entered politics in 1976 and went on to serve in many portfolios including Senior Minister of State for Finance, Minister for Trade and Industry, Minister for Health, Minister for Defence, and First Deputy Prime Minister. He became Singapore’s Prime Minister in 1990 and led the country for 14 years.

Dean of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Associate Professor Yoh Khay Guan cited Prof Saw’s key contributions to the biomedical sector were highlighted by Professor John Bu-Iwong, NUS Senior Vice President (Health Affairs) in his citation. Sir Richard is the first to receive the Honorary Doctor of Science from NUS in more than 40 years.

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Financial Studies, and the Saw Swee Hock Professorship in Law, the Saw Centre for Biomedical Sciences, the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health at the University.

For his generosity and dedication, Prof Saw was presented the President’s Award for Philanthropy in 2013 and named as one of 48 Heroes of Philanthropy in the Asia-Pacific region by Forbes Asia magazine.

Finally, Sir Richard’s transformative contributions to the biomedical sector were highlighted by Professor John Bu-Iwong, NUS Senior Vice President (Health Affairs) in his citation. Sir Richard is the first to receive the Honorary Doctor of Science from NUS in more than 40 years.

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Dedication to society

As the first Malay student to graduate with a First Class Honours degree in Social Work from the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sri Nur Diyanah Binte Hardy has also made history in other aspects of her academic achievements. Diyanah is the first student from a madrasah, or religious school for Islamic instruction, to have gained admission into the Department’s undergraduate degree programme in the last 20 years. After studying at Madrasah Al-Maarij Al-Ismah for 12 years, she enrolled in the Department of Social Work at NUS.

During her freshman year, Diyanah worked with humanitarian organisations to educate children in Cambodia on hygiene. The two-week expedition further deepened her commitment to the social work profession.

To give back to the madrasah which had shaped her life, she also started the Madrasah Maths Mentoring programme with a former schoolmate.

Diyanah’s passion in supporting the needs of women and children has seen her taking up a half-year internship with the Singapore Committee for UN Women.

On 13 July this year, Diyanah fulfilled her dream when she graduated top of her class. She plans to do social work in a non-governmental setting or work with local children’s homes to implement community programmes.

Jeremy Lim capped his NUS undergraduate experience with a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese Studies in July, but getting there was not easy. The degree not only affirmed his intellectual abilities, but also taught him a lesson in overcoming brittle bone disease, a congenital condition that affects one in 20,000 births.

The wheelchair-bound former young ambassador of the National Kidney Foundation’s Children’s Medical Foundation has been taking an experimental drug for 13 years and his bone-strengthening effect has kept him fracture-free the past five years.

Looking back, the Japanese-major appreciated that the University has accommodated his limitations. Lessons were arranged such that his mother did not have to drive him between his classes on campus. If he missed a lesson, his professors would set up one-on-one sessions for him, which he jokingly said motivated him not to be absent.

“He is very positive, has excellent communication skills, is humorous, inquisitive and is a very hard worker. He could brighten up classes no matter how hard and serious the study was,” said Drbum Walker from the Centre of Language Studies at NUS.

In spite of all the help, Jeremy was expected to hold his own, academically.

“One of the things I’m really grateful to NUS for is that they didn’t help me in terms of the academic experience, they didn’t make any concessions for me, they didn’t make it easy. They allowed me to really grow and face all the challenges that any other student would face,” he explained.

Jeremy will be taking a year off to study for the highest level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. He may then take up a master’s degree in Japanese Studies or perhaps, become a translator for the media industry.

Marking another milestone

As the first for the unique NUS event, the public could also donate during Rag Day by tapping their contactless smart cards on a 3.5-metre “birthday cake” for Singapore, covered by thousands of well-wishes penned by the public.

Capping the memorable night was a stunning fireworks display which elicited loud cheers from the spectators.

A few days before, more than 5,000 NUS students had braved the morning storm on Flag Day to seek donations for 19 charitable organisations supported by the Community Chest in Singapore. Rag and Flag, an NUS signature event which began more than 50 years ago, saw undergraduates from Halls of Residence and schools raise a total of $451,120 for the beneficiaries, exceeding the initial target of $450,000.

Congratulations dinner rounds up Commencement

More than 300 guests attended the University’s annual Commencement Dinner on 24 July at the College of Alice & Peter Tan at NUS University Town, marking a nostalgic close to Commencement 2015.

Among those present were NUS Pro-Chancellors Mt Ngiam Tong Dow, Mt Hillard Matar and Mt Chan Sek Keong; NUS Chairman Mt Wong Ngit Liong; Board of Trustee members; senior administrators, as well as faculty, staff, students and alumni.

The customary Commencement Dinner address delivered by NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan spoke of NUS being a dynamic community pursuing diverse and interesting things that enrich the campus and bring benefit to the wider society. He also highlighted some of the many recent accomplishments by NUS students including the strong medal tally garnered by students and alumni at this year’s 28th SEA Games.

NUS Students’ Union President Lim Kok Seng shared some of the changes that took place at the student body under his watch. He called for his fellow graduates to “move forward with anticipation, confidence and hard work, with the hope that after ten years later, we will meet someday...”

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Welcome aboard freshmen!

Some 2,200 incoming students were welcomed with performances at the annual Freshmen Inauguration Ceremony on 3 August held at the University Cultural Centre. The students also gained invaluable advice from NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan and NUS Students’ Union President Lim Kok Seng at the event.

Rag Day 2015, themed “Where I belong” with the tagline “Be with the people”, carried the message of solidarity with the community. The spectacular display of creativity and innumerable crowd of 26,000-strong crowd at the annual NUS Students’ Union (NUSSU) Rag and Flag.

The colourful extravaganza took place in tandem with the University’s 110th anniversary celebration on 7 August, two days before Singapore’s 50th birthday.

Held at the largest floating stage in the world — The Float@Marina Bay — as part of the Golden Jubilee Weekend and National Day Parade festivities, the vibrant occasion was graced by Guest-of-Honour Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore’s Minister for Environment and Water Resources.

Other guests in attendance were NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan; NUS Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost Professor Tan Eng Chye; Dean of Students’ Associate Professor Tan Teck Koon; NUSSU President Lim Kok Seng and Community Chest Director of Relations & Engagement Mts Heng Liang.

Elaborately designed floats built from recycled materials were carefully transported to the venue and high-energy performances kicked up the atmosphere.

Other acts including YouTube star Christina Grimmie and homegrown talents such as The Sam Willows and Kool Kib entertained the crowds. A carnival with booths also offered fun-filled games and activities.
UK Prime Minister pushes for global anticorruption

The challenge I am laying down for every country today is to root out the rot of corruption.

– Mr David Cameron, UK Prime Minister

On an official trip to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations and partnership between Singapore and the UK, Mr Cameron paid a special visit to the School to deliver a speech as part of the LKY School Distinguished Speaker Series. The British premier said that cutting corruption by just 10 per cent could benefit the global economy by US$380 billion annually. “Corruption is one of the greatest enemies of progress in our time. It is the cancer at the heart of so many of the world’s problems,” he maintained.

To sceptics who say fighting graft could disadvantage their economies, Mr Cameron was emphatic that countering the problem should not have to damage business, jobs and growth, but instead could bring about the opposite effect. Also, it is morally and economically right, he noted. “As we have seen here in Britain — and as we have seen here in Singapore: where tackling transparency and openness.

Among other heartening examples to promote trade and transparency were the G8 agenda for sharing tax information across nations, and an international plan to prevent companies from artificially shifting their profits across borders to evade taxes.

Another key area Mr Cameron believes in is the transparency of business ownership. To lift the veil of secrecy used by criminals to hide and move their ill-gotten gains, Britain will from next year set up a publicly accessible central registry showing the real owners of British companies.

Mr Cameron also emphasised Britain’s commitment to playing a bigger role in ASEAN, especially in business. His strong delegation of key business representatives showed the UK’s seriousness in doing trade with the region, he said.

The question-and-answer session, Mr Cameron fielded questions ranging from solving “legal corruption” to different countries’ rule-of-law on ant graft.

The event was attended by almost 300 guests, including Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance; Ms Grace Fu, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office and Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, and Foreign Affairs; UK business delegations; local officials and industry leaders; as well as NUS academics and students.

On transparency and openness.

The Medical Dinner 2015 on 3 July saw close to 1,000 alumni, students and guests gather for a night of fun, food and conviviality.

A high point on the calendar of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine), this year’s dinner was especially significant as it marked the School’s 110th anniversary. Guests at the occasion included NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, NUS Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost Professor Tan Eng Chye, and National University Health System Chief Executive Professor John Eu-Li Wong.

A video screening traced the School’s beginnings at Sepoy Lines in 1905, and chronicled its development in teaching and research. Icons portraying Singapore medicine, the College of Medicine and Tan Tock Seng buildings, were brought back to life in the form of commemorative memorabilia. All proceeds from their sale will benefit financially needy medical students. A silent auction of three paintings by 2007 President’s Design Award’s Designer of the Year Mr Eng Siak Loy was also held. The establishment of the Parkway Pantai Professorship in Medicine and Healthy Ageing at NUS Medicine was announced at the event. It will provide direction and support for more extensive research into the causes, as well as the prevention of neurocognitive and orthopaedic diseases associated with ageing, and bone, muscle and joint disorders.

NUS alumni descended on Bukit Timah Campus on 4 July, dressed in their retro best. The Bukit Timah Homecoming, themed “Varsity Showtime”, drew more than 1,000 alumni and their families, who were kept entertained with nostalgic hits and classics from the 1960s.

The Homecoming, organised by the NUS Office of Alumni Relations, was co-hosted by the UK’s Law and Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY School).

Celebrating with a toast: Prof Simon Chesteman, Dean, Faculty of Law (in foreground); Prof Kishore Mahbubani, Dean, LKY School (left); NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan and NUS Chairman Mr Wong Ngok-Lung (Tor and 2nd from right respectively)

Throwback to the Swinging ‘60s

Commemorative memorabilia on sale at the dinner

NUS alumni, students and guests were treated to an auction of three paintings by 2007 President’s Design Award’s Designer of the Year Mr Eng Siak Loy. The establishment of the Parkway Pantai Professorship in Medicine and Healthy Ageing at NUS Medicine was announced at the event.

The dinner also welcomed this year’s graduates from NUS Medicine, Alice Le Centre for Nursing Studies and Department of Pharmacy into their respective professions.
Conference focuses on nation’s progress

The “Singapore at 50: What Lies Ahead?” Conference, organised by the Institute of Policy Studies and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY School) at NUS, marked the University’s contribution to the SG50 celebrations and NUS’ 110th anniversary. It brought together eminent thought leaders who discussed how Singapore has progressed since its independence, and how it might continue to shine in the next half a century.

The two-day SG50+ Conference started with an opening dinner on 2 July attended by more than 600 participants. In its welcoming address, NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan pointed out that to continue to succeed, Singapore must carefully pick out the pathways that will allow new and sustained heights of progress and achievement. “Good, multidisciplinary research and NUS is fully committed to contribute to such types of research and their application,” he said.

In a dialogue moderated by prominent CNN host Dr Fareed Zakaria, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong spoke about the reasons behind the country’s success and challenges it faces moving forward. He also touched on various subjects ranging from terrorism to the rise of social media.

The conference on 3 July saw distinguished speakers from academia, public service, and the private sector giving their views. The first session focusing on geopolitics was chaired by Singapore’s Ambassador-at-Large and NUS Board Member Professor Chan Heng Chee. Ambassador-at-Large and LKY School’s Governor Professor Tommy Koh, who helmed the second session which studied the economy, noted the importance of humility and the difficulty of predicting the future.

Mr Lee pointed out that a strong Singapore Prime Minister said he believes the new generation will have to deal with different kinds of challenges in the years ahead. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong spoke at length on some of the issues faced at the opening dinner for the SG50+ Conference on 2 July. The hour-long dialogue was moderated by CNN host Dr Fareed Zakaria.

We’re performing exceptionally, and we need to keep on being able to do that, otherwise somebody will move our cheese.

– Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore Prime Minister

Leaders who can marshal enough of these youths to form a corps to lead the country and support a system which will work are needed, he said.

Singapore faces new challenges in next 50 years

Singapore’s education system has successfully uplifted the country’s population by raising social mobility. However, going forward, it will need to evolve to create individuality and stimulate innovation.

Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam made the observation at a lunch dialogue during the SG50+ Conference moderated by CNN host Dr Fareed Zakaria. Mr Tharman, a former Education Minister of Singapore, traced the island nation’s economy which transitioned from trading to value-adding after independence.

He is convinced that the next phase of development will centre on a new education system. Singapore’s education system has successfully uplifted the country’s population by raising social mobility. However, going forward, it will need to evolve to create individuality and stimulate innovation. To Dr Zakaria’s question on how to maintain and instil the drive to succeed, the Prime Minister said he believes the new generation is up to the task. “I think the young people are hungry, they want a better life. They want their careers to advance. They are very driven.”

Touching on the perceived contradiction of having tough rules while allowing a live-and-let-live approach towards celebrating every community and religion, Mr Lee said, “There must carefully pick out the pathways that will allow new and sustained heights of progress and achievement. “Good, multidisciplinary research and NUS is fully committed to contribute to such types of research and their application,” he said.

Over lunch, Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Tharman Shanmugaratnam fielded some tough questions posed by Dr Zakaria on topics spanning the economy, education, healthcare and politics.

The environment came under the spotlight during the afternoon session moderated by NUS Board Member and former United Nations Under-Secretary-General Dr Noorleen Hayder. The final session, chaired by LKY School Dean Professor Koh Poh Koon, examined new democratic challenges transforming traditional ideas of authority and hierarchy. Former UK Prime Minister Sir John Major, together with Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, explored the rise of potentially disruptive forces in democratic governance.

Mr Lee pointed out that a strong conviction to build the country, good leadership and regional stability have contributed to the island nation’s success. The key challenge would be to maintain this progress for the future.

To Dr Zakaria’s question on how to maintain and instil the drive to succeed, the Prime Minister said he believes the new generation is up to the task. “I think the young people are hungry, they want a better life. They want their careers to advance. They are very driven.”

Touching on the perceived contradiction of having tough rules while allowing a live-and-let-live approach towards celebrating every community and religion, Mr Lee said, “There has to be a lot of give-and-take because you need strict rules but at the same time, this is an area where if you insist on going by the rules, everybody is going to be the loser. It is not possible for us to codify a set of statutes of exactly what is permissible and (what) is not permissible conduct.”

He highlighted the Charlie Hebdo incident in France early this year, which prompted the “I am Charlie Hebdo” movement for freedom of speech. “We have freedom of speech too, but we also acknowledge restraints when it comes to denigrating somebody else’s faith, when it comes to proselytising and trying to persuade somebody else to come over to your faith. Or even when it comes to how you express your own beliefs so as not to cause offence to others and some of these are written down and, in extremis, we have to take a pen to court.”

However, Mr Lee conceded that keeping this racial and religious harmony will be increasingly difficult, particularly with the rise of social media and the threat of terrorism.

On how the government can accommodate young Singaporeans — who have grown up in a very open media culture — with autonomy and a much stronger sense of individual identity, Mr Lee responded, “I think the politics will change. They have different aspirations, different interests.”

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Students past and present score at SEA Games

More than 60 NUS students and alumni contributed to Singapore's record medal haul by winning 32 medals at the 28th SEA Games. At the event hosted by the Republic from 5 to 16 June, the athletes put up a commendable performance in canoeing, floorball, shooting, water polo, gymnastics and wushu, among other sports.

The University’s participants were key members of the women’s floorball team that emerged champion. They included Science student Sharifah Badrniyah, School of Computing student Gracia Serinawulan and alumni Laura Tan, Suhaidah Mohd Yusof and Wynne Tang, who led as captain. Floorball made its inaugural appearance in this year’s Games.

Sharifah, who picked up the sport in primary school, had trained for up to four hours each day since last November, forgoing personal time with loved ones delivered. Sharifah was grateful for the overwhelming support of the spectators. “It was an amazing experience to be able to achieve gold in front of the home crowd this SEA Games,” she said.

Engineering undergraduate Mervyn Toh is no stranger to the SEA Games, having earned a silver medal for kayaking in 2013. This year, he struck gold for the K1 200m event, and rowed to a silver medal finish for the two-man K2 200m event. The paddler, who fell in love with the sport as a teenager, underwent up to 11 training sessions a week.

Other NUS canoeists who clinched medals included Science students Tan Chin Chuen and Lucas Teo, as well as alumni Annabelle Ng and Geraldine Lee. Business student Lee Tze Yuan achieved gold for taipan, a category of wushu. He said, “This medal win is especially emotional because I get to fly our flag high on home ground. Not many athletes are able to achieve gold in front of the home crowd.”

Adding to the accolades, Lisa was named Best Oarswoman with her perfect score of 50, while Jeremiah and Benjamin followed closely behind as two of the four runners-up.

First in Asia to win Zworykin Award

His significant research contributions in the field of medical and biological engineering.

He is the first in Asia to be accorded the honour — named after a Russian pioneer, engineer and inventor of television — given out by the International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering (IFMBE) every three years. The influential non-governmental organisation for the United Nations and the World Health Organization represents interests in biomedical and clinical engineering.

At the World Congress on Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering in Toronto, Canada where the presentation took place, Prof Lim shared his research experience in an invited lecture. The enterprising researcher has also won numerous accolades, including the NUS University Award for Outstanding Researcher and the 25 most enterprising technology start-ups.

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Contributing to this magnificent feat were incoming Law student Yonig Yi Xiang, who secured a silver medal finish for the two-man K2 200m event.

The paddler, who fell in love with the sport as a teenager, underwent up to 11 training sessions a week. Also in wushu, Engineering student Sim Min Li captured a gold and a bronze, while incoming Law student Yonig Yi Xiang secured a team silver.

The men’s water polo team continued its indomitable streak, scoring gold for the 28th consecutive time. Contributing to this magnificent feat were incoming Engineering student Ang An Jun, Engineering undergraduate Chiam Kian Sun, Law student Koh Ian Ying, as well as alumni Marcus Goh, Lin Diyang and Nigel Tay.

The NUS community congratulates all its athletes!

Top in international moot competition

Final-year NUS law student Jeremiah Lau, Benjamin Wong and Lisa Tan walked away winners of the inaugural Herbert Smith Freehills Competition Law Moot 2015 held at King’s College London in June.

The trio beat strong opponents from the University of Helsinki, Maastricht University and University of Leeds, as well as the competition’s host university King’s College London, scoing the highest among all 12 teams in the preliminary rounds.

They eventually emerged as champions after a gruelling finale with the University of Amsterdam, by presenting an impressive case before a panel of judges comprising senior competition law enforcement officials.

The fact that the competition was topped by an Asian team made the win even more rewarding.

“Given that the moot problem was based on European Competition Law, many would not have expected an Asian team to outperform the ‘native’ teams,” said Faculty of Law’s Associate Professor Burton Ong who coached the team. Lisa attributed the win to the team’s perseverance. “We were up against our European opponents, who were eloquent and charismatic graduate students with much greater exposure to European Union competition law. However, we were not put off by the challenges, and were determined to do our best,” she said.

Prof Lim has spun off the technology to co-found Clearbridge BioMedics. The firm has commercialised the invention into a device, which is undergoing clinical trial in cancer centres around the world.

Prof Lim revealed that he will be embarking on research to develop novel technologies that can contribute towards personalised or precision medicine, particularly in cancer. "A "one size fits all" just does not work and only individual patient-derived information can help us do a better job," he explained.

The enterprising researcher has also won numerous accolades, including the NUS University Award for Outstanding Researcher and President’s Technology Award in Singapore. Clearbridge BioMedics has been selected as one of the winners of the prestigious 2014 TIE50 Awards for the world’s 50 most enterprising technology start-ups.

NUS NEWS

Students past and present score at SEA Games

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**Blue LED extends life of fresh food**

Besides being energy savers, blue light emitting diodes (LEDs) may soon help to keep consumers safe from food poisoning.

NUS researchers at the Food Science and Technology Programme in the Faculty of Science have shed light on the pathogen-killing property of blue LED. Experiments on bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli showed that the light-sensitive compounds of these microorganisms make them vulnerable to the shorter wavelengths of the blue LED.

The scientists found that the neutralising effect is most potent at low temperatures of between 4°C and 15°C, in slightly acidic conditions. The work led by Assistant Professor Yuk Hyun-Gyu is the first to demonstrate that temperature and acidity affect the antibacterial efficacy of LEDs.

Asst Prof Yuk pointed out that chilling acidic foods, coupled with blue LEDs, could “meet the increasing demand for natural or minimally processed foods without relying on chemicals such as acidifying agents and artificial preservatives”.

The discovery, published in Food Microbiology in June, could well eliminate chemicals from the equation of processing and preserving food. The next step for the researchers is to employ the LED approach to fresh-cut fruits, ready-to-eat seafood such as sushi and salmon, as well as chilled meat products, he said.

The investigators plan to verify if blue LED illumination can effectively kill pathogenic bacteria without deterioration of food products. If successful, the new method will be a boon for retail settings, hawkers centres, food courts, supermarkets and food suppliers.

**Asthma drug in dengue trial**

A clinical trial is underway in Singapore to determine if a drug used for asthma will be effective for treating dengue fever.

NUS and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore (Duke-NUS), in collaboration with National University Hospital and Singapore General Hospital, are testing the drug ketotifen on patients infected with dengue. Ketotifen has been tested in Singapore to apply the new technology to fresh-cut vegetables to determine if LEDs will improve their nutritional quality during storage. Key parameters examined include vitamins and chlorophyll.

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**Instant drinking water in remote places**

The team designed the innovative filtration systems to withstand sharp and large debris commonly found in rural water sources, using sturdy ceramic membranes instead of the usual hollow fibre plastic.

The ceramic membrane, the systems’ core, can last three to five years, with routine maintenance of rinsing and backwashing. The valves used are widely available in developing countries, while the bag, if damaged, can be replaced with a bucket or container, explained Chong Tee.

The products can also be easily transported into disaster sites by first responders, he said.

**A clinical trial is underway in Singapore to determine if a drug used for asthma will be effective for treating dengue fever.**
New management appointments

Mr Don Yeo Yong Kang

Mullinix from 1 January 2016.
Mr Yeo, who was also a Board Chairman of the CPF Board, had held numerous positions during his past 10 years with the organisation.

Before joining the CPF Board, Mr Yeo had worked in the Institute of Public Administration Management at the Civil Service College, Ministry of Law, Shell, Ministry of Trade & Industry as well as the Prime Minister’s Office (Public Service Division). He is currently a Board Member with the Singapore Examinations & Assessment Board, and a member of the Public Sector Committee, Singapore Chapter, CPA Australia.
Professor Philip Li-Lin Liu is joining NUS as Vice President, (Research and Technology) on 31 August 2015. He is currently the Class of 1992 Professor and Director of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University, as well as the holder of the Kwok-Ting Lee Chair Professorship at National Central University, Taiwan.

Nature enthusiasts and island hoppers now have another reason to visit St John’s Island in Singapore.

The Sisters’ Islands Marine Park Public Gallery, which showcases the rich marine biodiversity in the island State, was opened to the public on 19 July. It forms part of the Marine Park Outreach and Education Centre (MPOEC), a partnership between the National Parks Board (NParks) and the Tropical Marine Science Institute (TMSI) at NUS.

The launch of the Gallery by Singapore President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam was attended by distinguished guests such as Mr Desmond Lee, Minister of State, Ministry of National Development; Ms Christina Ong, Chairman of NParks; Mr Kenneth Ee, CEO of NParks; Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, NUS President; and Professor Ho Teck Hu, NUS Deputy President (Research & Technology).

The Gallery features an overview of the Marine Park and a three-dimensional diorama of its two dive trails which will kick off in September. A seminar room and teaching laboratory cabler for talks, seminars and teaching activities for schools and community groups. By end 2016, viewing pools with marine organisms and a mangrove ecosystem will be available, while outreach programmes such as guided habitat walks will be offered.

Dr Tan was impressed by the gallery and outreach programmes being conducted at the MPOEC, and pointed out their importance in preserving the rich natural habitat and biodiversity of Singapore.

He noted that discoveries, such as a Neptune’s Cup sponge thought to be extinct, have been made recently. “These are all precious assets. We’ve to learn to keep our biodiversity programmes versatile, alive and thriving.”

TMVI and NParks collaborate closely on marine research projects, including the giant clam and sponges programmes, where endangered species are cultured before being reintroduced back into the Marine Park.

The Marine Park, encompassing Sisters’ Islands and the western reefs of St John’s Island and Pulau Tekukor, is a platform for outreach, education, conservation and research activities pertaining to the local marine biodiversity. The new gallery will enhance these programmes.

The Gallery is open daily from 10am to 2:30pm on weekdays, 10am to 3:30pm on Saturdays and 10am to 5:30pm on Sundays and public holidays. To coincide with ferry services plying Marina South Pier and St John’s Island, admission is free.

Marine Park Public Gallery opens to public

Legal internship with a financial twist

A new internship, launched earlier this year by NUS Faculty of Law (NUS Law), Citi and Rajah & Tann, will help meet the evolving demand of the financial and legal industries.

The Citi Legal Internship Programme aims to groom future lawyers with practical skills in the banking sector. Nine students were attached to a senior counsel for three months, gaining exposure to the in-house legal function at Citi, including insights into global financial regulatory trends, product developments and contract negotiations.

The evolution of the legal industry has resulted in the need for the legal profession to transform the way it was originally set out to be. There is now an increasing need for law students to look beyond the traditional private practice career path and seek out alternative career choices,” said Mr Andrew Wan, General Counsel Markets & Securities, Asia Pacific, Citi.

Mr Lee Eng Beng, Managing Partner at Rajah & Tann, one of Singapore’s leading law firms, added that in today’s challenging world, such commercial sensibilities and industry knowledge have become a fundamental requirement for lawyers. “All interns are granted a guaranteed interview opportunity with the law firm with the best performing among them clinching a coveted training contract.

NUS Law Dean Professor Simon Chesterman believes that the hands-on skills delivered through the tie-up would benefit the students in their future endeavours.

“The students who take part in this programme will emerge with deep insights as to the possibilities available in the banking industry, as well as skills that will serve them in whatever path they choose to follow,” he said.

From left: Mr Louis Chan, Director and Deputy General Counsel, Markets & Securities, Asia Pacific, Citi; Bernard, Ms Phoon Khai Kwang, Head of Human Resources, Citi Singapore; Mr Wan; Mr Lee and Prof Chesterman.

Bursary forges a beautiful friendship

“...I used to work during school holidays to supplement my family allowance, but with this Bursary, I can now focus my energies on my studies. Like Juliana, I hope to contribute to causes I believe in one day.”

— Chen Yuen Lin ‘13, a Social Work student in the Arts Faculty of Social Sciences, met her benefactor Ms Juliana Lim ‘72, after receiving the Bursary.

Ms Juliana Lim said, “I admire the spirit of the motivated and committed community volunteer Ms Lim set up the James Lim Teck Liang Bursary to honour her late father, a teacher who gave selflessly to the community.

To find out more about making a gift to NUS, call 1-800-DEVELOP (1-800-338-3557), email advances@nus.edu.sg or visit www.giving.nus.edu.sg.}

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Deep-sea nodule expedition fishes up bizarre creatures

Mysterious creatures from the deep have been spotted and collected.

A team comprising six scientists from the Keppel-NUS Corporate Laboratory has observed and retrieved samples of strange critters from the Pacific Ocean as part of the initial process for the exploration of deep-sea polymetallic nodules. All come from a depth of 4,000m in the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone located some 1,600 nautical miles south of San Diego, US.

The deep-sea expedition was commissioned by Ocean Mineral Singapore, a subsidiary of Singapore-based Keppel Corporation, and UK Seabed Resources Limited. The researchers conducted an environmental survey of the seabed and waters in the areas claimed by Singapore and the UK where polymetallic nodules occur. These irregularly shaped nodules contain metals and rare-earth elements which potentially have high commercial value.

To obtain approval for harvesting the nodules, interested contractors need to establish an environmental baseline assessment for the existing marine life, a requirement by the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

The team from the Tropical Marine Science Institute (TMSI) at NUS was on board a US oceanographic vessel for six weeks to gather environmental data between February and March this year. Said Dr Tan Koh Siang, TMSI’s Senior Research Fellow who headed the Singapore team, “With the data, the ISA can then make an informed decision whether to allow mining, and how such activities can be carried out with minimal damage to the environment.”

Initial findings have revealed hundreds of marine organisms collected, many of them small and rare. These include marine bacteria with unique metabolic mechanisms, foraminifera in mind-boggling forms, and fan-shaped unicellular xenophyophores. There is also an amazing range of small worms such as nematodes and polychaetes living on the sediment and within the nodules.

“Biodiversity is high, although abundance is low,” Dr Tan noted, intrigued by the wide variety of life existing in complete darkness at temperatures as low as 1°C, being subjected to pressure 400 times that on land.

The expedition enabled the biologists to examine uncharted terrain, as well as practise handling specialised and sophisticated equipment. This invaluable learning experience will arm them with the requisites for their next deep-sea voyage.