Yale-NUS College
Campus opens
Meeting of minds on liberal education

Yale-NUS College hosted the inaugural Symposium on International Liberal Education on 11 October, bringing together some 40 global thought leaders in higher education from key institutions around the world.

With the goal of fostering visionary thinking and dialogue around reimagining undergraduate education for the 21st century, the symposium focused on fundamental challenges facing higher education today.

Participants included:
- Professor Tan Choh Chuan, NUS President
- Professor Peter Salovey, Yale University President
- Mr. Qing Lin-Kung, Singapore's Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills)
- Prof. Grace Ong, NUS President
- Prof. Zhang Jie, Oxford University President
- Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore Prime Minister
- Prof. Richard Levin, Yale University President

In his opening remarks, Prof. Zhang Jie highlighted that Yale-NUS needed a curriculum and a college ethos which could respond to the regional context to benefit its students. "Its graduates have to understand these countries, have a feel of how they work, what they need, how they can move forward... Then they can be effective working in these countries, and helping them to change and to adapt to a rapidly changing world," he said.

Following the ceremony, Mr. Lee toured the campus and interacted with Yale-NUS students and faculty.

Groundbreaking oral healthcare

At the symbolic groundbreaking ceremony were (from left): MOH Chief Dental Officer Assoc Prof Patrick Tseng; Assoc Prof Ong, Mr Wong, Prof Tan, Mr Goh, Prof Wong; MOH Director of Medical Services Assoc Prof Benjamin Ong and NUS Deputy Chief Executive (Clinical Enterprise) Adjunct Assoc Prof Joe Sim.

NUS is Asia's top university

NUS has been hailed as Asia's best university in the 2015/2016 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2015-16. Globally, the University has been placed 12th and 26th, respectively.

By being among the top 76,798 academics and 44,229 employers around the world, the 2015/2016 QS World University Rankings found NUS in 9th spot in both academic and employer reputation. The University is also among the world's top 10 universities for Engineering and Technology, Social Sciences and Management, and Natural Sciences; and in the global top 20 for Arts and Humanities, and Life Sciences and Medicine.

Drawing data from 1,100 institutions, 11 million academic papers, and more than 11,000 academic surveys, the THE World University Rankings 2015-16 placed NUS in the global top 10 for international outlook, and global top 30 for teaching and research. It is the only Asian university to be among the world top 30.

NUS President Professor Tan Choh Chuan said, "Our consistent performance in international rankings is a reflection of Singapore's strong support for higher education, as well as NUS' strong focus on talent and excellence."

Mr Phil Baty, Editor of the THE World University Rankings, congratulated NUS on being Asia's number one university—the first time in the 13-year history of the THE World University Rankings.

"NUS' new position as Asia's top university and among the very best of the world's elite research universities is thoroughly deserved," he added.
Research awards recognise eminent scientists

NUS students showed their reporting skills in a global journalism essay competition, scooping all four places earmarked for Singapore participants to attend global journalism conference Future News 2015 in Scotland.

Three of the winners — recent Law graduate Ching Yan, Year 4 Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (PASS) student Celine Leong and Year 3 PASS student Desmond Koh — have taken the News Reporting and Editing module offered by NUS Communications and New Media (CNM).

The fourth winner was Year 3 PASS and University Scholars Programme student Isabella Chua. All four writers have published their work on Campus Eye, a CNM news portal.

Aspiring journalists win trip to Scotland

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Champions in maritime law competition

The students, who had no prior moot experience, started preparing for the competition last December. They would spend almost every day in the library, as well as conduct practice sessions with their coach and professors in the lead-up to the competition.

“The two biggest takeaways from the competition were the experience of preparing for a case itself, and the chance to interact with dedicated professors and practitioners who made available their time and experience to coach us,” said team Captain Jia En.

The winners hope their success would inspire other law undergraduates to give voice to the voiceless in our society,” she said.

For Celine, writing helps shape journalism especially with the growing role of new media and recent graduates Syazana Yahya, Moot 2015. Year 4 student Cassandra Chow

The finals saw the NUS contestants square off against the University of Hong Kong, successfully arguing their case as the claimants that the opposing team were fraudulent in the management of a vessel after it was attacked by pirates and damaged. The team also won the Oral Rounds of the competition.

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Alumni Day brings together NUS community

Eighteen former and current NUS faculty members have been recognised in a list of Singapore scientific pioneers in a commemorative book about the country’s science and technology efforts. The 120-page Singapore’s Scientific Pioneers, published by Asian Scientist with grants from the SG50 Celebration Fund and the Nanyang Technological University, lists a total of 25 scientists aged 50 and above who have made exceptional contributions to Singapore’s scientific, engineering, medical and education sectors over the last five decades.

One of the professors, NUS Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research Professor Ariff Bongso, was hailed for his pioneering work in the area of stem cell biology.

“I am honoured at the recognition given to my work and to have been featured in this book. It has been very satisfying to have helped childless couples and put Singapore on the biotechnology map through my research,” said Prof Bongso.

Former NUS Science Dean Dr Gloria Lim was acknowledged for the role she played in grooming generations of botanists. Many of her former students have also gone on to serve the nation as plant experts and science educators.

“It was a whole wide field for me. No one did research in fungi then,” said Dr Lim, who is renowned for her work in botany and plant pathology, which is widely used in agriculture.

NUS staff members aged 65 and above who had chalked up at least 10 years of continuous service were feted at the NUS Pioneer Generation Staff Hi-tea. The event took place just before the Kent Ridge Alumni Family Day in mid-August.

NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan welcomed the guests, acknowledging them as “the people who have really built the University and enabled it to come the very far distance it has traveled, particularly over the last 50 years.”

Former Director at the NUS Office of the President Dr E Sukumar found the high tea both meaningful and memorable for him and his former colleagues.

“NUS has gone to great lengths to show its appreciation, and recognise our efforts. I was touched by the warm hospitality and graciousness that was evident all round,” said Dr Sukumar, who had been with the University for 32 years.

Science pathfinders remembered in book

A limited run of 200 hardcover and 2,000 softcover copies of the book will be distributed to schools, libraries and scientific institutions. It can also be downloaded from www.asianscientist.com/pioneers.

Spin-off revolutionises big data analytics

As people increasingly rely on digital platforms for their daily needs and information, it is critical for businesses to make sense of the huge amount of data from various sources. An NUS start-up has leveraged the University’s technologies to “mine” such big data, and present them in intelligible and usable formats.

6Estates was founded in 2014 by four industry veterans and researchers — CEO Mr Gary Chin; CTO and Co-founder Dr Lauan Huang, who is Deputy Executive Director of NEXT; Chairman and Co-founder Professor Chua Tat Seng, who is also Director of NEXT; and Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Chair Professor, NUS School of Computing, and Chief Strategist and Co-founder Mr Roger Yuen, a Co-founder of visual search firm ViSenze.

The young start-up has already secured several clients, including Ogilvy & Mather China, with whom a three-month pilot was conducted. 6Estates is currently raising its Series A investment, after obtaining $1 million in seed funding from its founders, angel investors and SPRING Singapore via the Technology Enterprise Commercialisation Scheme.

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On the left, NUS President Mr E Sukumar, with his former colleagues.

Some 5,800 people gathered for the Kent Ridge Alumni Family Day.

Celebrity NUS alumnus Mr Tay Ping Hui and Ms Cheryl Wee, as well as the Eusoff and Temasek hall bands provided guests with a musical interlude as they enjoyed the afternoon’s festivities.

Various fun activities such as face-painting and balloon-sculpting also kept guests entertained throughout the event.

NUS NEWS

6

7
University plans global campus alliance

The leaders of three top public universities in the US, UK and Singapore — the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Cambridge and NUS — released a joint statement on 17 October on their intention to work towards an agreement to form a new alliance to collaborate on research and graduate-level programmes.

Announced by Professor Nicholas Dirks, Chancellor, UC Berkeley; Professor Sir Leszek Borysyuk, Vice- Chancellor, University of Cambridge; and Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, NUS President, the statement said:

“On behalf of our institutions we, the undersigned, have agreed to take the first step towards the formation of a new alliance of global campuses that will, through collaborative research and educational programmes, take on some of the world’s most pressing problems. Over the coming months we intend to establish a governance structure and operating procedures for this unique multilateral partnership — the cornerstone of an alliance that we expect to expand, in terms of programmatic scope, in the future.”

We are motivated by our commitment to utilize our combined academic resources for the greater good in our home countries and around the world. We believe that this new alliance will open the way for scholars and students at partner institutions to connect, collaborate and compete in ways that could not otherwise take place.

While there are certainly a number of multilateral and bilateral global partnerships already in existence — many of which our institutions already participate in — this endeavour is differentiated by its intention to pilot a commitment to address global problems at the center of its activities. Among the research interests we have already identified, anyway existing collaborations, are global public health, climate change, data science, and precision medicine. In the coming months we look forward to engaging members of our respective faculties, as well as students, in order to solicit their ideas and input regarding the specifics of the alliance’s research and educational agendas.

In the short-term our goal and commitment is to reach agreement on a detailed memorandum of understanding by April 2016.”

Chart future course by reading the water

In charting the course on the currents of higher education, a university must be able to “read the water”, said NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan. He shared his thoughts on navigating the main currents and major eddies of global education at the Georgetown University Fall Faculty Convocation in the US on 14 October.

As keynote speaker at the important annual ceremony where Georgetown University faculty members were recognised for their achievements, Prof Tan spoke on “The aims and purposes of education: Some perspectives from Asia”.

He highlighted three major “currents” in Asia:

First, higher education in Asia is maturing at an unprecedented pace and scale.

By 2020, China and India together would have 65 million students in tertiary education compared with 20 million in the US. “This is a challenge but it also presents new opportunities for Asia to innovate and to partner others, to raise the impact of its higher education sector”, Prof Tan noted.

Second, a major priority in many Asian countries is to develop world-class universities.

These nations view the world-class university as a driver of more knowledge- and innovation-based economic growth, prompting substantially more public funding for selected universities in various countries.

Third is a growing interest in liberal arts education in several parts of Asia.

For instance, NUS and Yale University jointly set up Yale-NUS College, the only liberal arts residential college in Singapore.

Although the Asian focus on higher education has largely been utilitarian with influence from Western traditions, the growing appreciation that universities need to foster more critical thinking and creativity given the changing nature of work and society in a complex world, said Prof Tan.

Sperm whales can grow up to 20m. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has classified them as vulnerable to extinction.

Professor Rudolf Meier, LKCMHMs Deputy Head, revealed that plans are underway to prepare the whale skeleton for exhibition in 2016. He expressed hope that parts of the skeleton could be viewed at the end of this year.

The Jubilee Whale Fund will also go towards building an education, research and conservation programme around the animal so as to promote environmental awareness.

Two current Museum supporters in Singapore have kickstarted the initiative. Expanded Construction, the main contractor for LKCMH, is contributing $50,000, while Mr Joseph Koh — an honorary research affiliate of the Museum — and his wife Mrs Koh Peifen, are donating a five-figure sum.

Mr Koh, a former Singapore High Commissioner to Brussels, called for other Singaporeans to chip in and drive the establishment of “our very own Singapore whale”. Singapore obtained its first complete whale skeleton in 1892. The 13m baleen whale beached in Malacca was an old Raffles Museum showpiece until 1974. It was subsequently gifted to Malaysia’s Museum Negara, and is now housed in the Maritime Museum in Labuan, East Malaysia.

The Museum has launched a campaign to raise $1 million for the project. This would help finance resources required to prepare, restore, mount, exhibit and maintain the huge specimen, as well as create a learning and interactive experience around the display.

Singapore whale makes its way to museum

One of the highest honours in the fields of health and medicine, the lifelong membership recognises individuals who have shown outstanding professional achievements and commitment to service. They are elected based on their distinguished and continuing achievements in a relevant field, as well as for their willingness to contribute in conducting significant health-related studies and activities.

NAM President Dr Victor J Dzau pointed out that the newly elected members represent the brightest, most influential and passionate people in science and medicine,” he said.

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Keep Singapore special for the future

Today’s students are a privileged group, as they get to experience Singapore’s Golden Jubilee and, very likely, SG100 in another five decades. The onus thus lies on them to build a nation that would continue to be special in the next 50 years, stressed Dr Ng Eng Hen, Singapore Minister for Defence.

Speaking at NUS’ 2015 Kent Ridge Ministerial Forum in August, Dr Ng asked the students whether the Singapore that they live in will be as special to them and to the world in future.

The Minister traced Singapore’s progress from 1900 to the present, illustrating social and economic issues. As well as foster their interest in key political awareness among undergraduates, the audience posed questions freely with the audience. He highlighted that throughout its history, the country has been at the mercy of external forces and events, such as British rule, World War II and major financial crises. These events underscored the point that “life is not fair, especially for small states.” To mitigate its limited influence, Singapore sets out to make as many friends as possible, a strategy that has worked in its journey towards nationhood.

Dr Ng also highlighted “big challenges” lying ahead, among them the country’s rapidly ageing population. However, he believes this could be turned into an advantage, example by becoming the world leader in geriatric products.

He advised the students to stay innovative and resilient, expressing confidence that they could overcome the challenges on the horizon. “I believe that we can continue on a steady path, and I believe that your future is incredibly bright.”

His parting message to the youths, “You’re only limited by your dream, so go chase that rainbow.”

A flagship event of the NUS Students’ Political Association, the Kent Ridge Ministerial Forum aims to promote political awareness among undergraduates as well as foster their interest in key social and economic issues.

I’d rather have honest people with honesty and integrity run a less perfect system, than dishonest people run a perfect system.

— Dr Ng Eng Hen, Singapore Minister for Defence

During the question-and-answer session, the audience posed questions ranging from the issues confronting Singapore and its role in global affairs.

Internationally, Singapore occupies a privileged position, Dr Ng said, with many parties wanting to work with the city state because of its reputation for integrity, honesty, openness and reliability. He emphasised the importance of these traits, “Corruption is such a cancer that once it sets in, it’s very hard to eradicate...And if there’s one thing that you have to prize, it’s complete integrity of your systems. And I tell you, the only antidote to sliding down the corrupt path is people, not systems.”

He recalled the strong undergraduate nationalist movement and confrontational style in the early days. However, the University has evolved from “a hotbed of revolution” since then, and he is heartened by the current engagement model, which he hopes will continue.

For Mr Soh, “NUS is a university founded by the community, for the community. All of us are privileged here, we never must have the wrong sense of entitlement.” As a former NUS Students’ Union President, he frequently interacted with undergraduates from other countries, especially those from developing nations, who looked up to NUS and aspired to attain its success.

NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan who attended the forum reaffirmed that the University remains deeply committed to the community and Singapore. Besides addressing relevant immediate issues, it will also explore areas that will be important in 10 to 15 years, he said.

To prepare for the unpredictable future ahead, Prof Tan highlighted the need to create a broad “brain trust” by building future capital not just in the visible “lighted areas”, but also the hidden unknowns in the shadows, to avoid missing out on opportunities.

U@live, an initiative of the NUS Alumni Advisory Board, is organised by the NUS Office of Alumni Relations. The forum features prominent alumni of the University who have made a significant difference to society.

What NUS means to the community

The University is not simply an academic institution where students study for degrees. It goes way beyond the basic role to encompass intangibles such as hope and aspiration for the young, quality and strength in terms of leadership; academic achievements; and impactful research.

To Mr Johnny Tan, NUS stands for all these essential attributes, as well as the value it adds to individuals, society and nation-building. As a result, the Chairman of the NUS Alumni Student Advancement Committee and Member of the NUS Alumni Advisory Board has become “inher”, from getting an education and interacting with the NUS community.

Mr Tan was one of four speakers at the Mega U@live forum on “NUS — What Do We Stand For?”

Our University today helps transform lives, uplift society and does Singapore proud.

— Mr Johnny Tan, Chairman, NUS Alumni Student Advancement Committee

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Fluorescent probe for live neurons

A chemical dye that fluoresces in living nerve cells, a world’s first, can now enable researchers to look into neurological disorders in the body, such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease.

Singapore scientists from NUS and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) have invented a probe that can specifically label and image live neurons in the brain. This discovery can potentially be applied in diagnostic tools, surgical aids and drug delivery.

Neuron Orange (NeuO), an organic dye formulated by the team, allows real-time imaging of neurons both in the petri dish and within the organism. No prior chemical could stain live neurons exclusively, while antibodies are used only on dead nerve cells.

Little is known about the mechanisms controlling neurons’ form and function owing to the lack of tools to visualise these nerve cells in their natural state.

The Singapore breakthrough, published in Angewandte Chemie International Edition early this year, overcomes current limitations. Although fluorescent proteins are able to view neurons, their complicated and laborious preparation deters general use. NeuO, however, can be easily introduced intravenously instead of having to genetically engineer an organism to express the protein.

Led by NUS Chemistry Professor Chang Young-Tae, the team developed and tested NeuO on zebrafish and mice. The non-toxic chemical crosses the blood-brain barrier and selectively stains neurons immediately. The fluorescence passes out of the body harmlessly in a few hours.

The group has filed patents for both the approach and NeuO, and licensing is ongoing, Prof Chang disclosed. The compound is being shared with other research groups around the world for neurological investigation.

A chemical dye that fluoresces in living nerve cells, a world’s first, can now enable researchers to look into neurological disorders in the body, such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease.

Nasopharyngeal cancer (NPC), also known as nose cancer, affects 9.5 in 100,000 people per year in Southeast Asia and East Asia, predominantly Chinese males. It is the eighth most common cancer among Singaporean men, occurring between 35 and 55 years of age.

However, little knowledge exists about non-Chinese patients.

An NUS study, a first involving multiple ethnicities, has found that the disease also affects 15 per cent of the non-Chinese population in Singapore. The discovery provides important intelligence of such links to NPC, potentially paving the way for developing targeted therapeutics against the cancer.

Previous research established that the Chinese in the region has genetic and environmental links to the cancer, with the Epstein Barr Virus variant showing a strong correlation. Hypotheses of causes include cultural dietary preference among Southern Chinese such as preserved food that might contain carcinogens, as well as immune response in viral-associated cancers.

Physicians from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, headed by Assistant Professor Lim Chwee Ming from Otolaryngology, retrospectively reviewed the charts of 558 NPC patients at the National University Hospital (NUH) from 2002 to 2012.

Although 85 per cent of the patients were Chinese, the number of non-Chinese subjects was still sizable, with Malays making up about 70 per cent of this group.

Many of the non-Chinese patients had advanced cancer when they first sought treatment, but there was no significant difference in the two groups’ survival rates.

The report published in PLOS could enable scientists to focus on the Epstein Barr Virus for targeted treatment. Dr Lim pointed out that several groups at the National University Cancer Institute are working in this area.

He added that a clinical trial in cell therapy is currently underway at NUS. The collaboration involves NUS Adjunct Associate Professor Goh Boon Cher, Head of Haematology and Oncology at the Institute, and NUS Paediatrics Professor Darío Campana.

The robotic swans developed by TMSI and NERI can collect real-time water-sampling data to enhance our current capability and mitigate such a barrier.”

Two of the swans are equipped to collect water parameters such as dissolved oxygen, pH levels and chlorophyll, while the third gathers atmospheric data, acting like a weather station. Data from the swans is streamed wirelessly to a server accessible via the Internet.

The swans can be loaded with different sensors and actuators, depending on need. They can also conduct instantaneous operations, deviating from their preprogrammed mission if the on-board probes sense an irregularity.

The Chinese National Engineering Center and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University have signed an agreement with NERI to test-bed the system in several rivers in Southern China. They are also exploring the possibility of using NUSwan for water surveillance in one of the world’s largest reservoirs in China.

Robot swans patrol Singapore waters

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Key appointments at NUS

Cinnamon College at NUS welcomed its second Rector Ms Euleen Goh on 1 July. She succeeded eminent East Asia historian Professor Wang Gungwu, who was the College’s inaugural Rector since 2010.

Cinnamon College houses NUS’ University Scholars Programme (USP), a multidisciplinary, residential cum academic programme for undergraduates. As College Rector, Ms Goh will facilitate visits and programmes for the College, while working with College Master and USP Director Associate Professor Kang Hwee Chuan to build a sense of community among College residents and fellows.

Ms Goh, a Chartered Accountant, holds professional qualifications in banking and taxation. She was the first Singaporean to head Standard Chartered Bank’s sales, corporate, and institutional banking business in 1999.

The non-executive board member of several big organisations — such as Royal Dutch Shell plc and Capitaland Limited — is a Trustee of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs Endowment Fund. She chairs the Board of Singapore Chinese Girls’ School, the Board of Governors of Northlight School and DBS Foundation Ltd.

Ms Goh has won many accolades, among them a place in the Singapore Woman Hall of Fame for her professional success and community achievements. She has actively contributed to public service through youth mentorship and community programmes, and was awarded a Public Service Medal and a Public Service Star, awarded a Public Service Medal, in 2013.

Two other appointments will take effect in early 2016.

Professor Patrick Finbarr Allen was named Dean Designate, Faculty of Dentistry (FOD), and Director, National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore next year. He will be taking over from Associate Professor Grace Dng, who has been Dean since 2010.

Prof Allen is currently the Professor of Prosthodontics and Oral Rehabilitation of University College, Cork, Ireland. A former Dean of Dentistry/Head of Cork Dental School and Hospital, he holds concurrent appointments as Consultant in Oral Rehabilitation and Restorative Dentistry, and Head of Unit of Restorative Dentistry. As Dean Designate, Prof Allen will provide FOD with academic and administrative leadership. As the Centre for Oral Health’s Director, he will implement its strategic goals, driving initiatives in integrated and collaborative clinical care, medical education and research.

Prof Allen is the winner of numerous awards in oral health and has held visiting research positions in several countries.

Professor Jonathan D Rigg will assume the position of Director, Asia Research Institute from 1 January 2016. Formerly with England’s Durham University, Prof Rigg joined NUS Geography in 2013. He is currently the Raffles Professor in Social Sciences and Deputy Chair of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences’ Faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee.

A highly recognised development geographer, Prof Rigg has been working on issues of transformation in rural Asia over the last 30 years.

The prolific author of books, chapters in edited volumes, and journal articles sits on the editorial and advisory boards of several journals.

Maritime law research gets boost

Singapore’s expertise in maritime law research has been enhanced with the establishment of the Centre for Maritime Law (CML) and Maritime and Port Auditors of Singapore (MPA) Professorship in Maritime Law.

On 3 September, Guest-of-Honour Mr Andrew Tan, Chief Executive, MPA and Professor Simon Chesterman, Dean, NUS Faculty of Law (NUS Law) launched CML and the MPA Professorship. Some 150 members from the judiciary and government, practitioners from the legal, insurance and shipping sectors, and academics, attended the event.

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The scope of CML, NUS Law’s sixth research centre, includes research in commercial maritime law, private shipping law and dispute settlement. MPA, through the Singapore Maritime Institute, has set aside $2 million to support Professorship activities for five years.

The MPA Professorship in Maritime Law builds on the $4 million MPA visiting professorship programme established previously. MPA has contributed a further $1 million to the Professorship, which further strengthens the development of resident teaching expertise and maritime legal research activities at NUS Law.

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SingHealth, Duke-NUS raise $30.5m.

School Singapore (Duke-NUS) highlighted the significance of the funds as many of the successful activities the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre has achieved may fall outside the bounds of typical grant support mechanisms. ‘Therefore, funds raised from private philanthropy for medical research and education will boost this trajectory of accomplishments, and help sustain support that can further strengthen, expand and fast-track programmes,’ he said.

A total of four new Professorships — Tan Chong Lim-CCF Professorship in Paediatric Oncology and three Professorships in Cardiovascular Medicine, Plastic Surgery and Regenerative Medicine were set up with the funds. These endowed Professorships will enable key appointments in teaching and research in medicine.

At the event, SingHealth and Duke-NUS also marked 10 years of successful partnership in education initiatives at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School. Singapore (Duke-NUS) also marked 10 years of successful partnership in education initiatives at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

Since April 2014, private philanthropists’ contributions have been supplementing government funding to stimulate innovation and translational research. Donors include the Viva Foundation for Children with Cancer, Children’s Cancer Foundation and Lee Foundation. Professor Thomas Coffman, Dean of Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore (Duke-NUS) also marked 10 years of successful partnership in education initiatives at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

More than $10 million was raised for medical research and education initiatives at the inaugural SingHealth-Duke-NUS Gala Dinner 2015 on 30 August. More than 700 clinicians, researchers, educators and donors attended the event, which was graced by Guest-of-Honour Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

V R Nathan was a community leader. For serving the Indian community with distinction and unswerving commitment, he was conferred the Public Service Medal by Singapore in 1986. He was an ardent advocate of lifelong learning and he diligently supported various educational initiatives at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He was a Trustee of the Singapore General University Hospital, has been a member of the NUS Tamarind Island Board of Directors, and was a Trustee of NUS Vickers Foundation.

In 2004, Mr Nathan established the V R Nathan NUS Bursary to help financially needy students with special priority for disabled students — at NUS. To find out more about making a gift to NUS, call 1-800-DEVELOP (1-800-338-1567), email askdev@nus.edu.sg or visit www.giving.nus.edu.sg

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Singapore pays homage to Sydney Brenner

Singapore feted Nobel Prize winner Dr Sydney Brenner in October with a two-day event consisting of a public lecture, symposium and exhibition, capped off with a grand dinner banquet. The acclaimed molecular biologist has been instrumental in catapulting the country’s biomedical initiative onto the world stage over the last 30 years.

NUS, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the Agency for Science, Research and Technology (A*STAR), together with US-based Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory which houses Dr Brenner’s archives, co-organised the event.

About 1,300 guests attended the Nobel Laureate Public Lecture on 1 October featuring Laureates Dr James Watson, who spoke on “Stopping Incurable Cancers through Eliminating Their Anti-Oxidative Defenses”; Sir Richard Roberts on “A Crime Against Humanity”; and Dr Brenner on “Homo sapiens: A Unique Animal”.

Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, who is Coordinating Minister for National Security and Chairman of the National Research Foundation, graced the Sydney Brenner Symposium as Guest-of-Honour. The 400 attending members of the local and international scientific community witnessed the launch of “A Heroic Voyage”, an exhibition on Dr Brenner’s life in science. Held at Biopolis, it will subsequently move to NUS and NTU.

Dr Brenner recalled the milestones of his scientific career at the Symposium’s opening, ending with, “The journey will continue, I hope, after I’m gone. I’ve often asked one request, which is in 2053, on the anniversary of the DNA publication, that I will be allowed to come back here, (for) one day. I don’t care where I am, whether I come down or come up, just to see what’s happened to the world.”

At the closing dinner banquet, NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan recounted the ways Dr Brenner had left his mark on Singapore.

They included the Singapore Cancer Syndicate, and the recruitment and training of promising scientists and clinicians at NUS, National University Hospital and A*STAR.

Dr Brenner sharing his thoughts at the Symposium

A glass sculpture of the T4 bacteriophage model used by Dr Brenner and colleagues to demonstrate DNA triplet codons

Exhibition on Dr Brenner’s life in science