Class of 2010
Embracing the challenges of tomorrow

The Nanyang spirit
Inspired to give their best

New nexus
In conversation
Generous hearts
The Mayor of the Games
Front cover: July and August couldn’t be a more exciting time for NTU, with the Convocation ceremonies soon to be followed by the start of the inaugural Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games. Eager to run the next lap in their journey of learning are graduates (from left) Lee Chong Leong, Joeri Vos and Aisha Farhana Binte Najumudeen (photo: Dios Vincoy Jr).
See you again, soon

This is my first issue as editor-in-chief of @NTU, and what an opportune time to start. As I’m writing this, Convocation 2010 banners are being put up around the campus and this month, more than 8,500 students will graduate from NTU. Next month, 5,000 athletes and officials from the world over will arrive at the Yunnan Garden campus, which was chosen as the official Youth Olympic Village. And this year, NTU celebrates our 55th anniversary.

For many of you in the graduating class, convocation is a time of mixed feelings. It is time to bid farewell to the halls that you have lived in, the lecturers that have nurtured and guided you, and the friends that you have laughed and argued with. You say hello to a whole new world, one that could be unfamiliar but nonetheless exciting.

Even as you leave the comfortable security of NTU, you know you will always have a place here, as alumni contributing back to your alma mater, as mentors to new students or even as students yourselves again in postgraduate or other courses.

At NTU, we believe in building lifelong links with our alumni, whether they are in Singapore or abroad. Our alumni strength today stands at more than 143,000 and our alumni associations span from Singapore to China and from India to the United Kingdom. These global associations help to carry NTU’s name and the achievements of our graduates overseas.

Similarly we hope to create links with the 5,000 guests who will call our Yunnan Garden campus their home during the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in August 2010. Some day, they may return to visit the campus because of the beautiful memories they had here, become our students or send their children to study here.

NTU has developed, together with Tsinghua University, the first hydrogen-electric bus that will help ferry the young athletes around the games village. Named GreenLite, it is Singapore’s first truly green bus as it has zero carbon emission, is light on noise and is designed to run on a small fuel cell power capacity of just 40kW.

To commemorate NTU’s honour in being the first Youth Olympic Village, a sculpture was created by local artist Yeo Chee Kiong and it stands tall in front of the Tan Chin Tuan Lecture Theatre at the main academic complex. The sculpture suggests through the metamorphosis of the butterfly the transformative experience the youths will have at the games village.

Franklin Roosevelt once said: “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” It is now time for our graduates to spread their wings and soar.

Congratulations, Class of 2010!

Dr Vivien Chiong
Editor-in-Chief
On behalf of the editorial team
IT’S THE CLASS OF 2010’S turn to sport the cap and gown at the annual Convocation. At 17 ceremonies held at the Nanyang Auditorium from 26 to 31 July, we celebrate the achievements of more than 8,500 graduating students.

His Excellency Mr S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore and Chancellor of NTU, presides over the first ceremony on Monday, 26 July. This year, two distinguished individuals will receive honorary degrees from the university. Prof Perry McCarty, Silas H Palmer Professor Emeritus at Stanford University, will be bestowed the Doctor of Engineering (honoris causa), while Prof Rudolph Marcus, Nobel Chemistry Laureate (1992) and Noyes Professor of Chemistry at the California Institute of Technology, will receive the Doctor of Science (honoris causa). Both luminaries have achieved pre-eminence in their fields and have made significant contributions to society.

Among the pioneers of the Class of 2010 are the first cohort of graduates from six new programmes – the Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Economics; the Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences (NTU-Beijing University of Chinese Medicine Double Degree Programme); the Double Degree in Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science); the Master of Education (English Literature); the Master of Arts (Counselling & Guidance); and the Master of Science (Systems & Project Management). This year also marks the graduation of the first cohort of students from the CN Yang Scholars Programme, NTU’s premier programme for science and engineering students.

Outstanding graduating students are also awarded Gold medals and prizes each year, the most prestigious of these being the Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medal and the Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award. The latter honour has been named after Mr Koh Boon Hwee, Chairman of NTU’s Board of Trustees, in recognition of his unwavering support for education. This year, NTU will honour 28 Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medallists and 19 Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award recipients from among its pool of top students. NTU’s annual Convocation ceremony in China will be held in Guangzhou city on 19 September.

Read the rest of this issue to find out more about the Class of 2010.

BY THE NUMBERS

THE SINGAPORE 2010 Youth Olympic Village

1 eco-bus Plying the roads of the Village will be Singapore’s first eco-bus, GreenLite, the result of a joint research project between NTU and Tsinghua University. The one-of-a-kind vehicle uses a fuel cell and battery system that produces zero carbon emissions.

3 Mayors Making sure the Youth Olympic Village runs like clockwork will be newly appointed Village Mayor Mr Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary [Community Development, Youth & Sports and Transport]. He will be assisted by his two Deputy Village Mayors – sports legend Asst Prof C Kunalan of NTU’s National Institute of Education and decorated swimmer and Nominated Member of Parliament Ms Joscelin Yeo.

10 halls of residence Athletes and guests will be housed in 10 newly refurbished halls of residence.

2,000 volunteers The number of registered student volunteers from NTU who will be working to make the Games as memorable as possible.

21,000 meals Athletes will also learn more about Singapore’s reputation as a food paradise, with 300 chefs ready to prepare 21,000 mouth-watering meals each day!
IN DISTINGUISHED company

NTU PROVOST PROF BERTIL ANDERSSON joins the ranks of 15 Nobel laureates and other visionaries who have received the prestigious Wilhelm Exner Medal for their significant achievements in research.

A pioneering biochemist in research related to artificial leaves, Prof Andersson will receive this latest honour in Vienna, Austria, in November. His fellow Wilhelm Exner medallist is Prof Ada Yonath of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, the 2009 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry.

The Wilhelm Exner Medal has been awarded since 1921 to innovators whose work has opened new possibilities in industrial applications. Past winners of the award include the leading lights in science, engineering and innovation, including Dr Ferdinand Porsche, the creator of the hybrid gasoline-electric vehicle.

“I am deeply honoured and yet humbled to be in the prestigious company of the most outstanding scientists and inventors in the last nine decades who have shaped the world we live in today,” said Prof Andersson of the award.

Appointed Provost in April 2007, Prof Andersson has played a leading role in charting NTU’s growth, boosting its educational and research capacities and reinforcing its profile internationally. He has been closely associated with the Nobel Foundation for the last 20 years, and is currently serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Nobel Foundation.

Before he joined NTU, Prof Andersson served from 2004 till 2007 as the Chief Executive of the European Science Foundation and Vice President of the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) of the European Commission. He was the Rector (President) of Linköping University, Sweden, from 1999 to 2003.

DOUBLE honours

TWO PIONEERING PRACTITIONERS in Interactive Digital Media at NTU have been honoured with the prestigious Eurographics Distinguished Career Award 2010. In May, Prof Nadia Magnenat-Thalmann, Director of NTU’s Institute for Media Innovation, and Prof Daniel Thalmann, Visiting Professor at the School of Computer Engineering, received their awards at the opening session of the 31st Annual Conference of the European Association for Computer Graphics, held in Norrköping, Sweden.

The Distinguished Career Award is presented biennially to leading researchers who have significantly advanced the field of computer graphics. Prof Nadia Magnenat-Thalmann was recognised for her interdisciplinary research in the fields of computer graphics, computer animation and virtual worlds, as well as for having established MIRALab at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, one of Europe’s leading research centres in Interactive Digital Media. This year, she was also conferred an honorary doctorate from the University of Ottawa, Canada, in recognition of her achievements in computer graphics and computer animation.

Prof Daniel Thalmann received the award for his pioneering research on virtual humans and his leadership in establishing the Virtual Reality Lab at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland.

CAMPUS BEAT

GREEN transport

ATHLETES AND OFFICIALS staying at the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Village at NTU can see the sights on campus onboard GreenLite, Singapore’s first truly eco-friendly bus. A hydro-electric vehicle, it is the product of joint research between NTU and China’s Tsinghua University.

The project was completed within seven months by a team of researchers from both institutions. “This project is an excellent symbol of the friendship between NTU and Tsinghua University, and our respect and care for the environment,” said NTU President Dr Su Guaning at a completion ceremony for the project in Beijing.

“There is an urgent need globally to find new solutions in sustainability and energy research, and as responsible global citizens, we all have a part to play. By combining our strengths, we can make greater progress and headway, as evidenced by the speed at which this joint project was accomplished.”
GLOBAL calling

THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE of Technological Universities has taken its next step forward with a series of new initiatives. Guiding the coalition in its critical early years will once again be NTU President Dr Su Guaning, the Alliance’s founding Chairman, who was elected to a second term from 2011 to 2013.

Launched in April 2009, the Alliance comprises seven of the world’s top science and technology institutions – the California Institute of Technology, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich, the Georgia Institute of Technology, Imperial College London, the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, NTU and Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Besides attending the second GlobalTech Alliance Board Meeting held at Shanghai Jiao Tong University in May, senior representatives and faculty members participated in the first Workshop on Sustainable Urban Solutions, a reminder of the Alliance’s commitment to tackling global challenges in the areas of sustainability and global environmental change; the security of energy, water and food supplies; and issues related to population growth.

“The Global Alliance of Technological Universities adopts an interdisciplinary and cross-boundary approach to problem-solving,” said Dr Su. “This greatly encourages research collaboration and exchange.”

The Alliance Board has drawn up an action plan that includes enhanced multilateral student exchanges among the member universities, as well as workshops within the next 18 months on sustainable energy, global health and enhancing cooperative efforts in Africa.

ON the go

GERMANY’S LEADING engineering university, Technical University of Munich (TUM), will be complementing NTU’s strengths in “green” vehicle technologies at its latest initiative in Singapore, the TUM-Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE).

CREATE is a programme by Singapore’s National Research Foundation that attracts elite international universities to set up world-class research centres here by collaborating with Singapore-based universities and organisations. This latest partnership between NTU and TUM will involve research that leads to a new paradigm in urban e-mobility for tropical megacities, one that fuses functionality, safety and energy efficiency.

OVERSEAS Chinese meet

IN MAY, NTU co-hosted Singapore’s largest international conference on the Chinese diaspora, with 300 scholars and experts from more than 31 countries and territories gathering to discuss issues related to the field. The occasion was the 7th conference of the International Society for the Studies of Chinese Overseas, jointly hosted by NTU’s School of Humanities & Social Sciences and the Chinese Heritage Centre. “This conference marks an important milestone as we increase our engagement and exposure to international developments in the field through collaborations with our regional and international partners,” said NTU President Dr Su Guaning, who chairs the Chinese Heritage Centre Council.

GRAPHIC future

THE INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA scene at NTU continues to take surprising new forms, with increasing global attention focused on its initiatives. One indicator of this was the recently completed Computer Graphics International 2010 conference. Held from 8 to 11 June and organised by NTU’s Institute for Media Innovation and the Computer Graphics Society, the event is one of the oldest and most highly acclaimed international computer graphics conferences in the world. This year’s edition marks the second time the event has been held in Singapore. NTU welcomed 250 participants to the Yunnan Garden campus, bringing together distinguished speakers such as Prof Qunsheng Peng of Zhejiang University and Prof Franz-Erich Wolter of Leibniz University Hannover.
THE WORLD CUP of communications

THE WEE KIM WEE SCHOOL of Communication & Information is the first in Southeast Asia and only the second in Asia to host the leading lights in communications at the annual conference of the International Communication Association. This year’s event was held from 22 to 26 June, and featured some of the best papers in the field from top scholars around the world.

“The International Communication Association holds its annual conference outside America once every four years. It is an honour for NTU to host this in Singapore. This is like Singapore hosting the World Cup, an opportunity that comes once in a lifetime,” said Prof Ang Peng Hwa, the Chairman of the conference organising committee and former Chair of the Wee Kim Wee School. “This event further cements the reputation of the Wee Kim Wee School as the premier communication school in Asia.”

At the conference, Prof Eddie Kuo, one of the first local academics to indigenise communication studies in Asia, chaired a forum, “Whither Asian Communication Research?”. The forum was sponsored by the Asian Journal of Communication, which Prof Kuo co-founded in 1990. As the founding Dean of the Wee Kim Wee School, Prof Kuo has played a seminal role in the growth of the communications field in Singapore and Asia. He was honoured at the conference for his achievements in establishing the journal and shaping communications education and research.

See also “In conversation” on pages 28–29.

IRELAND to Asia

IN JUNE, NTU’s Nanyang Business School and Ireland’s top research university, University College Cork, established the Farmleigh Fellowship Programme to give outstanding Irish graduates the chance to better understand the dynamic Asian region through NTU. By allowing participants to study at the university and work in Asia over a 12-month period, the programme will foster greater management skills amongst Ireland’s future business leaders. “Students undergoing this programme will benefit immensely from our faculty who have extensive teaching, consulting and management experience in Asia,” said Prof Gillian Yeo, Interim Dean of the Nanyang Business School. “Being strategically located in the heart of the Asia-Pacific, which is thriving with opportunities, we are also well-placed to give students in-depth understanding about the fast-growing markets in the region.”

LEARNING better

ON 21 JUNE, about 100 education policy makers and school administrators from 20 Asia-Pacific countries arrived in Singapore to attend the East Asia Conference on “Benchmarking Education Systems for Results”. The conference was co-organised by NTU and a host of international partners that included the World Bank and government ministries from Australia, South Korea, Russia, Thailand and the United Kingdom, among others.

East Asia has some of the best performers in education, such as Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. These are also, not coincidentally, among the region’s top economies. The conference allowed policymakers to learn more about how education systems can impact national economic performance. “There still exists a gap of knowledge regarding what types of education systems are best geared to achieve a nation’s aims, and more specifically, which features differentiate well-performing systems from the under-performing ones,” explained Prof Euston Quah, Acting Chair of NTU’s School of Humanities & Social Sciences, at the launch of the conference.

“In holding this conference, we at NTU hope to contribute to the promotion of education assessment, evaluation and research, and also to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas.”

TWO IN one

NTU’S JOINT DOCTORAL PROGRAMME with Israel’s leading university, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, will offer students from both universities the chance to do high-end research in two dynamic regions. Designed for the brightest, the NTU–Technion Joint PhD programme was one of two new joint initiatives unveiled by NTU and Technion on 21 June. The other initiative provides grants to cover the living expenses of each joint PhD student at the host institution, as well as stipends for two visiting post-doctoral fellows from each university.

The joint PhD programme will initially cover Materials Science and Bioengineering, and will lead to a doctorate jointly issued by NTU and Technion. “Technion is delighted to launch the joint PhD programme with NTU, one of the leading technological universities in the world,” said Technion President Prof Peretz Lavie (left, with NTU President Dr Su Guang). “Combining the knowledge and talents of our institutes will ensure the high quality and excellence of the scientific and technological leaders in Singapore and Israel.”

NTU has joint PhD programmes with other leading universities around the world including Imperial College London, the Technical University of Munich and Karolinska Institutet.
RESEARCH

CLEAN edge

IN JUNE, the Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N) marked its launch by signing partnership agreements with six top European universities. ERI@N seeks to advance research in the field of clean energy, and the six institutions that NTU will be working with are the University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, Technical University of Munich, the Norwegian University of Science & Technology, the Austrian Institute of Technology and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne.

ERI@N has received funding support of S$200m from organisations such as Singapore’s Economic Development Board, the National Research Foundation, the Agency for Science, Technology & Research, and the Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore. With over 60 researchers engaged in a range of investigations in sustainable energy, the centre also works closely with key industry players including Robert Bosch, Vestas, Rolls-Royce and Det Norske Veritas.

The new centre marks the culmination of two years of concerted action by senior university leaders. ERI@N’s seven-member international Advisory Board is chaired by renowned photochemist Prof Michael Grätzel (third from left) of École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland. The 2010 recipient of the Millennium Technology Prize, Prof Grätzel is recognised for his work on third-generation dye-sensitised solar cells.

NTU Provost Prof Bertil Andersson (fourth from left) was instrumental in setting up ERI@N and engaging Prof Grätzel to lead its Advisory Board. “ERI@N serves as the pan-university strategic platform that brings together all of NTU’s energy research activities into a coherent whole,” said Prof Andersson at the launch of the centre on 15 June.

“Besides looking into technological solutions, ERI@N also studies environmental impacts as well as business and economic models, legislation and societal acceptance for its projects,” he explained. “It is truly a multidisciplinary centre that links all the colleges within NTU in energy research.”

NEW MEDIA frontiers

FRAUNHOFER IDM CENTRE @ NTU (Fraunhofer@NTU) looks set to break new ground in research and development using visualisation tools. NTU’s capabilities in Interactive Digital Media (IDM) will soon be boosted with the setting up of the centre, a partnership between NTU and Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Europe’s largest institution for applied research. It will focus on promoting applied research as well as commercialising innovations in New Media.

Backed by Singapore’s National Research Foundation, the centre will receive S$14m from the Media Development Authority, NTU and Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. The agreement to set up Fraunhofer@NTU was signed on 31 May at the residence of His Excellency Mr Jörg Ranau, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Singapore (standing, far right). German Federal Minister of Education and Research Prof Annette Schavan (standing, extreme left) and Singapore’s Minister for Education Dr Ng Eng Hen (standing, centre) witnessed the signing. “The Fraunhofer IDM Centre @ NTU is expected to attract the best of IDM R&D from Europe,” said Mr Michael Yap, Executive Director of Singapore’s IDM R&D Programme Office (seated, second from right). “It will also help to enhance the international network of world-class research capacity in Singapore.”
The newly inaugurated Advanced Environmental Biotechnology Centre marks another step forward for sustainability research at NTU. Launched on 10 May, the new centre will study micro-organisms for water and environmental technologies. A unique bi-national effort between NTU and the University of New South Wales, it will draw on NTU’s established strengths in water-related research to deliver new solutions in the field. The Advanced Environmental Biotechnology Centre will be led by Prof Ng Wun Jern, Executive Director of NTU’s Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute, and Prof Peter Steinberg of the University of New South Wales. Supported by Singapore’s Economic Development Board and the Environment & Water Industry Programme Office, the S$21m centre will further strengthen Singapore’s position as a global hub of water technologies.

In May, the university and IBM forged a partnership to develop a platform for the convergence of cloud computing and high-performance computing. The collaboration aims to create market-ready solutions for industries and consumers, bringing the benefits of high-performance computing to more users. NTU’s High Performance Computing Centre, home to one of the fastest and greenest supercomputers in the region, will work with IBM to combine the strengths of cloud computing and high-performance computing to reinforce Singapore’s position as a global R&D hub for innovative technologies. Faculty members will benefit from the tie-up through projects in the fields of engineering, mathematical sciences, finance, medicine and pharmaceuticals.

The World’s largest integrated palm oil group, Wilmar International Limited, has made a gift of S$1m to NTU to support scholarships for the Master of Science in Managerial Economics and Master of Public Administration programmes. The generous gift will enable NTU to award 10 Wilmar International China Leadership Scholarships in each academic year, for five years. Dubbed the “Mayors’ Class”, the prestigious Master of Science in Managerial Economics and Master of Public Administration programmes are China-focused initiatives aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of public administrators. The breadth of the “Mayors’ Class” alumni has contributed to the network of NTU ambassadors in China and strengthened ties between Singapore and China by opening up more avenues for high-level bilateral exchanges.

In seeking new answers in sustainability, Dr Mark Wrighton, Chancellor of Washington University in St Louis, is hopeful for global change. This was the message he sent during a public lecture in May at NTU. Organised by the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI), Dr Wrighton’s lecture is but one of many expressions of interest at NTU about our role as global citizens, in the quest for sustainable energy alternatives.

An award-winning researcher who has led groundbreaking projects in photochemistry, surface chemistry, catalysis and electrochemistry, Dr Wrighton is acutely familiar with matters of sustainability. After beginning his career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in 1995, he was appointed the 14th Chancellor of Washington University in St Louis, and has been instrumental in leading the university to new heights. At NTU, Dr Wrighton began his lecture by introducing a study conducted by the National Academies’ Committee on America’s Energy Future, which he led as Vice Chair. Initiated in 2007, the four-year study was done by 25 leading voices in American science, technology and economics, many of whom have gone on to play key roles in the Obama administration.

Among the promising technologies identified by the study committee are wind energy and solar photovoltaics, both of which are the subject of active investigations at the S$200m Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N), which in June signed partnership agreements with six top European universities to conduct joint research in clean energy.

In a question-and-answer session chaired by NTU President Dr Su Guaning, Dr Wrighton drove home the point that urgent collaborative action is needed. “What we’re trying to take on is the challenge of the century,” he said. “We need international collaboration that will bring us all together to find an answer.”

Our Energy future

Fuellling the dragon

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Class of 2010

Pioneers of the graduating class talk about the highs of learning at NTU and look forward to new challenges.

BY SHEERE NG
Few graduates embody NTU’s “East meets West” paradigm as completely as Fung Foon Yin, 23. While many students might talk about jamming, sports or even mugging for exams when asked about their memories of university life, she remembers poking her coursemates with acupuncture needles and plying them with herbal decoctions.

Foon Yin is from the inaugural cohort of the five-year NTU-Beijing University of Chinese Medicine Double Degree Programme, the first of its kind in Singapore, and earned herself a place on the Dean’s List from 2005 to 2008. One highlight for her was the two years she spent at the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, where she witnessed first-hand how traditional Chinese medicine can complement western clinical approaches.

“We were fortunate to be taught by a dedicated group of doctors who generously shared with us their knowledge,” Foon Yin recalls. “In our final-year clinical rotations at various hospital departments, we got to interact with patients directly and it was inspiring to see how Western and Chinese medicines complement each other.”

Fired up by her experiences, Foon Yin applied an “East meets West” approach to her Final-Year Project, which studies how popular Chinese remedies can affect the interactions between selected intestinal bacteria species. “I was curious to find out how scientific methods can be applied in the understanding of traditional Chinese medicine,” she says. “The results showed that Chinese remedies can indeed alter the interspecies interactions, in addition to having a substantial antibacterial effect.”

Foon Yin was also selected to participate in URECA (NTU’s premier research programme for top students), and despite the many challenges, did a graceful balancing act between her studies and research investigations. “I just kept telling myself that I could manage my coursework with my time in the lab, and that it would all be worth it,” she recalls. “I have no regrets about joining URECA because it was so enriching.”

Next up for this pioneer is another foray into research and clinical work; Foon Yin is currently considering pursuing either a Doctor of Medicine programme or a Master’s programme in traditional Chinese medicine. “I am proud to be part of the inaugural cohort of this unique programme, and to have had this experience!” she says.
Yammie Chin’s days at NTU have been defined by a passion to serve others. Besides her academic pursuits, she made it a point to volunteer at the Singapore Boys’ Home as a member of NTU’s Welfare Services Club, where she was in charge of an entire block of youths. The 24-year-old was also a student ambassador of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences.

A conscientious student, Yammie was eager to take part in NTU’s Global Immersion Programme, thoroughly researching her international learning options before deciding on the University of Washington in Seattle. She took her education into her own hands by enrolling herself at the university’s Early Childhood Cognition Lab as a research assistant.

Indeed, Yammie loves research so much she considers NTU’s Psychology Lab her favourite chill-out spot on campus. “I spent a significant portion of my undergraduate days in the lab working on URECA and my Final-Year Project, and as a research assistant,” she says, “It felt like a second home to me.”

Yammie’s dedication has garnered her the Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award, presented to graduates with an outstanding academic and community service record. Not only was her URECA project published in the Journal of Research in Personality, her Final-Year Project will also be presented in August at the Multidisciplinary Decision Science Symposium, organised by NTU’s Centre for Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, together with the Division of Economics and Division of Psychology.

Currently a research assistant at the Clinical & Forensic Psychology Branch of Singapore’s Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports, Yammie will be pursuing a Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology within the next few years. After that, she hopes to become a clinical psychologist and champion the awareness of mental health and self-care issues.

For Yammie, the learning journey is both unending and full of surprises. “One of our professors, Assoc Prof Ho Moon-Ho, once told us that getting a ‘B’ doesn’t make us a bad person,” she recalls, “That reminded me to focus on the process of learning rather than the outcome.”

Yammie Chin

- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, School of Humanities & Social Sciences
- Among the inaugural cohort of Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award recipients
- NTU President Research Scholar, URECA (Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus)
- Yammie’s Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award honorees: “Asst Prof Joyce Pang was my URECA supervisor; she is a very cheerful and inspiring role model who has played a vital role in grooming my interest in research. Mr Ken Kwan was my statistics lecturer and tutor at Singapore Polytechnic; he taught me that logic and creativity are not at opposing ends, but rather, can produce splendid results when combined.”
- Graduation wishes: “Stay true to what you believe in, and always be hopeful about the future!”
The company of Nobel laureates, fantastic research opportunities and enduring friendships with likeminded peers from around the world — for Azar Eyvazov, 22, these have been just some of the rewards of studying at NTU.

When Azar first came to the university in July 2006 to take part in the 37th International Physics Olympiad (hosted in Singapore for the first time), little did he know that he would soon be embarking on the learning adventure of his life. After a taste of the academic challenges that awaited him here, Azar made the decision to leave his native Azerbaijan for Singapore — and by his own account, this was the perfect choice for him.

As one of the first graduates of the premier CN Yang Scholars Programme, Azar has had a fantastic foundational experience in science and mathematics. Among the highlights for him was the opportunity to meet numerous leading scientists, travel to Tsukuba, Japan, for a research collaboration and join a research group in only the second year of his Physics degree programme.

“Another factor that inspired me was the bond I shared with my coursemates and friends,” he recalls. “At NTU, all my fellow CN Yang Scholars are passionate about their learning. This made me try even harder.”

Azar’s greatest sense of academic achievement came from receiving a First Class Honours and finishing his degree programme a semester early. An equally important measure of accomplishment came from engaging more deeply with his fellow Scholars. “Being far from home has allowed me to become more independent,” he says. “The diverse learning environment at NTU also broadened my horizons and helped to reshape my opinions on many issues.”

No self-absorbed youth, Azar enjoys giving tuition to younger students and helping them to appreciate the world of science. His next goal is to embark on his PhD studies in physics. “I want to give something back, to make a contribution somehow,” he says. “That is my motivation for becoming a physicist.” – CCO
For Dai Chenyuan, one plus one is equal to more than the sum of its parts. The Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medallist is a pioneering graduate of the Mathematics and Economics programme, and is grateful for its unique dual focus. “Mathematics trains our logic while economics gives us the ability to view the world from both micro and macro perspectives,” she explains.

The 22-year-old economist has excelled by embracing the learning opportunities afforded by NTU. Not only did Chenyuan make the Dean’s List for all four years of her studies, she was also chosen for the URECA programme and got the chance attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Association conference in Beijing, China, in 2008.

Chenyuan also made it a point to venture into new disciplines. In 2009, she and her friends took part in the L’Oreal Brandstorm competition. Despite being relative novices at the art of marketing, the team advanced all the way to the semi-finals with a winning formula of resilience and innovation.

These traits will serve Chenyuan well in September when she embarks on a Master’s degree in Finance and Economics at the London School of Economics. And she will bring with her a newfound sense of purpose. “There are opportunity costs associated with any decision,” she explains. “To study further means that I won’t have a certain amount of working experience. But I’m willing to take on this challenge to learn even more!”

The economist with the winning formula
Despite multiple roles as the Head of the English and English Literature Department at Whitley Secondary School, in addition to being a first-time mother, Jocelyn Chen was eager to hit the books again for her Master in Education (English Literature). And the many late nights and lost weekends were more than made up for by the exhilaration of learning new ideas and concepts.

“I can still remember driving home after the first lesson of our Master’s programme,” recalls Jocelyn. “The word that comes closest to describing how I felt is ‘jouissance’ – I couldn’t wait for my next lesson!”

After eight years as an educator, Jocelyn had felt the need to sharpen her teaching skills, in order to give her students the best. “I wanted to become a more effective teacher, and to be able to bring fresh ideas to my classes,” she recalls. “Just as importantly, I also wanted to be a role model for continual learning.”

Besides experiencing a renewed sense of intellectual engagement, another highlight for Jocelyn was the chance to meet fellow educators with diverse teaching experiences. “Not only were we able to learn from our professors, we also got to understand the realities that exist at different levels of Singapore’s education system,” she explains. “This helped us to gain a broader overview of the educational landscape.”

Having returned to her teaching duties, Jocelyn is already bringing a strengthened commitment to grooming her young charges. “From the word ‘go,’ it has all been a thrilling roller-coaster ride,” she says. “Was there stress involved? Definitely. Would I do it all again? Without a doubt!”
Dobson Han, 25, has always dreamed of designing games that can capture the imagination. Keen to realise this goal, as well as to enhance his entrepreneurial skills, he found the perfect fit in NTU’s Business and Computing double degree programme.

It’s a one-two combo that has allowed him to maximise his talents. Not only did Dobson regularly make the Dean’s List for both Business and Computer Science, he is also a Nanyang Scholar, a Koh Boon Hwee Scholar and a Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medallist – a singular array of honours.

“NTU has helped me to prepare for a professional career in many different ways,” explains Dobson. “One example of this was through modules such as Industry Seminars, which invites leading speakers from key industries to share how technology can be used to enhance a company’s performance and competitiveness.”

Professional goals aside, Dobson has also made the most of his time outside the programming lab. In 2008, he formed a team with three friends to enter the Microsoft Mash-It-Up Competition. They emerged second for coming up with an innovative new application for Microsoft’s online tool, Popfly. A passionate floorball competitor, Dobson has also just earned his open water diver’s certification.

Currently a game programmer at Tecmo Koei Singapore, the self-professed “entrepreneurial engineer” is applying his creative energies to the realm of multi-player online role-playing games. Asked how he manages all his many new responsibilities, Dobson says it is a matter of keeping his eyes on the prize – a talent he perfected at NTU. “Instead of planning ahead for just a week at a time, for example, I try to work out my mid-term and long-term goals,” he explains. “This helps me to prioritise all that I have to do.”

**Dobson Han**

- In the inaugural double degree cohort: Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science) programmes, Nanyang Business School and School of Computer Engineering
- Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medal and Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award recipient
- Dobson’s Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Awards honorees: “Assoc Prof Sia Siew Kien was one of the faculty members who pioneered this double degree programme. He has always been very helpful in answering our questions as well as providing guidance. He also invited industry professionals to come and speak with us, so that we had a better understanding of the career paths available to us. Mdm Lee Lay Koon was my physics tutor at Hwa Chong Junior College. She not only strives to instil interest in physics among her students, but also inspires us to perform to the best of our abilities.”
- Graduation wishes: “I’d like to wish my friends and fellow graduates all the best in their endeavours. This is just the start of a new and exciting phase of our lives!”
New **nexus**

*Fresh ways to learn, on the campus of tomorrow.*

For a generation at ease with new media, the need to share ideas and opinions often seems as natural as breathing, with conversations enabled by technology. That’s one of the goals of NTU’s Cool Campus initiative – to give students tools that can further enhance their learning at the university, and to engender fresh dialogues and perspectives.

First put forward by Mr Koh Boon Hwee, Chairman of NTU’s Board of Trustees, Cool Campus seeks to deliver a technologically enabled environment for students to better work, live and play. It now encompasses four main projects (broadly entitled Learning Spaces, Services on the Go, Social Media and Helping the Lost Sheep). Here’s a primer on the Cool Campus.

**Knowledge central:** A thriving interdisciplinary research scene ensures surprising finds across campus – such as this showcase of media projects by NTU’s Interaction & Entertainment Research Centre.
Learning spaces: Opened in March, the Lee Wee Nam Library Learning Commons adds a new twist to how libraries can facilitate education. With devices and configurable spaces that encourage group activities and discussions, it gives students more ways to come together and learn.

Studio sessions: At NTU’s School of Art, Design & Media, traditional tools of the artist and craftsman coexist easily with the latest technologies. Interdisciplinary projects abound; the School’s sophisticated motion capture system allows students to realise their ideas in film-making and gaming, and has also been employed by engineering students for modelling projects and by DSO National Laboratories for flight simulation research.
Pod talk: Some students learn best in the quiet of their room; others like to be surrounded by their friends, the wisecracks flowing thick and fast. One of the best things about Cool Campus is that it gives students the choice to discover which works best for them. Opened in April, the Learning Pod @ South Spine features configurable learning spaces that are perfect for discussions with coursemates.

World-beaters: Opened in 2009, NTU’s School of Physical & Mathematical Sciences building is modelled after the world’s best academic facilities, with students having unparalleled access to research resources. This gives them the winning edge when it comes to hands-on learning.
Bring the buzz: A university without expressions of creativity would be dull indeed. Another hotspot on campus that employs technology in learning is the Art Gallery of the National Institute of Education. Not only does it support the research and practice aspects of the Visual & Performing Arts Academic Group, it also features interdisciplinary exhibitions by students and international artists.

Get connected: Members of the NTU community who spend much of their time online will experience a new level of ease through Cool Campus. Since March, for example, all halls of residence enjoy blanket wireless network coverage, with free connections at common areas. A host of popular eServices has also been launched under the myNTU mobile platform, allowing users to organise their campus activities, discover customised services, share content and find their way around the university. Stay tuned for more to come!
The Nanyang spirit

Outstanding members of the Class of 2010 – national athletes, globe-trotters and pace-setters – with the “can-do” spirit.

BY QUAH CHIN CHIN

Exceeding their limits

Balancing academics with athletics has been a hallmark of both Tay Yu Ling’s and Amanda Choo’s undergraduate years. The two national sportswomen have gone through university life with strict discipline and zeal. They share their memories of NTU and their plans for the future.

As Tay Yu Ling bids farewell to NTU, she does so with many accolades to her name. The graduate from the School of Biological Sciences isn’t only a budding researcher, but also a national fencer with a string of honours. Yu Ling, 23, believes that her years at the university have helped her to better appreciate the complexities of research. “The programme exposed me to the world of research, scientific enquiry and current directions in the biomedical industry, giving me a more balanced perspective on life as I step out of NTU,” she says.

Still, it wasn’t always a smooth ride. First introduced to fencing in her early teens, Yu Ling recalls having to juggle her studies with rigorous training sessions and competitions. Fencing inevitably brought her away from lectures and tutorials, and she remembers having to catch up on her studies on planes and at airport lounges and hotel rooms. “I remember already applying for leave on my second day of classes!” she says.

Yu Ling’s punishing training schedule also left her with little time for herself, even on weekends. Thankfully, the support

Convo index

An excellent year
Not only will 2010 always hold a special place in the hearts of the graduating class, it also represents a milestone in the life of the university – it’s the 55th anniversary of our founding!

Colours of achievement
You can expect to see over 20 different shades of graduation hoods during the Convocation ceremonies – a testament to the richness and diversity of programmes offered by NTU.
of her family, professors and coursemates carried her through. She is especially grateful to her Final-Year Project supervisor, Asst Prof Sze Chun Chau, who she says guided her investigations with a watchful eye. “Under her tutelage, I got a glimpse of the thought process and complications in research,” says Yu Ling, a Nanyang Scholar.

The indomitable lass, who, together with the national women’s fencing team, has won a number of Gold medals at the Southeast Asian Games and other regional tournaments, is now setting her sights on the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, in November. Not only that, she will soon be starting her graduate classes in medical school. If all goes according to plan, Yu Ling will become a doctor in four years’ time.

“The whole experience of being a student-athlete – to compete overseas while taking ownership of my own learning – remains the highlight of my time at NTU,” she says. “I realised that if you open your mind, there are so many things you can learn.”

Record-breaker
Like Yu Ling, Amanda Choo has excelled in academics and sports. The 22-year-old graduate of NTU’s National Institute of Education has represented Singapore as a sprinter in regional and international competitions. Currently a teacher at St Anthony’s Canossian Secondary School, Amanda chose her Bachelor of Science (Education) programme in order to combine her love for sports and education – the latter a passion she discovered after having done a semester of relief teaching. “I really enjoy working with students and helping them to realise their talents,” she says.

The programme has also given her a better understanding of her own sporting regimen. “I try to incorporate what I learnt during my physiology and biomechanics lessons into my training,” she explains. “The course has helped me to relate better to certain aspects of my regimen.”

Amanda also received great encouragement from her professors and coursemates, and she attributes much of her sporting success to them – during her undergraduate years, Amanda broke three national records, including a 100m national record in April.

For now, Amanda is focused on qualifying for the Asian Games, as well as enjoying her time with her young charges. A longer-term goal is to specialise in fitness coaching – and possibly even venturing into new athletic challenges. “Maybe when I retire from the track, I’ll take up another sport to put my sprinting to good use!” she enthuses.
At home in the world

Three graduates with a passion for Asian culture, bridging the university with the world.

Even as a child, Joeri Vos loved watching Hong Kong dramas, and was fascinated with Asian culture. That became a consuming passion when he first visited China in 2004. So mesmerised was the Dutchman that, upon graduating with a degree in Information and Communication Technology, Joeri decided to take up a degree in Chinese, in Beijing.

This love affair continued when Joeri embarked on a Master of Science (Asian Studies) at NTU’s S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). “I couldn’t shake the desire of wanting to know more about Asia and how China, in particular, fits into the region,” says Joeri, 26. “The decision to come to Singapore was a ‘no-brainer’. I loved living in Beijing, but to truly understand Asia, it is better to study in Singapore, which is a melting pot of many different Asian cultures.”

The diverse nationalities and backgrounds of his coursemates deeply enhanced Joeri’s learning experience. “RSIS has students from all over the world, and simply by talking with your classmates, you’re able to get many different viewpoints on vital issues,” he says. “That helped to broaden my horizons and gave me a better understanding of how events can be interpreted in different parts of the world.”

Joeri’s research interest lies in the relationship between North Korea and China, a subject he finds particularly fascinating. He hopes to work as a political analyst and is currently thinking of pursuing a PhD, again with an Asian focus. “My time at NTU has been very enriching,” he says. “I’ve learnt to take a more theoretical approach to analysing current issues, and to better appreciate different perspectives from around the world.”

Passion for ASEAN

Bubbly, eloquent and whip-smart, Aisha Farhana Bte Najumudeen is the teacher you always wished you had. Talk to her and it quickly becomes obvious that the 24-year-old has a keen interest in current affairs — she peppers the conversation with references to the latest happenings in Asia and beyond.

Indeed, Aisha is one of the founders of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Club at NTU’s National Institute of Education. “I was reading and watching a lot about ASEAN’s 40th anniversary and realised that there was a dearth of understanding among students about our regional neighbours,” she recalls. “The truth is that there are so many compelling aspects to ASEAN – sociocultural, political, educational — that we can enjoy and ultimately bring into the classroom to share with our own students.”

Formed in 2008, the award-winning club acts as a base to connect the region’s youths via exchange programmes, camps and educational forums. Aisha pioneered several projects during her tenure as Chairperson, such as the ASEAN Youth Camp Mania, a 10-day event that brought together university students from around the region. She also participated in a cross-cultural learning programme in the Philippines, where she and other club members organised workshops with students from the University of St La Salle in Bacolod City.

Always on the go, Aisha will take to the podium this month as the Valedictorian for the graduating class from the Bachelor of Science (Education) programme. True to her love for new experiences, Aisha is also planning to pursue a Master’s degree in English Literature. In the meantime, she is hard at work with her classes at Sembawang Secondary School. “My goal is to instil in my students the spirit of academic excellence,” she says. “I hope to get them to demonstrate this to themselves!”

Keeping the flame

Lee Chong Leong loves — and lives — the Nanyang spirit. In fact, it was one of the factors that led him to choose NTU four years ago. “I wanted to experience the Nanyang spirit for myself,” says Chong Leong, 24.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chinese from the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Chong Leong is also the Valedictorian for his cohort. It’s an honour that he dedicates to his coursemates. “Those of us who are graduating from the Division of Chinese are a close-knit family,” he says. “I think we carry with us a degree of cultural identity and responsibility that spurs us to contribute towards the broader community.”

Currently a Senior Officer with Singapore’s Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, Chong Leong has excelled in his linguistic pursuits. Not only did he take part in URECA (Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus), his Final-Year Project on Chinese grammar will be presented in September at the 7th International Symposium on Ancient Chinese Grammar in Roscoff, France.

“NTU nurtures students who can think and act independently,” he says. “Compared to before I came here, now I want to learn because of a genuine desire to understand things better, and to improve myself.”

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Symbol of promise

One of the most striking sights of the Convocation ceremonies is the University Mace. Carried by the Dean of Students, its glittering facets and surfaces symbolise the bright future of the graduating class.

Joining the family

Following the 2010 Convocation ceremonies, NTU’s alumni family will grow to over 143,000 members. We have a strong global presence too, with 24 international alumni chapters — and counting!
The decision to come to Singapore was a ‘no-brainer’ ... to truly understand Asia, it is better to study in Singapore, which is a melting pot of many different Asian cultures.

— Joeri Vos

Global aspirations: Off to a flying start at NTU’s Sports & Recreation Centre are (from left) Lee Chong Leong, Joeri Vos and Aisha Farhana Binte Najumudeen.
When it comes to hitting the books, Lim Cai Yun, an Accountancy graduate from the Nanyang Business School, is ahead of her cohort. Having completed her three-year programme in two-and-a-half years, in addition to taking part in business case competitions and investment-related activities, Cai Yun will be receiving the prestigious Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award. The 22-year-old participated in URECA (Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus) in her second year, during which she conducted a comparative study on e-commerce in the hospitality industries of China and India. Her supervisor was Assoc Prof Kanapaty Pelly Periasamy, Assistant Dean at the Nanyang Business School, and one of the two educators Cai Yun has chosen to honour as a Koh Boon Hwee Scholar.

“My initial apprehensions about research disappeared quickly under Assoc Prof Periasamy’s guidance and supervision,” says Cai Yun. “What I learnt from him wasn’t only about research, but encompassed many crucial skills that can’t be mastered within a classroom.”

A senior researcher and educator who has been with the Nanyang Business School for 12 years, Assoc Prof Periasamy was especially impressed by Cai Yun’s focus on delivering quality research. “She responded promptly to feedback and wouldn’t be satisfied with results that were merely ‘good enough,’” he recalls. Indeed, Assoc Prof Periasamy now cites Cai Yun’s research findings in his graduate classes.

He is also modest about his role as an educator. “There are many professors at NTU who have taught and interacted with Cai Yun during her learning journey,” he explains. “That I was selected amongst all these equally worthy educators is a great honour that I will cherish.” Having taken on an Associate position with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Cai Yun is now eager to make her mark in the world – and to carry on developing her talents. “The opportunities for learning are always there,” she says. “It’s only a matter of whether or not we have the determination to pursue them!”

And she will undoubtedly draw inspiration from these words by Assoc Prof Periasamy: “Your education hasn’t ended with your graduation from NTU. On the contrary, education is a lifelong journey that will have to run in parallel with others. Let passion and value, with high morals and ethics as beacons, be your guide as you progress in all your journeys.”
Proud to be a member of the Class of 2010? Send us a high-res photo along with a caption explaining why your photo embodies the Nanyang spirit. Three Convocation teddy bears will be given away to those who send in the most interesting, heartwarming or original entries. Selected photos will be published in the print or web edition of @NTU. The deadline for submissions is 31 August 2010. Don’t forget to leave your full name, course of study/school, and contact details when you write to us at nnews@ntu.edu.sg.

Win a Convo bear!
In conversation

Communications pioneer Prof Eddie Kuo speaks to Prof Hao Xiaoming about bridging Asia and the rest of the world.

As the founding Dean of NTU’s Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information, Prof Eddie Kuo has played a seminal role in communication research in Asia. A courtly presence who is as respected by his peers as he is popular with students, Prof Kuo co-founded the *Asian Journal of Communication* in 1990, moulding it into a publication that has given voice to the rising tide of communication research within the region.

After 20 years as the editor of the journal, Prof Kuo is stepping down. He spoke with Prof Hao Xiaoming, the Associate Chair (Academic) of the School and incoming editor of the journal; in keeping with the themes that have defined Prof Kuo’s career, the subject was, as always, the urge for new connections.

**Prof Hao:** How was the *Asian Journal of Communication* first started and what ambitions did you have for it at the time?

**Prof Kuo:** The journal was the brainchild of the late Anura Goonasekera, then the Head of Research at the Asian Media Research & Information Centre (AMIC), and mine. At the time, I was the Head of the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore, and our goal was to provide a platform for communication scholars to report their findings and forge links with their peers in Asia and internationally. From the start, we were keenly aware of our Asian heritage, and saw it as our duty to promote communication research from this part of the world.

In 1992, the journal became a joint publication of AMIC and the newly established School of Communication Studies at NTU, where I served as founding Dean until 2003. In that sense, you could say that the time was just right for the journal.
As the Asian Journal of Communication gains recognition as the leading publication in Asian communication, NTU is also being marked as a leading institution in communication education and research from this part of the world.

Prof Hao: What was the most challenging part of editing the journal in its early years?
Prof Kuo: In running any journal, there are a number of conditions you need to meet. One is financial, obviously. Until the Taylor & Francis Group took over the production of the journal in 2004, we relied on AMIC for support.

As co-editor, I also took care of the journal’s editorial content. The review process is obviously very important in ensuring the quality of our articles.

A third consideration is readership. For the first 10 years of the journal, we had a fairly limited readership as the balance of dialogue between the East and the West wasn’t like what it is now. From 2000 onward, however, interest in Asia grew, and the numbers of submissions and subscriptions have also been increasing year after year.

There’s no magic formula; building a credible journal takes time and hard work.

Prof Hao: You mentioned that the production of the journal was turned over to Taylor & Francis in 2004. This milestone was followed in 2008 by the inclusion of the journal in the Social Science Citation Index. Can you explain the impact of these two successes?
Prof Kuo: It was a logical progression for us to enter into a publishing agreement with the Taylor and Francis Group, which took over the tasks of production, marketing and distribution. We went from publishing two issues a year to three in 2005, and then to becoming a quarterly in 2006. The plan is to publish six issues per year from 2011.

Being accepted into the Social Science Citation Index has also affirmed the scholarly standing of the journal, placing it among the top journals in the field of communication research. There are only about 50 such journals listed on the index, and it is the only one that is based in Asia.

Prof Hao: How else has the journal contributed to the School, and more generally, to the university as a whole?
Prof Kuo: As the journal gains recognition as the leading publication in Asian communication, NTU is also being marked as a leading institution in communication education and research from this part of the world. Every time we communicate with our authors, reviewers and readers, we are spreading the good name of the School and NTU.

Prof Hao: What do you think have been the major changes to communication research in Asia over the last 20 years?
Prof Kuo: The defining characteristics of communication research in the region are still being debated. If you look at current studies, you’ll find that a great majority use research methods that were first developed in the West, such as in the United States. While that may still be necessary, we must try to go beyond that.

In my view, there hasn’t been enough attention paid to local cultural issues and situations. Is the communication situation in Singapore the same as one in any other major city, such as London, Paris or New York? Or do we also have to look at the distinct historical, cultural, political factors involved, in order to get a fuller picture?

Prof Hao: So we need to use the Asian context to test theories that have been developed and employed in the West, to see if they are universally applicable?
Prof Kuo: Yes, and this is a trend that I hope to see more of, if communication research in Asia is going to make a difference. However, this doesn’t mean that the theoretical frameworks we do develop are only applicable within the Asian context, but that whatever we find here will be able to be incorporated into the larger body of communication theory. I’d like to believe we are observing the coming of age of Asian communication research, which should begin to make significant contributions to the field of communication.

Prof Hao: You were also the founding Interim Dean of NTU’s School of Humanities & Social Sciences from 2003 to 2005. As a senior researcher, educator and administrator, which of your roles have you most enjoyed?
Prof Kuo: In addition to teaching and research, I’ve had the rare honour to be involved in the initial planning and development of two new schools at NTU. I’m grateful for the opportunity given to me. I’ve enjoyed all my roles, and am thankful to the colleagues I’ve worked with over the years. To win their trust and receive their support – that’s been very fulfilling for me.
Generous hearts

Having experienced the Nanyang spirit for themselves, three iGave Graduation Giving Ambassadors are eager to share it with the next generation of students.

BY QUAH CHIN CHIN

“...What the iGave campaign has instilled in me is a sense of belonging. That and the friends I have made here are the main things I will take with me when I graduate.

– Chong Hauo Wah

A living tradition: Embodying NTU’s spirit of service are (from left) Chong Hauo Wah, Shelly Chen and Go Ka Diam.
More than 65% of the graduating cohort had contributed to the Graduation Class Gift at press time. This surpasses the 55% target the Class of 2010 had set for itself, marking another new record for the university.

Chong Hauo Wah, 22, became an iGave Graduation Giving Ambassador in his third-year of studies at the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, when a senior invited him to attend a talk by NTU’s Development Office. Greatly inspired by what he heard, Hauo Wah decided to sign up for the iGave campaign.

iGave comprises the Graduation Giving, Alumni Giving, Faculty & Staff Giving, Parents Giving, and Corporate Partners programmes, through which various groups of the NTU community can give back to the university.

“I saw it as a great opportunity to express my gratitude towards NTU,” Hauo Wah recalls. “Just as importantly, I also wanted to promote the tradition of giving among the student community.”

During his years at NTU, Hauo Wah made it a point to take part in all the university has to offer. A member of several student organisations, he also participated in the Global Summer Studies exchange programme at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

In early July, Hauo Wah began working as a designer of integrated circuits. Yet he looks back on his years as an iGave Ambassador with fondness. “What the iGave campaign has instilled in me is a sense of belonging,” he says. “That and the friends I have made here are the main things I will take with me when I graduate.”

Shelly Chen, a 2010 graduate of the School of Chemical & Biomedical Engineering, admits to feeling curious when she first saw posters promoting the iGave campaign during her second year at NTU. “One of the questions I had was why we were being asked to give when we had already paid tuition fees,” she recalls. “Even then, I could feel the Nanyang spirit – work hard, look ahead, stay positive and, most of all, help one another. And that was why I decided to come here.”

It was a sense of gratitude that prompted Go Ka Diam, 22, to become an iGave Ambassador during his third year at NTU. “The university has given me a great education and myriad growth opportunities,” he says. “I wanted to show my appreciation in a tangible way.”

A graduate of the School of Biological Sciences and an avid sportsman, Ka Diam was also a volunteer with the Red Cross Humanitarian Network (NTU Chapter). In 2009, he was appointed the Vice-President of the iGave campaign for the School of Biological Sciences and School of Chemical & Biomedical Engineering. Sharing with his fellow graduating students about the need to give back to the university has been rewarding indeed. “I’ve made many great friends here,” he says. “Not only will we work hard in our professional lives, we will also continue to find ways to contribute to society.”

A tradition of giving

The graduation class gift makes a difference to current and future students by supporting a range of innovative academic experiences and research activities, as well as scholarships and bursaries.
The Mayor of the Games

NTU alumnus Mr Teo Ser Luck is helping to bring the inaugural Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Village to life, with an eye towards inspiring the leaders of tomorrow.

BY ADELINE ONG
As someone who spent most of his childhood years hanging out on the streets, and who started working part-time when he was 12, Mr Teo Ser Luck is now living his dreams.

The 42-year-old Mayor of the North East District and Senior Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports and Ministry of Transport never thought he would succeed academically. “I didn’t feel I was cut out to do well in the Singaporean system,” he recalls. “I was easily distracted and spent a lot of time playing, rather than in school or at the library!”

But it was with a sense of mission that he entered NTU, graduating with a Bachelor of Accountancy degree in 1992. “It was important for me to graduate and start working,” explains Mr Teo. “Having come from a humble family, my goals were more practical.”

And the bonds he built during his years at the university have endured. A resident of Hall of Residence Five during his student days, Mr Teo still comes to the Yunnan Garden campus on weekends with his friends to cycle down its avenues. Even so, he is amazed by how much NTU has developed over the years. “I credit the university for making the hostels a lot more accessible and conducive for students, for example,” he says. “You never really experience this transformation until you get off the bicycle and walk around to see the changes.”

Making things happen

Be it in public service or sports, Mr Teo lives by the principle of always giving his best. Not everything will go smoothly, he concedes – that is why we have to learn to accept our failures, pick ourselves up and try again. “You need to have courage and determination to accomplish your goals, and you must believe in yourself,” he says. “Without that belief, you become too comfortable and don’t progress; you never expand your horizons.”

It was this “never-say-die” spirit that first led Singapore to a historic win as host of the inaugural Youth Olympic Games. Now, 18 years after he graduated from NTU, Mr Teo will be returning to the university as the Mayor of the Youth Olympic Village. Having had a first-hand tour of the facilities, he believes the university is very much ready for its role. “NTU should pride itself on being the world’s first Youth Olympic Village,” he says. “This is a great achievement for the university, and represents a major contribution because the Village is the heart of the Games.”

With less than a month left to the Games, Mr Teo is passionate about what Singapore can offer. “This is no mean feat,” he explains. “It’s like organising one international championship, multiplied by 26 sporting events – that means we are hosting 26 world-class championships over 12 days!”

During the Games, Mr Teo will be ably assisted by two Deputy Village Mayors – former Olympians Asst Prof C Kunalan of the National Institute of Education and Joscelin Yeo. Their enthusiasm is equal to the scale of the challenge. “Hosting the Games requires thorough planning, and there is a certain amount of risk involved,” says Mr Teo. “It’s about coming out of our comfort zones and proving that Singaporeans can make things happen!”

A time to learn

Aside from maintaining the safety and comfort of the 5,000 international athletes and guests at the Village, Mr Teo and his team are sparing no effort to ensure that their days here will be exciting and full of learning opportunities. This is a role that the university amply fulfils; not only was NTU chosen because of its well-developed infrastructure, the Yunnan Garden campus provides a uniquely supportive environment for learning.
Coff ee with

THE MAYOR OF THE GAMES

In addition to the sporting events themselves, the Games will feature a Culture and Education Programme, which aims to inculcate the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. Explains Mr Teo: “This programme will help to bring the athletes together, in order to experience the importance of a society in harmony, and to learn to accommodate one another’s differences.”

Athletes can also look forward to a festive World Culture Village that will present over 200 different global cultures, among other highlights. “Through this and a range of other youth-focused activities and programmes, we hope to engage the young athletes, and to inspire them to play a more active role within their communities,” he says.

A deeper legacy

For Mr Teo, these lessons are ones that will endure beyond the sporting events. Even before the Olympic torch is lit, Mr Teo has already set his sights on the broader legacy of the Games. He hopes the event will be a catalyst for young Singaporeans to become more deeply engaged with the challenges of the day, and that it will encourage them to translate their ideas into action.

“We have to think beyond the Games because the event itself will come and go,” he says. “What more is there for our youths to learn? In that sense, we’re not only talking about a legacy for NTU or the Games, but for the country as a whole.”

Mr Teo hopes young Singaporeans – not least NTU’s Class of 2010 – will embrace the challenges to come, in order to make a difference. The unbeaten path can bring whole new experiences and possibilities, he believes. “We can all contribute in our own way to something greater,” he says. “Don’t set limits for yourself; just try your best and don’t give up. You may discover something along the way, and later on, inspire others to do even more.”
At NTU, the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Village, nature is never too close for comfort, as this photograph of a bird’s nest attests. Shot at Hall of Residence 9 by Zhang Ruike, a third-year student at the School of Physical & Mathematical Sciences, it’s just another example of the unique character of the Yunnan Garden campus.

“I took this photo during my second semester, when I saw that several birds had nested on a clothesline. I was amazed that my hallmates had done a doorplate for them,” says Ruike, whose photo clinched the 5th prize in the U-Photography Competition for students, held earlier this year. “In my opinion, this harmonious relationship with nature is what sets NTU apart from many other universities.”

Look around the Youth Olympic Village’s Residential Zone and you’ll find other fresh touches of green at our hearth and home. These lush additions include freshly laid trellises adorned with creeper plants. Not only do these “green walls” complement the Village’s natural beauty, they also absorb heat, contributing to cooler surrounds.
Hello!
We can’t wait to meet you

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