Agent of Change

PHILANTHROPIST
BELINDA TANOTO:
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE
ESCAPE THE
CYCLE OF POVERTY

A Publication Of
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY SINGAPORE

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CHARTING GLOBAL FRONTIERS • BREAKING NEW GROUND IN THE WAR AGAINST DIABETES
The 'NTU Circle of Giving' visually encapsulates the University’s enduring mission of nurturing each generation of leaders and creating vital solutions to solve global challenges.

It represents new beginnings and a shared future between NTU and its collaborative partners, who like-mindedly understand, measure, develop and deliver solutions together.

The visual is inspired by an ancient Chinese coin, harking back to, and recalling NTU’s illustrious heritage and roots.

About the NTU Circle of Giving

Starting with a square at its centre, the shape radiates outwards into a pentagon, hexagon, heptagon and octagon, and eventually evolves into an infinite circle. This evolution of shapes reflects the virtuous cycle of giving, and the movement of lines, like a ripple, embodies a sense of fluidity and continuous action.

In this way, the identity is a visual embodiment of the tagline that conveys how one’s success is not an end in itself but a journey. It is not about individual achievements, self-exaltation or one’s position in society, but rather, what one enables or creates through the act of giving. The tagline also seeks to emphasise a shared future without lines of differences, and the unique roles that all stakeholders play within a shared circle, so as to like-mindedly deliver solutions to bring about positive change in our world.

The colour red represents the passion of those who give and the passion of those whose lives have been changed and empowered through the important act of giving.
THE SIMPLE ACT OF GIVING

Giving has always been a part of Nanyang Technological University (NTU)'s culture. Since it started in 1955 as Nanyang University, it has offered deserving students an education regardless of their income levels. Even in its early days, it was not just the wealthy who contributed to the University’s building fund; humble coolies also played a part, giving whatever they could. Each of their efforts has had a ripple effect and helped to create the institution we fondly call our second home.

It is in keeping with this tradition of giving that the NTU Development Office debuts Continuum. The triannual publication will replace Impact and Footprint to showcase acts of giving that inspire. It will also reimagine the possibilities of a simple gift, through stories that show the ways in which giving enriches both giver and recipient.

In this first issue, we spotlight two students who were both touched by the University at one point or another. The first is a current student who donates part of her bursary money back to the University, and the other is a former student who has not forgotten the assistance rendered to him two decades ago. Like so many others, they pay it forward so that fellow students in need can also unlock their maximum potential.

But educating students is just one facet of NTU; we are also nurturing the next generation of leaders, as well as advancing society with our research and innovation efforts. These efforts can be demonstrated in our Charting Global Frontiers campaign, categorised into five broad areas: Healthcare; Sustainability; Arts, Culture & Heritage; Security; and Innovation. This issue of Continuum explores each area in depth, to showcase the impact they can have on a wide range of social issues, among them chronic diseases and climate change.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Professor Lee Sing Kong, NTU’s Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), who passed away in May this year. Prof Lee left an indelible mark on the minds of students, faculty and staff and the larger community with his achievements and contributions, and everyone who knew him will recall that he was fully dedicated to the cause — the betterment of NTU and the community. In tribute, the Lee Sing Kong Endowment Fund was recently established, and will carry on his vision and passion for education by supporting professorships in Early Childhood Education as well as NTU Bursaries for underprivileged students. The Fund is a fitting and lasting tribute to a man who paved the way for so many to succeed and contribute to humanity.

Victor Tay
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
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WORTHY OF SUPPORT

Through Faculty and Staff Giving, deserving needy students have a chance to further their education.

NTU believes no gifted individual should be denied a quality education because of a lack of funds, and strives to provide equal opportunities for these students to help fulfil their potential and improve their life prospects. In this spirit of giving, NTU kicked off its annual Faculty and Staff Giving Campaign on 29 March 2017 at the Nanyang Auditorium Foyer, NTU.

Early-bird faculty and staff members participated in activities that included instant print photo-taking, ‘cupid telling’, caricature-drawing and a grab-and-win contest. The NTU Hall 67 dance crew, Generseis, then opened the event with an energetic dance showcase. This was followed by a Welcome Speech by NTU President Professor Bertil Andersson, who thanked faculty and staff for the continuous generosity that saw a participation rate of almost 56 per cent in 2016. “This demonstrates an active philanthropic community here in NTU,” he said. “Your support empowers deserving but financially-disadvantaged students to pursue an excellent education at our university.”

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION

Concurring with Professor Andersson, NTU’s Chief Development Officer Mr Victor Tay revealed that about one in five NTU students are in financial need. Monetary assistance, he said, not only alleviates financial stress but also helps remove personal burdens that come with financial struggles such as abandoning study plans to take up work.

Donors’ contributions go towards supporting a variety of initiatives, including scholarships, bursaries and meaningful student programmes. They are also used to fund research and academic work carried out to tackle complex national and global challenges.

“Together, the gifts make a wide and deep impact across the university as we shape the next generation of leaders and chart new frontiers in research and innovation,” said Prof Andersson.

After the motivational speeches, guests were treated to a buffet lunch and an NTU CAC Guitar Ensemble performance. The 2016 Faculty & Staff Giving Award recipients and Loyal Ambassadors were later acknowledged at a presentation segment.

In 2016, NTU achieved a participation rate of 55.59 per cent from its Faculty and Staff, with a TOTAL DONOR COUNT OF 2,229.

“Your support empowers deserving but financially-disadvantaged students to pursue an excellent education at our university.”

Professor Bertil Andersson, NTU President
FIGHTING DIABETES TOGETHER

A special forum highlighted LKCMedicine’s research efforts to combat the chronic disease.

With the government’s declaration of war on diabetes in 2016, NTU’s Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) has been looking into new ways to better prevent and control the disease. A number of these ideas were showcased at the Winning the War Against Diabetes Forum held at LKCMedicine’s Novena Campus on 24 March 2017. The event sought to raise awareness of the school’s research efforts and to encourage guests to donate to this worthy cause.

Philanthropists, foundation heads, business owners and other supporters of NTU were invited to the dinner session, organised by LKCMedicine and NTU’s Development Office. Guests were taken on a tour of the campus facilities and listened to presentations from LKCMedicine scientists Assistant Professor Yusuf Ali and Senior Research Fellow Dr Hou Han Wei, who introduced their respective diabetes research projects.

In his welcome address, LKCMedicine Dean Professor James Best noted that diabetes — particularly type 2 diabetes which is linked to obesity — is an especially salient problem in Asia. “This is a tremendous opportunity for Singapore to show leadership in the region in solving this problem,” he said. “Much is expected of LKCMedicine in medical research. Asst Prof Ali and Dr Hou are living up to that promise.”

The two researchers then joined Associate Professor Daniel Chew, Head and Senior Consultant at Tan Tock Seng Hospital’s Department of Endocrinology, in a panel discussion moderated by NTU’s Chief Development Officer Mr Victor Tay. They took questions from the audience and underlined the importance of investment in diabetes research to improve clinical care.

MORE THAN 200 MILLION PEOPLE IN ASIA CURRENTLY HAVE DIABETES, WHICH CAN CAUSE COMPLICATIONS SUCH AS HEART FAILURE AND STROKE.

SINGAPORE HAS THE SECOND-HIGHEST PROPORTION (10.53 PER CENT) OF ADULTS WITH DIABETES AMONG DEVELOPED NATIONS, BEHIND ONLY THE US.
A SWINGING TIME

Philanthropic golfers raised nearly $300,000 for student beneficiaries at the annual BCP Golf Challenge.

About 100 golfers took part in the Business & Community Partners (BCP) Golf Challenge on 17 May 2017, but the biggest winners of the day were the students of NTU, as the $293,850 raised will be channelled to NTU bursaries.

For the second year, this charity event was organised by the BCP committee and the NTU Development Office. Held on the greens of Seletar Country Club, the day-long event teed off with 25 flights of participants. It ended with a dinner at the clubhouse.

In his welcome address at the dinner, the late NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement) Professor Lee Sing Kong emphasised the importance of providing equal educational opportunities for students of different backgrounds. He also highlighted that with the funds raised from the BCP Golf Challenge, NTU is closer to achieving its mission of sending at least 80 per cent of students on overseas stints for global exposure.

Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and NTU alumnus Masagos Zulkifli, who was Guest-of-Honour, noted that “meritocracy can only work if there is morality”. He urged those who are doing well in life to give back to society. “Corporate and community leaders like you can make a difference,” he said. “Although the government subsidises course fees, bursaries and scholarships help to further close the gap.”

BCP Chairman Simon Lee then thanked the 100 business partners and community leaders who participated in the BCP Golf Challenge for their encouraging and inspiring support.

PARTNERS IN DRIVE

More than 30 businesses signed up as BCP Golf Challenge partners, as well as to sponsor goodie bags and prizes. These included Santarli Construction Pte Ltd, FairPrice Foundation and Mercedes-Benz.

Set up in 2011, the NTU BCP programme provides platforms for corporations and community leaders to make gifts and support financially-disadvantaged students in their pursuit of education. Events such as the BCP Golf Challenge propel the University’s belief that no deserving student should be deprived of admission into NTU because of financial difficulty.

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY LEADERS LIKE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISES COURSE FEES, BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS HELP TO FURTHER CLOSE THE GAP.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
NTU organised a Lo Hei CNY Celebration event for its Nantah alumni.

Nantah alumni members — pioneers who graduated from the then-Nanyang University (Nantah) — gathered on 11 February 2017 for a Lo Hei CNY Celebration.

Nanyang University (Nantah), the predecessor of NTU and Nanyang Technological Institute (1981-1991), was founded by Mr Tan Lark Sye in 1956. It was funded through donations from people from all walks of life, and was the only Chinese-language institution of higher education outside China. The University and the values it inculcated in a generation of students embodied what is widely-known as the ‘Nantah Spirit’.

The Lo Hei CNY Celebration kicked off with a welcome address by Chief Development Officer Mr Victor Tay, who gave guests a comprehensive update on NTU’s current progress and future plans. This was followed by a feng shui talk by Master Goh Guan Leong, and a presentation on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) by a TCM Physician from NTU’s Chinese Medicine Clinic. After the talks, lunch — a sumptuous festive buffet and the traditionally boisterous lo hei celebration — commenced.

The event also saw Nantah alumni contributing towards the University, with proceeds reaching $12,000. The funds have been channelled towards bursaries, student life and school advancement.

PROTECTING OUR PLANET

NTU and Nat Geo joined hands to promote sustainability through the National Geographic LIVE! Speaker Series.

NTU’s commitment to world-class sustainability research and teaching has been continuing under its strategic framework Sustainable Earth (2016-2020), whereby some $1.5 billion will be dedicated to sustainability research over four years. To raise awareness, as well as inspire Singaporeans to do their part in sustainability, NTU partnered National Geographic (Nat Geo) to present the fourth National Geographic LIVE! Speaker Series entitled “Wild Seas, Secret Shores” on 22 January 2017 at the Esplanade.

Marine biologist-turned-National Geographic photographer Thomas Peschak took audiences around the world with his award-winning images and engaging take on the ocean’s charismatic creatures. Nat Geo ocean explorer Erika Bergman also spoke about her passion and commitment for the environment.

Earlier, on 19 January 2017, NTU organised a National Geographic Live – NTU Exclusive Dinner for the University’s supporters and partners. Featuring the Nat Geo explorers, as well as Prof Adam Douglas Switzer from NTU’s Asian School of the Environment (ASE), the interactive and insightful session opened up new ways on how NTU and its partners can work together to create innovative and inspiring solutions for a more sustainable world.
Young and research-intensive, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore is ranked 11th globally. It is also placed 1st amongst the world’s best young universities.

CAREER PROGRESSION IS A GIVEN. BUT WE’RE TALKING TRANSFORMATION.

NANYANG BUSINESS SCHOOL GRADUATE STUDIES

Consistently ranked among top business schools, Nanyang Business School (NBS) is dedicated to nurturing business leaders of the world. NBS is the first in Singapore and among a select few in the world to attain accreditations from both EQUIS (EU) and AACSB (US).

Our Masters Programmes:
- Nanyang MBA
- Nanyang Professional MBA
- Nanyang Executive MBA
- Nanyang Fellows MBA
- MSc Accountancy
- MSc Financial Engineering
- MSc Marketing & Consumer Insight

BeyondAMasters.com
Defeating Diabetes

Researchers at LKCMedicine are committed to tackling what is widely considered the disease of our time.
here is no mistaking that diabetes — a chronic disease characterised by persistently-high blood sugar levels due to a lack or ineffective use of insulin — is a major global problem. According to the World Health Organization, the number of adults living with diabetes has nearly quadrupled since 1980 to 422 million, and it is projected to become the seventh-leading cause of death by 2030.

Of particular concern is the rising prevalence of diabetes mellitus type 2, which is often associated with obesity. Like obesity, most cases of type 2 diabetes are caused by preventable risk factors including an unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. However, changing lifestyle behaviours to lose weight does not necessarily rule out the likelihood of getting the disease, as clinical data suggests that Asian populations are more genetically predisposed than Caucasians to becoming diabetic.

In Singapore, the severity of the situation has become glaringly apparent over the past decade. Although diabetes occurs most commonly among the elderly, it now appears to be affecting younger adults as well. A comparison of the 2004 and 2010 National Health Surveys shows an increase in the prevalence of diabetes across all age groups. Moreover, the International Diabetes Federation reported in 2015 that, at 10.53 per cent, Singapore ranks a close second to the United States in terms of the proportion of adults with diabetes among developed nations.

Alarmed by these developments, the Ministry of Health declared a ‘War on Diabetes’ in 2016 to raise public awareness of the condition and to promote disease prevention and control. In tandem with the Government’s efforts to win this fight, NTU’s Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) is conducting research aimed at fully eradicating diabetes in the long term.
At LKCMedicine, a dedicated taskforce comprising local and international scientists has embarked on a variety of research projects to improve diagnostic, prophylactic and therapeutic methods for diabetes. Among those leading the charge are two homegrown experts, Assistant Professor Yusuf Ali and Senior Research Fellow Dr Hou Han Wei.

**AN UPSTREAM APPROACH**

The overarching goal of Asst Prof Ali’s laboratory is to preserve the function of pancreatic islets — the portion of the pancreas that contains insulin-secreting beta cells — in individuals before they are diagnosed with diabetes. “We want to make sure pancreatic islets can get to a higher functional state and produce more insulin, but not too high that it causes islet exhaustion or beta-cell death,” he says of his lab’s research undertakings.

One project involves isolating pancreatic islet beta cells in the East Asian population and comparing these with beta cells in Caucasians to examine whether inherent differences exist between the two groups. “I was interested to know why people of East Asian descent are more vulnerable to diabetes,” says Asst Prof Ali on the purpose of his study, adding that doctors in Singapore are seeing more non-obese people with the disease. By identifying the genes responsible for this trait, they hope to develop drugs capable of modulating gene expression — and preventing beta cell dysfunction — in 10 years’ time.

To better visualise the beta cells, they are collaborating with the Singapore Eye Research Institute on another project in which the cells are transplanted from the pancreas to the cornea in macaques. The benefits of this are twofold. First, transplantation of beta cells to the cornea, the most transparent part of the body, makes the invisible visible. Second, macaques (non-human primates) are closely related to humans, so the use of macaques rather than mice to test anti-diabetic drug candidates in pre-clinical trials will more accurately indicate their efficacy in humans.

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**Type 1 vs Type 2 Diabetes**

**Type 1 Diabetes** — the body does not produce enough insulin (insulin deficiency).

When we eat, complex carbohydrates are digested in the body and broken down into glucose (a simple sugar) before being absorbed into the bloodstream. This increase in blood glucose triggers the pancreas to release insulin, a hormone that regulates blood sugar levels in two ways: it helps the body’s cells convert glucose into energy immediately, or store the glucose for future use as an energy source.

One of two problems occurs in people with diabetes: Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, resulting in high blood sugar levels over a prolonged period of time: If left untreated, this could lead to life-threatening complications including heart attack and stroke.

**Type 2 Diabetes** — the body produces insulin, but it is ineffective in transforming glucose into energy (insulin resistance).

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**We have identified the drug compound that is far superior to current drugs in inhibiting enzymes that break down complex carbohydrates into sugar.**

Asst Prof Yusuf Ali
Asst Prof Ali’s team is also working with chemists from NTU’s School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering to develop novel drug compounds that slow the conversion of starch into simple sugars. Such a drug, to be taken orally before meals, would limit the amount of glucose being absorbed into the bloodstream and give beta cells time to rest, thus preserving pancreatic islet function.

“We have identified the drug compound that we believe is far superior to currently-marketed drugs in inhibiting the enzymes that break down complex carbohydrates into sugar molecules,” says Asst Prof Ali. Now under patent-pending status, their pill would be especially relevant for the Asian diet, which typically consists of starchy foods like rice.

HELP FOR THE STRICKEN
Whereas Asst Prof Ali’s research targets people at the pre-diabetic stage, Dr Hou has assembled an interdisciplinary team of engineers and scientists to explore new ways of evaluating the health risks of those who have already been diagnosed with diabetes. Their efforts are centred on improving metabolic health profiling.

Dr Hou Han Wei

OUR AIM IS TO DEVELOP MICROFLUIDIC DEVICES TO ASSESS THE VASCULAR AND IMMUNE HEALTH OF DIABETICS.

Drugs that slow enteric glucose absorption

Paper-based diagnostics for pre-diabetes/asymptomatic diabetes

Immune cell profiling of diabetics for precision medicine

THERE IS A 1 IN 3 CHANCE A SINGAPOREAN WILL GET DIABETES IN HIS/HER LIFETIME. LKCMedicine aims to slash those odds, with your support, through three research priorities:

- Drugs that slow enteric glucose absorption
- Paper-based diagnostics for pre-diabetes/asymptomatic diabetes
- Immune cell profiling of diabetics for precision medicine

This multi-pronged research strategy by LKCMedicine seeks to do more than mitigate the complications of diabetes. It is geared towards tackling the disease upstream where it begins through the development of preventive health solutions.
techniques in diabetic patients through the use of microfluidics, a highly-innovative technology involving the manipulation of fluid flow in microscale channels.

“Our aim is to develop microfluidic ‘lab-on-a-chip’ devices — in which a drop of blood is obtained via the fingerprick method and injected into the chip — to assess the immune and vascular health of diabetics,” explains Dr. Hou. These miniaturised devices would enable rapid health profiling “at the point of care”, meaning biological assays can be performed in diverse clinical settings (even in remote areas) and generate fast readout.

To profile the immune system of people with diabetes, Dr. Hou has proposed a lab-on-a-chip that integrates the purification process of white blood cells from whole blood samples with an immune function assay. It is envisioned that the device will allow doctors to assess the inflammatory status of patients, and accordingly prescribe the medication best suited for them.

Similarly, his team is trying to integrate onto a single chip the purification procedure of microvesicles — shed by vascular cells into the bloodstream — with a test to detect biomarkers of diabetes-related vascular complications such as blindness, kidney failure and leg amputation. If detected and treated early enough, these diseases could be stopped before they happen.

“Not only do we need new diagnostic tests for these complications, we also need to be able to quantify vascular permeability,” says Dr. Hou. “Using microfluidic technology, we hope to enable this in the near future.”

While Asst Prof Ali’s main priority is to mitigate insulin-producing cell dysfunction, he is also working with materials scientists at NTU to create a paper-based diagnostic test kit that can detect metabolic abnormalities in pre-diabetic patients. Their invention is currently awaiting patent approval, with hopes of eventually rolling it out into clinics.

Meanwhile, Dr Hou is using ‘organ-on-a-chip’ technology, in which human cells are grown outside the body in a microscale platform, to monitor vascular function in people with diabetes. For example, his team is developing an in vitro model of arteriosclerosis to study how plaque forms inside the arteries and interacts with immune cells.
A LOCAL STRATEGY
Both Asst Prof Ali and Dr Hou seek to advance diabetes care by stratifying patients based on their risk of getting the disease and its complications, which in turn will promote early intervention. At the same time, taking heed of the local context is a big priority.

“Han Wei’s and my research is focused on improving the health of the Singapore population,” says Asst Prof Ali. Thanks to the hard work put in by them and their colleagues, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that we may one day — perhaps in our lifetime — have a healthy populace free from the burden of diabetes.

ALUMNI SUPPORT FOR A MEANINGFUL CAUSE
In 2016, for the first time, the University provided an option for alumni to give towards diabetes research, after feedback from graduates that it was one of the meaningful causes they wanted to support. All such funds donated will go towards the LKCMedicine Healthcare Research Fund, which was set up in November last year. Even though the option for alumni to contribute to research was introduced only late last year, almost 500 alumni have already pledged their support for diabetes research, raising close to $100,000.

NTU alumnus Lim Thian Fatt, 51, who graduated from the university in 1989 with a Bachelor in Engineering (Civil and Structural), was one of those who contributed.

On why he decided to donate, the engineer said: “There are many friends I know who suffer from diabetes. I feel strongly for diseases that still do not have a cure.”

IF NOT CONTROLLED
DIABETES COULD LEAD TO COMPLICATIONS INCLUDING BLINDNESS, KIDNEY FAILURE, HEART ATTACK, STROKE AND LEG AMPUTATION.

IN 2015
541,600 DIABETICS NATION-WIDE
1,000,000 BY 2050 (ESTIMATED)

1 OUT OF 9 SINGAPOREANS IS CURRENTLY LIVING WITH DIABETES.
1 IN 3 DOES NOT KNOW THEY HAVE DIABETES.

IN 2015
3,815 DEATHS (ADULTS) IN SINGAPORE WERE LINKED TO DIABETES.

TAKEN AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION, SINGAPORE HAS THE SECOND-HIGHEST RATE OF DIABETICS IN THE WORLD.

DIABETES IS THE SINGLE LARGEST CAUSE OF DISEASE BURDEN IN SINGAPORE, ACCOUNTING FOR 10% OF TOTAL DISABILITY-ADJUSTED LIFE YEARS.

DIABETES MAINLY AFFECTS THE ELDERLY. 1 IN 3 SINGAPOREANS AGED ≥65 YEARS HAS DIABETES.

STATISTICS TAKEN FROM MINISTRY OF HEALTH, SINGAPORE, AND INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION.
Help us win the war against diabetes!

Mail the completed pledge to  
Development Office, 76 Nanyang Drive, Blk N2.1 Level B4, Singapore 637331


Yes, I wish to support the LKCMedicine Diabetes Research Fund with a Gift of:

- $2,500
- $1,000
- $500
- $100
- $50
- Other amount $________ (gifts of any amount are welcome)

Please select:  
- One-time gift
- Monthly contribution

**GIFT METHOD**

- Credit Card / Debit Card
- Cheque (Payable to “NTU”)

Card Type  
- Visa
- Mastercard
- Amex

Name on Card:

Card No:  
Expiry Date: ____________ (month/year)

**DONOR PARTICULARS**

Full Name Mr/Mrs/Mdm/Ms/Dr:

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The Singapore Government matches each gift, substantially increasing the value and impact of donors’ contributions. Singapore tax residents will also enjoy tax deductions based on prevailing government policies.
Ms Belinda Tanoto — from the family and foundation behind the Tanoto Scholarship for the College of Engineering, Nanyang Business School and Wee Kim Wee School of Communications & Information degree students — shares the lessons learnt through her philanthropic work.

A Gift

FOR A BETTER FUTURE: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

An MBA graduate from Harvard Business School, and one with a bachelor’s degree Magna Cum Laude in Finance and Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania, Belinda Tanoto could have taken many different career paths. But instead of just showing her mettle in the dog-eat-dog corporate world, she has also chosen to apply her talents to a different cause: philanthropy.

As member of the Board of Trustees at the Tanoto Foundation, the youngest daughter of prominent Indonesian businessman and philanthropist Sukanto Tanoto dedicates her energies to helping those in need break out of the poverty cycle. And education is her silver bullet. “Education is a cause that resonates not just with me, but my family as a whole,” says Belinda, whose father and mother, Tinah Bingei Tanoto, had to quit high school because of family circumstances. “Even though my father did not have the opportunity to complete his formal education, he is a lifelong learner and a passionate proponent of education. Only when our youths are equipped with the basic skills of thinking, reading, writing and counting, can they break out of the poverty cycle.”
A leader who is also active on the ground, Belinda spends a lot of time with the foundation’s partners and stakeholders. “I always learn so much from them,” she shares. “For example, a few years ago, I met a passionate primary school teacher in a remote area of Jambi, Indonesia. She implemented what the Tanoto Foundation taught her and used locally-available materials as teaching tools to liven up the classroom. The students were always looking forward to her science class.”

She recalls that the school was but a shack with metal sheets for a roof, yet it was still a place where lives were being transformed through education. “The teacher is an example of how one can make a difference,” she says. “And seeing how the Tanoto Foundation is catalysing innovation on the ground where it matters most is very rewarding for me personally.”

Why are you such a big champion of education?
Education is a cause that resonates not just with me, but my family as a whole. My parents’ situation was not unique in the 1960s, when much of Southeast Asia was still developing. Unfortunately, fast-forward to today, and we still see many children drop out of schools — their dreams shattered and their potential untapped — because of a lack of means. For example, in Indonesia, while robust economic growth has more than halved the poverty rate from 24% in 1999 to 11% in 2015, some 28 million Indonesians still live in poverty. Furthermore, only 27% and 8% of the workforce has received secondary and tertiary education respectively. Even in a developed economy such as Singapore, there are students who require financial assistance, without which the cost of tertiary education would be a real struggle. Education as a means to equip youths with the ability to break out of the poverty cycle is a form of sustainable giving and giving for the long term — it is something that resonates deeply with me.

Apart from being a means to getting gainfully employed, what do you think is the value of education?
The Dalai Lama once said, “The purpose of education is to build a happier society; we need a more holistic approach that promotes the practice of love and compassion.” In that sense, education is not just about the teaching of technical skills, but also the development of one’s inner self and moral compass.

At the Foundation, we don’t just provide our scholars with financial assistance and access to formal education, but also encourage them to give back and practice love and compassion. For example, every year, our Singapore-based scholars — including the ones from NTU — participate in a week of volunteering to help schools in rural Indonesia. Through this experience, the scholars gain not only self-awareness, but also learn the value of empathy and gratitude — the more you have, the more you need to share.

What to you is the importance of giving?
I do not believe that giving should be measured by dollar terms; what matters is the intention behind, and the impact of, the giving. Each of us have been given a unique gift, be it skills, money, relationships, etc, and we should use that gift to help make the world a better place. As Mahatma Gandhi highlighted, all of us can, and should be, the change we wish to see in the world.

My parents’ first philanthropic act took place in 1981, when they were in their mere thirties. Wanting to make sure that the young children of their employees received a good education, they founded a kindergarten and elementary school in rural Besitang, in North Sumatra, Indonesia. What had started as a straightforward school improvement programme quickly transformed into a holistic, integrated social development programme. The school became a training ground for parents on livelihood skills and for the community on basic health and sanitation.

EACH OF US HAS BEEN GIVEN A UNIQUE GIFT, AND WE SHOULD USE THAT GIFT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.
Many of our foundation’s programmes are impactful not because of the effort of a single individual, but rather the team as a whole.
How do you balance your time between philanthropy work and your many roles in the family’s various businesses?

My mentor, the ex-CEO of Hong Kong International Airport and the current head of a foundation in China, gave me two good pieces of advice: (1) prioritise, and (2) leverage on others. First, tackle things that are urgent and important; never procrastinate if you can do something immediately. Prioritising also means accepting trade-offs, that we cannot do everything. At work and at home, I follow the 80/20 rule, focusing on the 20% of causes that drive 80% of the outcomes.

It is also important to surround yourself with a good team of peers and colleagues who can help you achieve your goals. Many of our foundation’s programmes are impactful not because of the effort of a single individual, but rather the team as a whole. Each of us brings something to the table, complementing the other’s strengths, knowledge and experience.
Education aside, what other social issues do you hope to tackle?

Inequality is one of the biggest challenges of our time. Earlier this year, Oxfam published a report that the world’s 8 richest individuals own the same amount of wealth as 3.6 billion of the world’s poorest individuals. The root causes of this inequality are many, including inequality of opportunity (those who are born rich have a head start in life), inequality in the labour market (high-skilled workers receive increasing wages, while the rest of the workforce is stuck in low-pay work), and unequal resilience to shocks (shocks disproportionately affect poor and vulnerable households, eroding their ability to earn incomes and invest in needed healthcare and education).

While there are many things that are dependent on government policies, I believe that individuals, foundations and the private sector can also help solve the problem by improving access to quality education and healthcare, as well as investing in the workforce to ensure the upgrading of skills. In line with this, our foundation is also expanding our scope of work from improving the quality of early childhood centres and elementary schools to the provision of vocational training. Only then, can Indonesia tap into its demographic dividend and close the inequality gap.

The Tanoto Foundation was started by visionary Indonesian entrepreneur Mr Sukanto Tanoto and his wife Madam Tinah Bingei Tanoto in 1981. The couple believes that every individual deserves an equal right to obtain a better life. Armed with this belief, they steered the Foundation to improve lives through education, empowerment and enhancing the quality of lives.

The Singapore arm of the foundation was set up in 2001, to support and uplift students in the Republic. Projects that it has supported include the Tanoto Library at INSEAD’s Asia Campus at one-north and the Tanoto Foundation Centre for Southeast Asian Arts, housed within the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.

The Tanoto Scholarship, established from the donations received from the Foundation, is offered to students pursuing a full-time undergraduate degree programme at NTU’s College of Engineering, Nanyang Business School or Wee Kim Wee School of Communications & Information.

The Tanoto Foundation aims to:

- Develop and implement innovative programmes
- Empower beneficiaries through education and an enhanced quality of life
- Work with partners to support their programmes
- Share best practices

“EVERYONE SHOULD GET A CHANCE TO REALISE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.”

Mr Sukanto Tanoto and Madam Tinah Bingei Tanoto
THE “QUIET” Benefactor

A tribute to the late Dr Lee Seng Gee, a true friend of NTU and patron of many charitable causes.
The largest private charitable organisation in Singapore does not have a website. No “About Us”, “Our Beneficiaries”, “Accolades and Awards”, “Media Articles” — nothing. This says much about the organisation — the Lee Foundation — and its Chairman Dr Lee Seng Gee, who passed away on 10 May 2016.

In his eulogy for Dr Lee, former Singapore President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam described the late philanthropist as “a selfless and humble person, who saw it as his mission to help the less-fortunate.” These qualities are amplified in the “quietness” of the charitable works of Dr Lee and the Lee Foundation.

The Lee Foundation has donated close to $1 billion to numerous recipients and causes, including education, medicine, the arts and welfare for the underprivileged. Yet, only a handful of the Foundation’s donations and beneficiaries are known.

Dr Lee was a firm believer in the power of education, and his stalwart support transformed and advanced the educational landscape in Singapore. The Lee Foundation’s generous donations towards the building of educational institutions and facilities have provided invaluable and much-needed resources for quality education and research. The many scholarships and bursaries established by the Foundation levelled the playing field and provided access to quality education for students from underprivileged backgrounds.

Dr Lee was a supportive friend and benefactor to many, and NTU is grateful to be one of them. To-date, the University has received $177 million from the Lee Foundation in support of medical education, scholarships, bursaries, programmes and student activities.

In 2011, NTU was honoured to receive a momentous gift of $150 million from the Lee Foundation towards our new medical school. This was the single largest gift to a university in the history of Singapore. In gratitude and recognition of this historic gift, the new medical school was named the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine in honour of Dr Lee’s father, the renowned business leader, pioneer and philanthropist Tan Sri Dato Lee Kong Chian, who established the Lee Foundation in 1952. In keeping with the pioneering spirit embodied by Tan Sri Dato Lee, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine sets out to pioneer a new form of medical education in Singapore, taking advantage of NTU’s strengths in engineering to educate highly-rated clinicians able to harness the technological advances taking place in the medical world, and who will put patients’ needs at the centre of all care.

A LEGACY OF GIVING
The Lee Foundation’s spirit of philanthropy and support towards education can be traced further back to Dr Lee’s maternal grandfather, Mr Tan Kah Kee. Mr Tan was a prominent business and community leader and philanthropist, who also firmly believed that education was the key to a better society. Mr Tan had founded or donated generously towards several schools in Singapore, such as Tao Nan School, Ai Tong School, The Chinese High School, Anglo-Chinese School, Raffles College and Nan Chiao Girls High School.

Dr Lee had not only kept alive the spirit of generosity and community service of his father and grandfather, but had gone further and done much more to widen and deepen its impact, both personally and in the capacity of the Lee Foundation.

The sincerity and genuine compassion that Dr Lee had towards the less-fortunate was demonstrated through his personal visits to welfare homes during festive occasions. His actions said much about his kindness and compassion,

GIVING IN NUMBERS

$1 billion
AMOUNT DONATED TO VARIOUS CAUSES AND RECIPIENTS SINCE THE LEE FOUNDATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1952

$150 million
WAS DONATED TO THE NTU

$60 million
WAS DONATED TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD FOR THE

Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

I BELIEVE... THAT EDUCATION HAS THE POWER TO MAKE SOCIETY MORE EQUAL FOR EVERY MEMBER OF SOCIETY.

Dr Lee Seng Gee
especially for someone who was born into a privileged family yet genuinely felt and did so much for the less-privileged.

In 2009, NTU was honoured by Dr Lee’s gracious acceptance of the conferment of the honourary Doctor of Letters by the University. In his acceptance speech, Dr Lee said: "I share this love of learning and the importance of education with my late father. We both believe that education has the power to make society more equal for every member of society."

The paths of many people had been smoothened and brightened by Dr Lee, who had directly or indirectly afforded them with opportunities and possibilities that helped them to improve their lives and that of their families. The passing of Dr Lee is an immense loss not only to those who knew him, but also to the business world that has lost a great entrepreneur and a business leader, and to society who has lost a visionary philanthropist.

Dr Lee has left behind an enduring, meaningful and impactful legacy. The invaluable seeds of opportunities that Dr Lee has sown — in the forms of educational institutions, research facilities, and scholarships and bursaries — are a testimony to his vision and generosity; which will continue to benefit students, educators and researchers for generations to come. The nurturing of capable and compassionate future leaders; the innovations and advancements in healthcare and science and other critical areas for the betterment of our society and mankind; and the preservation of the arts and cultivation of its appreciation are priceless fruits that will be born from these seeds.

**Focus**

Like his father and grandfather, he was an extraordinary entrepreneur, community leader and philanthropist who made unparalleled contributions to Singapore. His passing is a great loss to us all.

Dr Lee’s family in a statement

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Seng Gee had impacted many people and organisations in his lifetime. The many contributions to the community and the tradition of giving he built are also examples for the rest of us, and he has left a legacy that will be unmatched.

Former Singapore President Tony Tan Keng Yam

He was a rare, selfless and humble individual who contributed to Singapore throughout his life.

PM Lee Hsien Loong

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/assets/4207538/581.1x779.5.jpg
TSP is the only programme where I can explore my academic interest and importantly, hone my skills to be the best educator I can be for my students.

Jopescu Toh  
Hwa Chong Institution  
Class of 2013

I chose TSP because it gives me more opportunities to practise my craft as an educator, locally and internationally, and prepares me well to nurture the next generation.

Amanda Chin  
Raffles Institution  
Class of 2014

TSP allows me to immerse myself in an academic environment of like-minded individuals. The programme gives me room to grow holistically as a teacher.

Ong Kangsheng  
Victoria Junior College  
Class of 2012

I chose TSP because it gives me opportunities to broaden my global perspectives while equipping me with pedagogical skills and knowledge to be an effective 21st century educator who goes beyond subject mastery.

Filzah Binte Hamzah  
Singapore Polytechnic  
Class of 2014

NTU-NIE TEACHING SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

More than a scholarship. Join TSP. Visit tsp.nie.edu.sg

The Teaching Scholars Programme is a premier scholars programme by Nanyang Technological University and it is administered by the National Institute of Education (Singapore).
“Running Singapore’s second academic medical library is a responsibility that I don’t take lightly. I feel privileged to have been given this job, and maintaining the library’s smooth operations and services is one way of showing my gratitude to the institution that hired me. Until a couple of years ago, I thought that was the only way.

The turning point came in 2015, when I was selected by my boss to be an iGave staff ambassador representing the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine). Set up in 2009, iGave is NTU’s annual giving programme, under which the entire NTU community — faculty and staff, alumni, graduating students, parents and external stakeholders — is encouraged to make a donation to support NTU students who require financial aid.

I’ll admit, I had not heard of iGave prior to being made staff ambassador. It hadn’t occurred to me that there might be financially-strapped students at NTU. But as I started hearing from student ambassadors who had benefited from iGave, I realised that students are just like you and me: we all experience hurdles at some time in our lives and need help overcoming them.

One story that touched me was of a student whose father had been retrenched. To support her family, she had backed out of an overseas study trip in order to work during the school holidays. The money she received through iGave enabled her to join her classmates instead of having to miss out on the trip.

While doing my job well is important, being an iGave ambassador allows me to do more for LKCMedicine students besides helping them find library resources for their research projects. I try to persuade my colleagues at LKCMedicine to contribute to the iGave campaign, so that student beneficiaries can concentrate better on their studies and be fully involved in campus life.

Students are the lifeblood of our University; we wouldn’t be here without them. The least we can do is help relieve their financial burden when they are going through a rough patch. Give willingly, with a grateful heart, and your job will be much more meaningful and satisfying.”

Ms Caroline Pang, 48, joined NTU in 2012 and is one of three iGave staff ambassadors at the School. Through their efforts, LKCMedicine raised $21,300 in 2016 — 16% higher than the amount raised in 2015 — and achieved a staff participation rate exceeding 75% in both years.
S Supraja is a person who believes that giving is better than receiving — and her actions certainly prove it. Even before her teens, Supraja was already volunteering in community events and donating to worthy causes. These days, she is carrying on charitable efforts by supporting the NTU Bursary Fund.

Supraja graduated from NTU in May 2016 with a Bachelor’s degree (First Class Honours) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE). As an undergraduate, she received the prestigious Nanyang Scholarship and was enrolled in the University Scholars Programme. Her stellar grades also got her into the Dean’s list in her final year of study. Since last August, she has been pursuing her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) studies, also at NTU.

In addition to impressive academic records, Supraja’s exemplary conduct and distinguished record in extra-curricular activities won her the Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award and the Professional Engineers Board Gold Medal in 2016. But what truly sets this high-achiever apart is her generosity. While still an undergraduate, she already supported the Fund, by donating $1,500 from her scholarship allowance every semester. Now as a PhD student, she is allocating $500 from her monthly stipend to the Fund.

**Sharing the GOODWILL**

**JUST 24, NTU PHD STUDENT S SUPRAJA HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY FOR HALF HER LIFE.**

**WHY IS GIVING BACK IMPORTANT TO YOU?**

In 2005, I was diagnosed with Posterior Uveitis, a serious eye inflammation. Fortunately, the condition was brought under control by doctors and I had the full support of my family during my recovery. It was a turning point in my life. It made me question if everyone else would have the same support or access to resources that I had. I’d like to think that my eye inflammation made me see the importance of giving back, and sparked my desire to serve. My parents and I started volunteering and doing community service actively. My parents believe strongly in giving back to society — for example, they have pledged to donate their organs and tissues after their passing, by opting into the Medical (Therapy, Education and Research) Act.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO SUPPORT THE NTU BURSARY FUND?**

I want to help underprivileged students and hope that monetary constraints will not stop them from pursuing their education at NTU. Also, I want to give back to the school. Apart from financial support, NTU has given me the experience of a lifetime. The University Scholars Programme exposed me to a vast spectrum of subjects such as philosophy, astronomy and business. It fuelled my curiosity for learning and moulded me into a holistic thinker who can approach issues from different perspectives. NTU continues to give me many opportunities. I have a very supportive supervisor and get to benefit from the NTU-Delta Corporate laboratory for Cyber-Physical systems that was launched in June 2016. This unique research ecosystem has further enabled me to learn alongside scientists from the Centre for Research and Development in Learning.

**WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WAYS YOU HAVE GIVEN BACK TO SOCIETY?**

Apart from donating to the NTU Bursary Fund, I used my first PhD stipend to replace the crockery in Bright Hill Evergreen Home, a non-profit nursing home. I also enjoy community service. In my undergraduate days, I led a team and organised a learning journey project for needy children, as a member of the NTU EEE Leadership Enrichment and Development Programme Club. Out of school, I am an active volunteer and together with my parents, regularly organise events for the less-privileged. One such outing was to bring wheelchair-bound elderly from Bright Hill Evergreen Home for their first ride on the Punggol Light Rail Transit. I also try to spread the spirit of volunteerism by getting my friends to join me for such events. As an Indian Classical dancer, I have organised and performed for a charity dance show.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO FELLOW NTU ALUMNI TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO GIVE?**

I urge everyone to think of those in need, and try to give back to our society. Making a gift to NTU is a form of gratitude because most of us would have benefited from our alma mater in one way or another. I would also like to share a quote from Sir Winston Churchill that has greatly influenced how I live my life — “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.” Giving back has made me a happier and more contented person. It is satisfying when I see smiles on the faces of the beneficiaries.

Supraja on the life-changing event that led her to think of the less-privileged

**KEEN ON GIVING?**

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN MAKE A GIFT TO NTU AT [WWW.NTU.EDU.SG/DO](http://WWW.NTU.EDU.SG/DO)
AS MR VICTOR TAY, Chief Development Officer of NTU, walks through the University’s sprawling campus, he not only sees innovative buildings and students; he also sees answers. “NTU is not just nurturing future leaders — it’s also on the path of adding value to society,” he says, pointing to the University’s research and innovation efforts, such as trials of driverless mini-buses to improve Singapore’s first- and last-mile connectivity. “The University is committed to creating highly applicable, real-world solutions,” explains Mr Tay.

Last year, NTU embarked on an ambitious University-wide fundraising campaign led by Mr Tay. Entitled Charting Global Frontiers, the campaign aims to create opportunities across every school, programme and relationship; and brings donors, partners, family businesses and the University closer in our shared commitment. This not only leverages the extraordinary activities that NTU has achieved, but also supports what more can be accomplished in the coming decades as a leader in research, teaching and innovation in Asia.

Firmly aligned with NTU 2020, the five-year strategic plan of the University, the Charting Global Frontiers Campaign is designed to harness timely opportunities and address present and future challenges that tackle issues of national and global concern, as well as shape our students to become leaders of tomorrow. The themes of healthcare, sustainability, innovation, security, and the arts, culture and heritage, fall under the campaigns’ fundraising framework, and hinges upon NTU’s five key research themes: Sustainable Earth, Global Asia, Secure Community, Healthy Society and Future Learning.

Read on to learn about what each theme aims to achieve and how your donations can drive them forward.

MEETING EMERGING NEEDS

RESOURCES ARE ALSO SET ASIDE TO PROVIDE FOR RESEARCH IN RESPONSE TO UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.
NTU’s most established and recognised research activities relate to sustainability. “It’s very important that we conduct sustainability research now, because we are living in a time when these issues really matter, as we are depleting our resources at a record rate,” says Mr Tay. Besides being published in journals, the research entities within the Sustainable Earth pillar have also generated intellectual property licences and launched spin-off companies. Each entity has a distinct research focus: ERI@N is exploring innovative cooling technologies to improve energy efficiency in the tropics, while the Complexity Institute promotes trans-disciplinary collaboration to improve urban liveability.

Despite their specialised roles, these research entities also collaborate with one another and share best practices. ASE, for example, is working with NTU’s Earth Observatory of Singapore to help regional governments monitor and react to coastal hazards, like tsunamis. “Having regional and global programmes like this will increase NTU’s visibility and forge important partnerships with governments and companies. It is also in line with our desire to create a better world,” says Mr Tay.

**MAKING CLEAN WATER MORE AFFORDABLE**

After two years of research and trials, a team from NEWRI have developed a nano-filter membrane that uses 80 per cent less energy to treat wastewater than current methods. The technology successfully meets the growing demand for clean water, says Professor Ng Wun Jern, executive director of NEWRI. “The world needs reliable and easy-to-maintain technologies to treat and produce extremely clean water at a low cost — and NTU’s nano-filtration hollow fibre technology offers that,” he adds.

**PRIMARY RESEARCH ENTITIES:**
- Singapore Centre on Environmental Life Sciences Engineering (SCELSE)
- Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N)
- Nanyang Environment and Water Research Institute (NEWRI)
- Complexity Institute
- Asian School of the Environment (ASE)
- Colleges of Science, Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and Engineering

**HAVING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL (SUSTAINABILITY) PROGRAMMES...**

**WILL INCREASE NTU’S VISIBILITY AND FORGE IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND COMPANIES.**

*Mr Victor Tay, Chief Development Officer, NTU*
By 2030, Singapore’s population of citizens aged 65 and above is set to double to 900,000. This “silver tsunami” will bring many challenges, among them a growing strain on the Republic’s healthcare system. To help Singapore meet these challenges, NTU set up the Ageing Research Institute for Society and Education (ARISE) last year. The institute supports inter-disciplinary research — in areas such as healthcare, technology and humanities — devoted to geriatric matters.

LKCMedicine will contribute to these with its study of post-genomic medicine, which emphasises early diagnosis and prevention through genetic and metabolic profiling. This increases the effectiveness of treatment and therapy by providing a more targeted approach. Technology to improve preventive care — such as smart sensors to detect falls in elderly — are being studied as well.

“We are also aware of the complications and burden of diabetes, which does not just affect seniors, but middle-aged citizens as well,” says Mr Tay, adding that institutions within NTU are at the forefront of diabetes research in Singapore. Genetic profiling of the local diabetic patient population will yield insights into the genetic nature of the disease, while also shedding light on how ethnicity affects an individual’s risk of diabetes.

There are many friends I know who suffer from diabetes... I feel strongly for diseases that still do not have a cure.

NTU alumnus and engineer Mr Lim Thian Fatt tells The Straits Times why he donated to the LKCMedicine Healthcare Research Fund.

Nearly 400 alumni have pledged their support for NTU’s medical research since the LKCMedicine Healthcare Research Fund was set up in November last year.

Source: The Straits Times

A QUICK TEST
One device that has come out of NTU’s healthcare research is an inflammation quick test kit. It checks if patients are suffering from internal inflammation in mere minutes, and with just one drop of blood. Currently, patients need to give a full vial of blood and wait for several hours for the results of the test. “(With this test), clinicians can accurately tailor the right combination of drugs and thus offer a more targeted treatment approach for all diabetic patients,” says Dr Hou Han Wei, a senior research fellow from LKCMedicine.

AIMS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING AND ACTIVE AGING

PRIMARY RESEARCH ENTITIES:

- Nanyang Institute of Technology in Health and Medicine (NITHM)
- NTU Institute of Structural Biology (NISB)
- Ageing Research Institute for Society and Education (ARISE)
- SCElse
- Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine)
- Colleges of Science, Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and Engineering

TAKING A HARD LOOK AT Healthcare

RESEARCH IN THIS SECTOR IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIVES AND MANAGES RISING MEDICAL COSTS.
NTU’s Security efforts devise strategies that avoid — and if necessary, respond to — threats to Singapore’s security. It comprises five research areas: Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, National Defence, Assured Resources and Social Harmony.

Each research institute within the cluster has a highly specialised role. For example, the Insurance Risk and Finance Research Centre at NTU is concerned with the security of Singapore’s financial market, taking into account supply chain resilience and risk management. Meanwhile, EoS considers the relationship between climate change and food security, and is carrying out an international study to examine the resilience of the region’s food supply. “The global situation requires us to be holistic in our approach — we can no longer just think of defence in the traditional sense,” says Mr Tay, explaining the Security cluster’s broad nature.

"The global situation requires us to be holistic in our approach — we can no longer just think of defence in the traditional sense," says Mr Tay, explaining the Security cluster’s broad nature.

BY 2030, FISH CATCH POTENTIAL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA’S WATER COULD SHRINK BY UP TO 60%, AS FISH MIGRATE TO ESCAPE WARMER OCEANS CAUSED BY GLOBAL WARMING. THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR SINGAPORE, WHICH IMPORTS 80% OF ITS FISH FROM THE REGION.

Source: The Straits Times

DID YOU KNOW?

BY 2030, FISH CATCH POTENTIAL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA’S WATER COULD SHRINK BY UP TO 60%, AS FISH MIGRATE TO ESCAPE WARMER OCEANS CAUSED BY GLOBAL WARMING. THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR SINGAPORE, WHICH IMPORTS 80% OF ITS FISH FROM THE REGION.

Source: The Straits Times
INNOVATION

NTU is a familiar name for many innovative inventions given its nurturing environment for science, technology and entrepreneurship. And as Singapore moves towards deepening its technological expertise, NTU will continue to move in tandem to deliver cutting-edge scientific research and revolutionary technological innovations across multiple disciplines. Most prominently, NTU has pioneered the creation of Nadine — the world’s most human-like social robot that has her own personality and emotions, along with the ability to recognise people and remember what they have said. Such social robots may be useful for the healthcare services sector in the future to serve as companions to the young and the elderly, as well as ease manpower shortages in the labour market.

"In today’s world, technology serves various aspects of a modern society such as scientific progress, education and communication," says Mr Tay. "Our research in Innovation aims to improve lives and open up opportunities by developing ground-breaking technology to address current and future issues".

"NTU has also always embraced innovative learning concepts, like the flipped classroom method," says Mr Tay. Introduced in 2015, the method encourages students to access course content independently, which frees up classroom sessions for team-based learning. "It’s something we’ve invested heavily in because we believe it will prepare students for the workplaces of the future, where solutions to problems will not just be in black or white," adds Mr Tay. And it has worked, according to students Continuum spoke to. "It allows us to spend more time interacting and exchanging ideas with our classmates and professors, which helps in our understanding of subjects," says Joshua Tan, a second-year Communication Studies student.

INNOVATION WILL CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE ECONOMY.

"Driving the Future"

PRIMARY RESEARCH ENTITIES:
- Centre for Research and Development in Learning (CRADLE@NTU)
- Institute of Media Innovation
- Robotics Research Centre
- Singapore Centre for 3D Printing
- IARE@NTU
- LKCMedicine
- National Institute of Education

Enabling next-generation solutions by developing:
- EFFECTIVE technologies
- MINDFUL learning environments
- MOTIVATING activity designs

SOCIAL ROBOT TECHNOLOGIES

Powered by intelligent software similar to Apple’s Siri or Microsoft’s Cortana, Nadine has her own personality, mood and emotions. She can be happy or sad, depending on the conversation. She also has a good memory, recognises the people she has met, and remembers what the person had said before. Created by a team of scientists headed by Professor Nadia Thalmann, Director of NTU’s Institute for Media Innovation, Nadine heralds a future where life-like socially intelligent robots like her could take on jobs in ageing societies facing a shrinking workforce.
Arts, culture and heritage play an important role in shaping the social fabric that underpins economic developments and human flourishing in a society. Through public engagement, arts, culture and heritage facilitate understanding in social issues and encourage citizens to participate in civic life and shape their community in a way that better reflects their values collectively.

Says Mr Tay: “At NTU, our research in arts, culture and heritage is designed to take advantage of Singapore’s position at the geographical heart of Asia and the University’s competitive advantage in business studies, international policies, the arts and its historic roots in China, India and Southeast Asian nations”.

“The intrinsic value and immense benefits — both economic and social — that come with arts, culture and heritage deserve our careful attention. With your help, we can forge strategic partnerships to harness opportunities within the arts that enrich our inner lives collectively and bring positive change to our community”.

The significance of Asia in global affairs cannot be overstated: the continent accounts for 60 per cent of the world’s population, a third of its GDP, and is the supply chain and manufacturing hub of the planet. The 21st century — dubbed ‘the Asian century’ by the Asian Development Bank — will continue to see the rapid replacement of rural culture in Asia with urban culture. What effects will this urbanisation have on individuals, communities and societies? How will consumption patterns change? This research focus aims to answer questions like these. “NTU is in a unique position to tackle these questions, because of our historic roots in Asia,” says Mr Tay.

Given the rise of Asian-owned multi-national firms, it is crucial that the University grooms Asia-ready business leaders, who can understand global issues from a regional perspective. This understanding is critical to business development, unlocking employment and generating economic growth, says Mr Tay. In this vein, the University will expand its internships to regional countries and forge new partnerships with overseas institutions. A new “Asia Centre” will also drive research in this field, attracting outstanding faculty, researchers and PhD students interested in research on Asia. NTU will also establish a Centre for Digital Economy, with a focus on research on technology-driven markets in the region.

Three cross-disciplinary research areas:
- BUSINESS CULTURE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS
- SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND RESILIENCE

**DID YOU KNOW?**

4 ASEAN ECONOMIES ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE GDPs EXCEEDING US$1 TRILLION BY 2030: MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND

Source: IHS Markit Ltd
CHARTING GLOBAL FRONTIERS

Solving Issues of Our Time • Shaping Leaders of Our Future

HEALTHY LIVING, ACTIVE AGEING
To support medical research and breakthroughs that will transform the way healthcare is delivered to patients, and enhance overall quality of life.

CONSERVING, TRANSFORMING, RECYCLING
To support groundbreaking green technology and NTU’s ongoing efforts in eco-friendly resources, renewable energy and clean water, for the preservation, remediation and restoration of our shared environment.

UNDERSTANDING, ENGAGEMENT, GROWTH
To support the expression and application of the arts in the various branches of creative activity, as well as promote and preserve our unique culture and heritage.

UNDERSTANDING, LEARNING, TEACHING
To support the development of cutting-edge technologies, nurture future innovation and the application of new ideas, discoveries and inventions.

PREVENTING, ADAPTING, RESILIENCE
To support multi-disciplinary research on security risks in today’s complex security landscape and rapidly evolving cyber-physical world.
YOU’VE REACHED EXCELLENCE IN YOUR CRAFT. NOW, AIM FOR MASTERY.

The Nanyang Executive MBA is a first-of-its-kind programme that consists of a general management core and industry-focused tracks, offered by Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. A programme jointly delivered with UC Berkeley, The Wharton School, Cornell University or IATA in Geneva, senior executives hone their leadership potential alongside accomplished peers to become effective leaders of the global market.
A DRINK TO GOOD HEALTH

A GENEROUS GRANT HAS GIVEN A SHOT IN THE ARM TO THE EFFORTS OF NTU RESEARCHERS, WHO SEEK TO DEVELOP NUTRITIOUS PROBIOTICS BEVERAGES FOR THE ELDERLY — AND SAVE THE EARTH AT THE SAME TIME.

Though ‘malnutrition’ isn’t a phenomenon one would commonly associate with Singapore, the fact remains that a number of elderly people here aren’t eating well enough. It’s not however due to a lack of food per se; rather, these seniors aren’t able to savour their meals — due to reasons such as a diminished sense of taste and the side effects of medication — and simply have less of an appetite as a consequence. This then has a number of implications, as under-nourishment leads to higher risks of infections, frailty and a decreased quality of life.

With Singapore’s ageing population in mind, an NTU research team has thus embarked on the ‘P2biotics for Healthy Living’ project, with the aim of developing nutritious beverages specifically for older consumers. These drinks contain probiotics microorganisms to promote better gut health, as well as other micronutrients such as vitamins, minerals and amino acids.

Probiotics drinks are nothing new however, and the casual observer might be inclined to ask what is so special about the ‘P2biotics for Healthy Living’ beverages. The answer lies in a production process that taps on a new form of fermentation technology. Instead of using crops and fruits — which are valuable food supplies — as raw materials, this technology uses side streams, such as soy bean residue, that would otherwise be disposed of. The result is a sustainable approach to production which contributes to achieving zero food waste, in what is known as the circular economy. Led by Professor William Chen, Director of NTU’s Food Science and Technology (FST) Programme (see box), the 15-member team — comprising PhD holders,

### NTU’S FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

With limited space to grow food, Singapore depends heavily on imports to feed its population. Recognising that enhancing food security is a key national priority, NTU launched the Food Science and Technology (FST) Programme in 2014. It is an inter-school and inter-disciplinary programme that is offered in partnership with Wageningen University of the Netherlands, to students from across four degree programmes — Biology, Chemistry, Bioengineering and Chemical Engineering.

Students and staff members of the FST programme can do their part in combating malnutrition, reducing food waste, extracting high-value food ingredients from raw materials and improve the sustainability of food production, processing and packaging.
We share the similar goal of keeping the elderly healthy through nutritious beverages. It is a win-win situation. Zhong Feng International has market experience while the NTU FST Programme can contribute our scientific and technological expertise.

Professor William Chen, Director of NTU’s Food Science and Technology Programme

It is a win-win situation,” says Professor Chan, referring to the team’s sponsors and partners. “Zhong Feng International has market experience while the NTU FST Programme can contribute our scientific and technological expertise.” Indeed, there are plans to sell the ‘P2biotics for Healthy Living’ beverages in Asia and Europe.

To ensure that the new products developed are safe for consumption, the research team has also developed new analytical technologies to test food safety. These are based on mass spectrometry techniques and can assess potential toxicity in new food products. Allowing for traceability, these technologies will also be extremely useful in fighting ‘food fraud’, which involves the tampering or substitution of food ingredients. Product testing for the flavours is ongoing.

Beverages developed under the ‘P2biotics for Healthy Living’ project are:

- Beneficial to gut health because of probiotics microorganisms
- Nutritious, with micronutrients such as vitamins, minerals and amino acids
- Produced using a fermentation technology which is sustainable and cuts food waste
- Ensured safe for consumption with newly-developed analytical technologies

A SHOT IN THE ARM

While the research team long realised that the fermentation technology could be used to create probiotics drinks, it was a gift of $750,000 from Chinese multi-industry company Zhong Feng International Development Pte Ltd in January 2017 that transformed the idea into reality. This donation, along with funding from the Ministry of Education, Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) of Singapore as well as local start-ups from the food industry, were valuable resources for the team in refining the technology.

“We share the similar goal of keeping the elderly healthy through nutritious beverages.

PHOTO  Zhong Feng International

Where do gifts go?

Support for research projects like ‘P2biotics for Healthy Living’ is an example of funding that is channelled towards school or Centre Advancement. Donors can also choose to give to NTU Bursaries or towards enriching student life as well as enhancing their learning experience.

Zhong Feng International donated $750,000 to support an NTU Food Science and Technology research project.
Ms Pang Yun Jing did not think that her teenage passion for photography would lead to a career behind the camera. But today, the 24 year-old is an up-and-coming artist, whose works have been showcased in galleries in Singapore and Scotland. She credits her increased visibility to winning the Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography 2016. “In addition to financial support, the prize also increased my exposure and familiarity with the local arts scene,” says Ms Pang, who graduated from NTU last year.

Stories like these are common among recipients of the Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography, which was established in 2009 with a term gift of $300,000 spread over five years from the late property tycoon, Mr Kwek Leng Joo. It is presented annually to two to four promising graduating students from ADM’s Photography and Digital Imaging programme with outstanding photography portfolios made over four years of studies. All final-year students from the programme are strongly encouraged to apply for the prize. Their entries are assessed by a panel of judges comprising industry leaders and ADM faculty. In 2014, Mr Kwek renewed the prize with another gift of $300,000.

Besides giving fresh graduates more exposure, the award also hones their craft, says Mr Kevin Fee, last year’s other recipient of the Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography. “The prize has allowed me to concentrate on refining my practice, while also exposing me to fine art and photography from different parts of the world,” Mr Fee, 27, tells Continuum. Like Ms Pang, Mr Fee has also had opportunities to showcase his work, both locally and overseas.
Misfortunes of the Inanimate is an archive of case studies, in which inanimate objects were ‘victims’ of unfortunate events. The series of images aims to challenge the audience to make emotional connections with the objects, hence empathising with them.

I had some ideas about works to create and the prize was crucial for these to materialise.  

Mr Kevin Fee

The prize provides rare and valuable support for young photographers.

Ms Pang Yun Jing

The Kwek Leng Joo Prize for Excellence in Still Photography aims to

PROMOTE YOUNG LOCAL TALENT IN STILL PHOTOGRAPHY

NURTURE A STRONG TALENT POOL

GIVE STUDENTS A HEAD-START IN BUILDING SUCCESSFUL CAREERS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

PROVIDE MORAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG TALENT

Blades Buried In My Skull & Ribcages is a photographic representation of my personal emotional pains; it explores and experiments with ways to visualise the intangibility of pain felt by the mind and heart.

The Thought Of Nothing is conceived from the artist’s existential contemplation on nothingness and her desire to escape the daily bustle of life. It documents her pursuit of this nothingness through monotonous tasks involving ordinary objects.

Imposed Accommodations is a documentation of evidences of accommodations that have been imposed onto a subject in order to achieve ‘compromisation’.

I was considered an emerging artist and the prize provided a much-needed push for my works to materialise.
**WHO IS SHE**

Ms Pang Yun Jing’s passion for photography was sparked nine years ago, when her parents bought their first digital camera. “I was intrigued by the world that I saw through the lens,” she tells Continuum, adding that photography helps her analyse, rationalise and visualise her thoughts.

Ms Pang submitted 2016’s The Thought of Nothing to be considered for the Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography. The 25-minute video documents the artist’s desire to escape the daily bustle of life and explores society’s association of time with productivity.

**WHO IS HE**

“I was not immediately drawn to photography when I entered ADM, since I had very little experience with it,” recalls Mr Kevin Fee. But as he learnt more about the craft, Mr Fee was impressed with its artistic possibilities and made it a key aspect of his career.

For the Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography, Mr Fee put forth To live and let live (2016). The work displays everyday conflicts that exist around us and highlights how quickly and spontaneously they can appear.

Both The Thought of Nothing and To live and let live were displayed at Each and Every Exhibition. The show had two runs; the first at Local Arts Space Deck, and the second at Edinburgh’s Fotospace Gallery.

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*Blades Buried In My Skull & Ribcages*  
*A Series of Unacceptable Behaviours*

**To live and let live** (below) video installation at Each and Every Exhibition.

PHOTOS Kevin Fee, Pang Yun Jing
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The late Mr Kwek Leng Joo was well-known as a property tycoon, serving as the deputy chairman and executive director of City Developments Limited. But he was also an avid photographer — among his favourite subjects were the Singapore Botanic Gardens and its inhabitants. To Mr Kwek, photography was more than just a hobby; it was also a vehicle for change and philanthropy. Through the sale of his photographs and books about photography, he raised over S$3 million for charity.

To spur the University’s art, design and media students to excel in photography, Mr Kwek made a personal gift to establish the Kwek Leng Joo Prize for Excellence in Still Photography in 2009. He renewed the gift for another five years in 2014, a year before he passed away. Mr Kwek had a longstanding relationship with the University, serving as a member on the NTU Board of Trustees between 2006 and 2015 and on its Board of Advisors from 2004 to 2006.
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Talk to any of the 22 Nanyang Business School (NBS) students who signed up for the NBS Sichuan Teaching Project 2016, and they will tell you that it was a big eye-opener. For three weeks in June 2016, they served as volunteer-teachers at Shuangdong–Nanyang Primary School in Deyang, Sichuan Province, China.

The team had worked together all year long in preparation for the trip, which was aimed at encouraging the local children’s interest in the English language. In a departure from previous years, several new ‘Singapore Day’-themed activities were also organised to teach the primary school students about Singapore’s culture. Besides watching an introductory video of Singapore, the children took part in a handicraft session on weaving paper ketupat, sampled Singaporean dishes such as laksa, and learned how to play old-school childhood games like ‘shooting marbles’.

For the NBS undergraduates, those three weeks in a foreign country were challenging yet rewarding. They expanded their cross-cultural awareness, grew closer as teammates and friends, and accomplished personal and team goals.

Both the Vice-Project Director Qiao Yuan and the Level Leader Yu Ting agreed that “participating in the Sichuan Teaching Project is something that we will never forget. Being part of the main committee allowed us to develop our soft skills and sharpen our project management skills. Flying to a new place for a positive cause with a group of new people is something every undergrad should experience.”

Participants were also given a sharp reminder not to take what they have for granted. “Through this project I have gained something intangible. Not only did I feel the joy of giving without expecting, I also had a first-hand experience of what I’ve always heard my parents say — we are fortunate and we should treasure what we have,” said Daryl Neo, a Volunteer-Teacher.

“The environment lacked basic facilities — access to clean water, sanitised washrooms, and basic hygiene habits like brushing your teeth everyday seemed like a luxury. This made me realise that we live in a really privileged society.”

The NBS Sichuan Teaching Project is an annual service-learning project in collaboration with Shuangdong–Nanyang Primary School. After the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, NBS received financial donations from its Executive MBA alumni in China to rebuild the school. Since then, teams of NBS undergraduates have gone there every year to volunteer as teachers.
THE JOY OF GIVING AND RECEIVING

Theresa Marten, a Tanoto Foundation scholar who graduated from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information this year, recounts her experience as a volunteer for Project Sukacita in December 2015.

"Coming from a humble family in Palembang, Indonesia, I had to pay for my own tuition fees and living expenses after my dad passed away. When I got a scholarship from the Tanoto Foundation, I felt thankful and lucky as it took much of the financial burden off my shoulders. This made me determined to pass on the kindness I had received.

Even though I may not be able to donate money to charity, I can still help the needy in other ways. I can spend time with them, bring smiles to their faces and be a positive influence on their lives. That’s why I joined Project Sukacita. We spent five days in Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau Province, Indonesia. This might seem short, but the impact that we left behind on the local community will hopefully last much longer than that.

While I tried to motivate and inspire the local children, they greatly inspired me as well. I learnt that happiness is simple. The kids taught me two keys to happiness that are often overlooked: trust and appreciation. I was amazed at how quickly they warmed up to us, even though we had just met them a few days ago.

When I made something out of play dough and gave it to the kids, I knew that my amateurish attempt looked terrible. But not once did the kids say that it was. Instead, they were elated to receive it. Their attitude made me wonder why we can’t be as trusting and appreciative as they are.

Another thing that made the experience so memorable and enriching was how hospitable the other Tanoto Foundation scholars and volunteers were. Being the only NTU student there, I was afraid that I would feel left out, but they proved me wrong. We had a lot of fun together and I hope to remain friends with all of them.

Sukacita means “joy” in Indonesian. I can’t think of a better way to sum up how I feel about taking part in the project.”

Set up in 2012, Project Sukacita is an annual community service project led by Tanoto Foundation scholars based in Singapore and Indonesia. Together with other volunteers, they visit rural communities in Pangkalan Kerinci every December. Their aim is to improve the living standards and quality of life of local villagers by creating a cleaner environment, raising public health awareness and emphasising early childhood education.

The kids taught me two keys to happiness that are often overlooked: trust and appreciation.

Theresa Marten, Tanoto Foundation Scholar
WHILE OTHERS ARE PLACING THEIR HARD-EARNED MONEY IN INVESTMENTS AND INDULGING IN LUXURIES, MR DANIEL CHEW (NANYANG BUSINESS SCHOOL, 96”) IS GIVING HIS TO STUDENTS IN NEED.
During Mr Chew’s A-Level days at Victoria Junior College (from 1989 to 1990), his father became unemployed, putting the family in a challenging financial situation. “The bursaries I received, as well as the money I earned by giving tuition, provided me with the financial means to achieve my first degree — which was instrumental in providing me a head start in my career.”

Mr Chew entered the Nanyang Business School to study Accountancy as he believes that “iron sharpens iron — the faculty had the most stringent admission criteria and competitive cohort,” and graduated with First-Class Honours.

While the second scholarship was set up to honour, Joanna, his wife of 22 years — Mr Chew’s pillar of support who has stuck with him through thick and thin — the first was set up in his parents’ name. “It dawned on me one day how my mum has aged over time. I was determined to show my appreciation in a meaningful way to a loving mum who had invested all her youth in nurturing her children. At that point I saw an appeal in an NTU newsletter asking for alumni to give back, and thus pursued the idea of donating to NTU’s endowment bursary fund in honour of my parents.”

Mr Chew’s parents came from poor families and had little formal education — a few years in primary school at best. Yet they did all they could to give him and his two younger brothers an education for as long as possible. “My late father was a bus driver and odd-job worker. When he lost his job, my mother took on a series of odd-jobs to help make ends meet. They certainly made huge sacrifices for us, including giving up the prospect of having more children — which they had always wanted — due to financial constraints,” he says. “But even though we didn’t have money, my parents taught us always to do the right thing — and to never trade our characters and integrity for financial gains.” And the right thing to do for him, is to give as he has received.

Believing that the best way of showing gratitude is to pay it forward, Mr Chew goes out of his way to donate not just his resources, but also his time. He tries to meet the scholarship recipients on the few trips he makes back to Singapore every year, and even takes time out to evaluate potential awardees.

Through the bursaries he is also passing on his own values. The recipients are assessed first on financial needs, then on extra-curriculum achievements — and results last: “I believe that someone who is not doing well in studies might yet have leadership qualities and be able to make a bigger difference later in life. In fact, two of my union executive committee members who didn’t do too well academically now have very successful careers! I didn’t do too well academically in the first one-and-a-half years of university either. But ultimately, it isn’t about results but how one can make a difference to the people around them.”

Mr Chew also uses the funds as a means to teach life lessons to his children, aged 10, 14 and 17 years. “I always bring my children along to meet the recipients to let them hear first-hand how such financial support can help the lives of others. My wife and I want to be good role models for our children and want them to be able to contribute to the endowment fund even when we’re no longer around!”

**Chew Yew Hock & Lim Sew Lan Scholarship**

Established in 2009, with a donation of $100K, in honour of Daniel’s parents

**ENDOWED AMOUNT:** Donations of $100,000 (plus government matching) to fund the following award(s) in perpetuity: Up to 2 bursary awards of $4,000 each for the span of an academic year for students at the Nanyang Business School

**Daniel and Joanna Chew Scholarship**

Established in 2012

**ENDOWED AMOUNT:** Donations of $100,000 (plus government matching) to fund the following award(s) in perpetuity: Up to 2 bursary awards of $5,000 each for the span of an academic year for students at the Nanyang Business School
A commitment to expanding educational opportunities also gave Han Suyin an unexpected gift: the second of her two daughters. Learning that a 12-year-old girl had been taken out of school to work, Han Suyin visited the girl’s family and offered to pay her school fees. She later adopted Chew Hui Im, now a 79 year-old retired teacher.

“It was my mother’s wish to see good Chinese-English translation in Singapore (and) China,” says Mdm Chew. To realise this wish, Mdm Chew — with the support of friends and the Government — established the Han Suyin Scholarship Fund at NTU in 2013, a year after Han Suyin’s death.

The fund disburses the Han Suyin Scholarship (in Translation Studies), valued at S$8,000, every year. It aims to develop and support Chinese-English literary translation and is awarded to an outstanding NTU undergraduate doing translation as a minor, at the Division of Chinese of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The School aims to raise $1 million for the fund to boost the fund and advance English-Chinese translation in Singapore. There are also plans to extend the scholarship to students on the Master’s degree programme in translation and interpretation.

If you would like to contribute to the fund, please visit bit.do/supporthansuyin.

For major gifts, please get in touch with Mr Victor Tay at +65 6790 4502 / CDO@ntu.edu.sg.

Han Suyin is actually a pen name. Her real name was Rosalie Matilda Guanghu Zhou. Rosalie chose her pen name carefully: ‘Han’ is an homage to the Hans, the majority ethnic group in China, while ‘Suyin’ means ‘a common voice’.
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Professor Lee Sing Kong was a widely-respected academic and passionate educator known for his contributions towards Singapore’s teaching system. At Nanyang Technological University, Professor Lee served in various leadership positions that included Director of the National Institute of Education (NIE), Vice President of Education Strategies, Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Learning (CRADLE), and Vice President of Alumni & Advancement.

As a horticulturalist, Professor Lee played a leading role in the greening of Singapore. His contributions to the preservation and development of the country’s national parks and greenery helped to realise the late founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew’s vision of a Garden City.

Beyond his long list of career achievements, Prof Lee was known to many of his colleagues and students as a visionary leader with a heart, a selfless mentor and a great teacher. In honour of Prof Lee’s contributions towards education and Singapore, the University has launched the Lee Sing Kong Endowment Fund, which will carry on his vision and passion for education by supporting professorships in Early Childhood education as well as NTU Bursaries for underprivileged students.

A champion of education and the environment, the legacy of this esteemed academic lives on with the establishment of an endowment fund in his name.
Remembering Professor Lee Sing Kong (1951–2017)

“[…] education and farming share a very strong parallel – they involve the process of nurturing and the goals are to help unleash the potential of either a plant or a child.”

Professor Lee Sing Kong
Former NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), NIE Director, and horticulturist
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