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Dear Alumni,

Time flies, and we have entered a brand new year, the beginning of my second year as President of NTU. I hope 2019 is off to a great start for all of you.

It has certainly been a roaring start for NTU as our university was invited for the first time by the World Economic Forum to join the Global University Leaders Forum, a select group of only 28 prominent universities in the world. At the annual meeting in Davos this year, NTU, together with the National University of Singapore, hosted the inaugural Singapore panel session on “Globalisation 4.0: Technology & Innovation for Humanity”. I was honoured to moderate the panel comprising Mr Heng Swee Keat, Singapore’s Minister for Finance; Mr Lim Chow Kiat, CEO of Singapore’s sovereign wealth fund GIC, an NTU alumnus, and a member of the NTU Board of Trustees; Professor Suzanne Fortier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Canada’s McGill University; and Mr Dion Weisler, President & CEO of HP Inc.

Our broad ranging discussion touched on how innovation, technology, skills and economic development will be critical to the advancement of a new socioeconomic world order. The convergence of the physical, digital and biological worlds is occurring at an unprecedented pace, leaving great societal change in its wake and bringing forth new challenges, as well as opportunities.

With Industry 4.0, many researchers and manufacturers will embrace advanced machines to accelerate the digital transformation of their processes. NTU has a critical role to play in this transformation, and our colleagues in the College of Engineering have partnered with Germany’s Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces to launch a joint lab of Engineering have partnered with Germany’s Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces to launch a joint lab of advanced materials, ‘skin’ electronics, biomedical engineering, and artificial intelligence (AI). This work aims to take robotics and medical technologies to the next level by combining human senses with machine learning.

In medical technology too, we will see the arrival of many smart medical devices that rely on AI and sensing technologies. A research team from NTU and Tan Tock Seng Hospital, for example, has invented a smart handheld medical device that could enable early intervention for patients with congestive heart failure. The portable diagnostic tool lets patients check for excess fluid in the lungs—a common symptom of congestive heart failure—from the comfort of their homes.

As much as we are concerned with the health of people, the health of our planet is just as important. At NTU, we remain committed to sustainability, manifested in our recent launch of the Fraser & Neave-NTU Food and Beverage Innovation Lab. More than just develop innovative products and recipes, the joint lab will investigate greener packaging and methods to convert food waste into valuable substances, thus reducing the strain on the Earth’s natural resources.

Beyond our planet, we are also proud to announce that NTU successfully deployed its ninth satellite, the AOBIA VELOX-IV nanosatellite, into space in January this year. It carries new technologies that will be tested and validated in space, and our scientists plan to use the findings to build satellites robust enough to withstand what would be Singapore’s first lunar mission, which may be achievable within five years.

Amidst these research advances, NTU’s focus on teaching skills and economic development will be critical to the advancement of a new socioeconomic world order. The convergence of the physical, digital and biological worlds is occurring at an unprecedented pace, leaving great societal change in its wake and bringing forth new challenges. Amidst these research advances, NTU’s focus on teaching skills and economic development will be critical to the advancement of a new socioeconomic world order. The convergence of the physical, digital and biological worlds is occurring at an unprecedented pace, leaving great societal change in its wake and bringing forth new challenges.

Yours sincerely,

Subra Suresh
President,
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
NTU has announced a $4 million gift from the Estate of Irene Tan Liang Kheng to establish and endow new master’s degree scholarships and grants at the National Institute of Education. With matching funds by the Singapore Government, a total endowment of $87.25 million will go towards supporting teacher training and development. Up to eight scholarships will be given out annually, each valued at $10,000 per scholarship for subsidised students and $82,000 per scholarship for non-subsidised students. In addition, several grants totalling $239,000 over two years will also be set up to support service learning projects and innovations in teaching and learning, among other initiatives. The Estate is also contributing $85,000 for a new showcase of books in the CJ Koh Collection at the NIE Library and Information Services Centre.

DIAGNOSING A BROKEN HEART

One in five people worldwide run the risk of developing congestive heart failure and the risk of disease onset increases with age. Conventionally, to detect the condition, doctors check for fluid accumulation in the lungs, perform medical imaging or rely on blood-based tests. These methods must be performed in a clinic or hospital, can be costly and require a longer time to complete.

Scientists at NTU have thus invented a portable device that records breathing sounds and relies on artificial intelligence to diagnose congestive heart failure. NTU Associate Professor Ser Wee, who led the study, noted that the device could identify patients with congestive heart failure with 92 percent accuracy—comparable to the existing ‘gold standard’ diagnostic methods such as X-rays and CT scans.

A VISION OF BETTER EYE TREATMENT

Currently, eye diseases such as glaucoma and macular degeneration are treated using localised methods such as eye drops and ointments. While doctors may sometimes prescribe eye injections, such treatments can be painful and carry a risk of infection and eye damage.

To overcome these problems, researchers led by NTU Professor Chen Peng developed a portable concept patch covered with biodegradable microneedles that allows controlled drug delivery to the eye. Each needle, thinner than a strand of hair, is made of hyaluronic acid—a substance found in the eye—and is shaped like a pyramid for optimal tissue penetration. They found that the drug-containing microneedles detached and stayed in the cornea of mice, releasing drugs over time as they dissolved.

A $4 MILLION BOOST FOR TEACHING

IMAGINE BEING ABLE TO HOLD A PORTABLE Device TO DIAGNOSE CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

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more than five decades ago, American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan wrote The Times They Are A-Changin’, a poignant, if somewhat melancholic anthem that is eerily prophetic about the state of the world today. With lines like ‘admit that the waters around you have grown’ and ‘your old road is rapidly ageing’, Dylan alludes to transition—revolution even—and suggests that those who resist change do so in vain. Indeed, the pace of change is more rapid now than ever before, much of it driven by technology. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is weaving itself into business processes and consumer devices, the Internet of Things (IoT) is helping to track and trace everything from logistics to personal health, and advances in additive manufacturing or 3D printing are modifying the way goods are being created.

With these innovations and more, humankind is now experiencing what is being called the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0.
Unlike the industrial revolutions of the past which enabled mechanisation, mass production and mass communication, Industry 4.0 is altering not only what we do and how we do things, but also forcing us to confront questions about the nature of work and what it means to be human.

“The convergence of the physical, digital and biological worlds is occurring at an unprecedented pace, leaving great societal change in its wake and bringing forth new challenges as well as opportunities,” said NTU President Professor Subra Suresh at the inaugural Singapore panel session at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, themed ‘Globalisation 4.0: Technology & Innovation for Humanity’. “Innovation, technology, skills and economic development will be critical to the advancement of Industry 4.0,” Prof Suresh said.
PLUGGING GAPS WITH AUTOMATION

Going beyond manufacturing, Industry 4.0 technologies such as robotics and AI are also expected to have a profound influence on medicine. A mechanical engineer by training, Prof Phee builds surgical robots and can envision a future where the convergence of Big Data, machine learning and advanced robotics will allow doctors to provide more consistent, high-quality treatments to a larger number of patients. More crucially, Prof Phee highlighted that these technological developments will help society cope with a rapidly ageing population—a silver tsunami for which society is not adequately prepared for.

Professor Nadia Thalmann, Director of the Institute for Media Innovation at NTU, shares this view, adding that maintaining a good quality of life for seniors—especially those with physical disabilities or dementia—involves more than “just feeding and washing them”. Social interaction and mental stimulation are just as necessary in elder care, but it simply costs too much to have someone on standby 24 hours a day to provide such services. This could change with robotic caregivers.

Nonetheless, Prof Thalmann thinks that much more work needs to be done to take robots and AI out of factories and hospitals and into people’s homes. “What is complex is the relationship between humans and robots, because in professional settings, the service quality provided by robots has to be on par with that of humans,” she noted.

Seeking to overcome this barrier, Prof Thalmann has built Nadine, a robot that recognises people, simulates emotions and can hold conversations in six different languages. Deployed in professional contexts, such as in the role of a receptionist, Nadine is revealing the shortcomings of human-robot relations and may eventually help intelligent machines better integrate with society.

“Whither the new jobs?”

Amidst the optimism surrounding Industry 4.0, many have raised concerns about the availability of jobs in a modern economy that values automation. A McKinsey report estimated that 50 percent of existing work activities can be automated, which means that layoffs are inevitable. Yet, new jobs will be created, as has happened with previous Industrial Revolutions—we just don’t know what kind of jobs they are, said Prof Gianasso. The question, then, is how do we prepare the workforce for the future?

“You need to know how robots and computers work, deeply enough that you don’t make judgements about these technologies based on hype.”

– Professor Nadia Thalmann
“My advice would be to go deep into one core area of competency, but then also have a superficial understanding of adjacent fields.”

— Professor Louis Phee

In Prof Thalmann’s opinion, a digital skillset is essential for thriving in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. “You may be an economist or a social scientist, but you need to know how robots and computers work, deeply enough that you don’t make judgements about these technologies based on hype,” she said.

This is especially important if society wants leaders who can steer innovation in a positive direction. Today, technology is running ahead of regulations and policies, and surprisingly, it is the innovators who are nudging policy makers to draw up rules governing things like AI and autonomous vehicles, added Prof Phee.

Academia also has a role to play in helping society better understand emerging technologies and their implications, so the education system needs to produce individuals that are strong technically. Prof Thalmann thus suggested that “at least one-quarter to one-third of the courses in any curriculum should touch on computer science and data science”.

SOFTENING THE BLOW OF DISRUPTION

On the other hand, universities should not neglect equipping their graduates with soft skills. Ironically, these come at a premium in an age of technology, precisely because they cannot be easily replicated by automation.

“While having a digital skillset is important, we must also train our graduates to operate across geographical and cultural boundaries, to be able to build relationships and work in a team, and to be agile in their learning,” said Prof Gianasso, emphasising that the ability to cope with rapidly changing scenarios, paradoxes and conflicting agendas will grant job seekers a competitive edge in the global workforce.

The private sector can also help workers stay relevant in Industry 4.0, Prof Gianasso added. “The most important change is in the mindset of the senior management teams. They need to understand that the money that goes into training is a high return investment,” he said.

But at the end of the day, the onus is on the individual to never stop learning. Those who are content with the knowledge and skills they already have run the risk of becoming obsolete as new technologies emerge, said Prof Phee.

“We all have to be like the Transformers and change with the times. My advice would be to go deep into one core area of competency, but then also have a superficial understanding of adjacent fields,” he concluded.

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— Dr. Joan Gan Chui Goh (EEE/1990)

“Industry 4.0 brings exciting opportunities as it takes human potential to the next level by leveraging data, smart analytics and digital automation. But with greater digital interconnectivity, we also need to pay attention to areas like cybersecurity. Another aspect to think about is regulation, which would play a huge role in enabling newer ways of working while keeping societal interests in check.”

— Mr Abhimanyu Bhola (NBS/2005)

“The internet has commoditised information, and success belongs to those who can react to information quickly and effectively. Embracing the tools provided by Industry 4.0 would therefore prevent one from falling behind.”

— Mr Roderick Chia (EEE/1998)

“Previously, we would purchase products that are mass manufactured and standardised. In the future, we may be able to enjoy products that are customised for each of us.”

— Mr Hendri Zhang (EEE/2007)

“With more intelligent systems, production could be faster, better and cheaper. This can be a good thing if the objective is to improve the quality of human life. However, technology could also lead to a race between organisations and countries to outdo one another.”

— Mr Adrian Chye (SCSE/2004)

“Many companies pursue data relentlessly in the hopes of winning the race in the marketplace. But it is the extent to which companies leverage data meaningfully that gives them a competitive edge over others. Today’s managers must equip themselves with data-intelligence transformation skills to compete effectively using actionable insights.”

— Mr Roderick Chia (EEE/1998)
A KEEN AI FOR INNOVATION

Ms Annabelle Kwok (SPMS/2015) is pushing the envelope of artificial intelligence and having lots of fun while at it.

Ms Kwok has an impressive list of achievements and accolades to her name. The 26-year-old Taekwondo black belt who graduated from NTU’s School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences in 2014 has represented Singapore in international youth programmes, volunteered in Thailand and rural Africa, founded two technology companies—SmartCrow and NeuralBay, and was shortlisted as a finalist for the Straits Times Singaporean of the Year 2018 award.

In this interview with NTULink, Ms Kwok shares how she “accidently” stumbled into the booming artificial intelligence field of AI.

Could you tell us how you got involved in the field of AI?

Well, I picked up programming in primary school, did H2 computing for A-levels, and my major at NTU was in mathematics, all of which are useful for building AI. Back then, I was interested in image processing, so I took some image processing classes under NTU’s math faculty and did some crossover modules from computer science. What I didn’t realise was that the concepts used to build image processing applications were relevant to creating AI as well.

One of the visiting professors at NTU who taught me a lot about image processing is Professor Alfred Bruckstein. He let me crash his class meant for graduate students. Because it was a small class and there was less exam pressure, I felt like I had a lot more space to ask random questions about concepts that were not in the curriculum, and I thought that was great for promoting curiosity.

So yeah, my entry into the field of AI was very accidental. Then came the sudden surge in interest in AI and people started saying “hey, let’s talk to her” because I was already working on it.

What is one interesting project that you are working on right now?

At NeuralBay, we’re developing AI for image and video processing, which essentially means getting machines to recognise people, objects and text. It’s more difficult than people think.

When you have a scanned document, AI can easily make sense of it because the lighting, orientation and everything else is perfect. But when you talk about real-world conditions, such as when you want to recognise an apple from 200 photos taken from different places at different times of the day, with different quality of cameras, there’s a lot of moving variables to consider. So what we do at NeuralBay is train a software to recognise the apple under many different scenarios.

To better answer your question, one interesting project that I’m working on is using AI-assisted image processing to improve accountability at toll gates. In doing so, authorities can better keep track of the number and types of vehicles passing through an area, and whether those numbers tally with the toll fees collected.

What are your thoughts about innovation in the modern economy?

I’m excited that today we are more connected than ever before because of technology. I’m also proud that we have become smarter and stronger as a species. However, I worry about technical and financial disparity. Big corporations are innovating so much faster than the smaller companies. I think smaller companies don’t have the resources to have their own innovation labs, but at the same time, they don’t see the urgency to innovate—if something has worked for the past ten years, they tend to assume very completely that it will work for the next ten years. But that’s not the case in this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

So we’re seeing a very deep technical disparity emerging. If we continue glorifying how fast everybody’s innovating without paying attention to inclusiveness, we are going to run into social problems very soon.

What advice do you have for a young person to thrive in a technology-driven age?

Don’t just look at the glory of building technology, pay attention also to the ethical responsibility that comes with it. The jobs of today are more than just about needing to put food on the table, and the jobs of tomorrow will be more than just about muscle and brains—they will be about heart. So invest your time and effort into a job that is meaningful, that has purpose and that resonates well with your value system, and choose carefully.

Along the way, there will be a lot of temptation to go for the highest-paying job or project, but ask yourself: are you sure you are using your skill in the right way that allows you to sleep soundly at night?
While it may not be everyone’s cup of tea, graduate education and qualifications beyond the bachelor’s degree do carry some perks when it comes to job hunting. As employers demand stronger leadership skills and deeper technical know-how, higher qualifications like the Master of Business Administration and the Doctor of Philosophy can give aspirants an edge in a job market that is increasingly global and competitive.

Universities, being hubs of higher education and vocational training, have a role to play in tailoring education programmes that equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to thrive in the modern economy. As one of the world’s top young universities, NTU is seeking to do more to improve the scale, scope, quality and impact of its graduate education and research.

“We have 37 PhD degree programmes and more than 70 master’s degree programmes at NTU,” said Professor K. Jimmy Hsia, founding Dean of the Graduate College, NTU. “Many of them are ripe for review because ten years ago, the standards, the faculty and the students were very different.”

**Excellence across the board**

Having served as the Associate Dean of the Graduate College and Associate Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and the Founding Director of the Nano & Bio Mechanics Programme at the US National Science Foundation, Prof Hsia is no stranger to refining graduate education programmes at institutions of higher learning. Now at NTU, he has formed the Graduate College Executive Committee, responsible for reviewing, debating, evaluating and eventually recommending new initiatives and changes to graduate education programmes.

Already, Prof Hsia notes the need to develop policies and processes to guarantee that the quality of graduate education is high and relatively uniform across the various schools in NTU. Currently, some graduate education programmes are better designed than others in terms of structure, content or course load. What the Graduate College seeks to accomplish is assess these success stories, identify best practices, then share them with other schools so that they too may implement strategies that benefit their graduate students.

“Some programme elements have worked out beautifully for some schools and produced highly versatile and capable graduate students. We don’t know whether those practices can be transplanted to other schools, but the Graduate College should at least be the body that gathers and safeguards institutional knowledge of what’s important and critical for successful graduate education,” said Prof Hsia.

**No more silos**

In addition to sharing best practices, Prof Hsia wants to strengthen the interdisciplinary aspect of graduate education and research at NTU. Graduate education programmes run by
individual schools and colleges tend to be structured according to their specialty disciplines, and this forms an intrinsic barrier to interdisciplinary thinking.

“You do need in-depth understanding of a particular field in order to do high quality research in science and engineering fields. But by exposing students to multiple different disciplines, new ideas come up and perhaps new fields can be developed,” Prof Hsia said. Hence, the Graduate College is helping schools tweak their graduate education programmes such that students are given the option to explore areas beyond their core discipline.

Graduate education programmes will also be better aligned with NTU’s ‘peaks of excellence’—sustainable Earth, secure community, healthy society and global Asia—meant to address national needs and global issues. Together with research centres like the Energy Research Institute @ NTU and corporate/joint laboratories such as the Alibaba-NTU Singapore Joint Research Institute, graduate students will have numerous opportunities to carry out interdisciplinary research with real-world impact.

“What the Graduate College can also do is support the concept of interdisciplinary education and research. If a faculty member proposes a ‘crazy’ idea that demands an unconventional mix of disciplines, as long as the idea has merits, we can provide him or her with resources such as PhD scholarships to develop the idea further,” he said.

Broadening horizons

Beyond interdisciplinary research and technical competency, Prof Hsia thinks that graduate students should also be trained in communication and writing, research integrity and ethics, and have opportunities to learn something about entrepreneurship, leadership and other soft skills.

“Twenty years after you graduate, how much of the technical stuff you learnt in university would still be relevant and used heavily? Quite a bit may have become obsolete. What would still be relevant as you rise along the career ladders are your soft skills, such as communication and persuasion,” he said.

For example, to help graduate students become better communicators, the Graduate College has established a requirement for communications training for all PhD students. The programme includes an intensive 19-hour course that focuses on helping students present their technical ideas and research findings in an accessible manner, be it in speech or in writing, and a university-wide three-minute thesis competition as a means to get graduate students to condense their entire thesis into a succinct yet understandable presentation for a non-expert audience.

Prof Hsia further noted that it was important to engage the right schools to provide the best training in specific soft skill areas. This entails working closely with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Communications and Information and the Nanyang Business School, among others, to add value to graduate education programmes.

“What we want, at the end of the day, are individuals who are not just comfortable working at the interface of different scientific fields, but who can also be leaders and advocates for their research on the global stage,” said Prof Hsia.

“Twenty years after you graduate, how much of the technical stuff you learnt in university would still be relevant and used heavily? Quite a bit may have become obsolete. What would still be relevant as you rise along the career ladders are your soft skills.”

— Professor K. Jimmy Hsia
If you graduated from the Nanyang Business School’s Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme in July 2018, you would have had Mr Pravin Raj as your fellow coursemate. Cutting a confident and convincing figure during presentations, the 34-year-old Strategic Planning Manager (Asia Pacific) at automation solutions provider Emerson emcees events, delivers public speaking training on a part-time basis and was President of the NBS MBA Student Executive Council from 2017-2018.

But beneath Mr Raj’s polished demeanour is a humble individual that gives back to society in more ways than one. In his free time, he volunteers with local charities and non-profit organisations and actively participates in panel discussions on current social issues. To top it off, he is also the sponsor of the Sellappah Scholarship, which aims to provide financial aid to students from Southeast Asia (excluding Singapore), Africa and South America who are committed to making a positive contribution towards the development of their respective home countries and communities.

“It has always been a dream of mine to help underprivileged and deserving students achieve their academic aspirations,” said Mr Raj. “I believe everyone deserves the opportunity to obtain a quality education, to give them the stepping stone they need.”

A history of giving

The Sellappah Scholarship is named after Mr Raj’s late grandfather, Mr K.N. Sellappah, who was a mentor to Mr Raj and a staunch advocate for education. Born in 1913 in Sri Lanka to a poor family, Mr Sellappah became a school teacher before selling what he could to journey to Malaya in search of a better life.

During the second World War, he was kidnapped and forced to work on the construction of the infamous Thai-Burma Death Railway. Fortunately, Mr Sellappah survived that ordeal to live a long and fulfilling life. He passed away in 2006 at 92 years of age but left behind valuable lessons on the importance of discipline, education, perseverance and community service to his grandson.

“He played a big role in my life. I always looked up to him,” said Mr Raj, describing his late grandfather as a “calm and composed” person whom his family could always turn to for advice. “He was not a strict disciplinarian, but did things with a lot of love, and inspired you to do better.”

One such scenario etched into Mr Raj’s memory is the day he showed a perfect test score to his grandfather. “He looked at it and said, ‘You can improve on the handwriting’. I smile when I think about it today. That was something he instilled in me: it is good to pat yourself on the back when you have done well, but also constantly strive to be better, not just for yourself, but for other people. Always think about how you can do more.’

Many drops make a shower

Mr Sellappah’s words continue to inspire Mr Raj, spurring him on to pay it forward whenever he can. In fact, the Sellappah Scholarship at NBS is the second one he has established in his grandfather’s name; the first is at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, where Mr Raj completed his undergraduate studies and received his bachelor’s degree.

“The NBS team was very helpful and fantastic from start to finish when I told them I wanted to set up the scholarship. They made it happen quickly and always kept me in the loop, so I was always aware of the progress. The important thing was having the right people with a similar mindset and desire to get things done,” Mr Raj said.

To encourage others who may be keen to contribute to society in their own small ways, Mr Raj had this to say: “Every little bit helps. I would encourage others to identify causes that they are passionate about and think about what they can do to make a difference in some way. Once they have that figured out, the rest of the pieces will fall in place automatically. The positive impact you can create in the lives of others cannot be underestimated.”
ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

As digitalisation continues to sweep across the globe, those who fail to embrace it will inevitably be left behind. Furthermore, as the nexus of innovation shifts to Asia, China has emerged as a strong contender in the digital economy, leveraging technology to bring new products and services to global markets, thus driving economic progress.

To help alumni better understand the nuances of the risks and opportunities presented by the digital economy, the Nanyang Technopreneurship Center (NTC) and the NTU Alumni Affairs Office jointly organised a Digital Economy Innovation Immersion Trip to China from 2 to 7 December 2018. Alumni participants had the opportunity to visit leading corporations in China to obtain insights on successful business models and gain a deeper understanding of the strategies of Chinese tech giants. Among the companies that opened their doors to NTU alumni were Alibaba, Hikvision, Kujiale, Hema Xiansheng, JD.com and Xiaomi, many of which are also involved in driving Singapore’s Smart Nation transformation.

In addition, delegates attended the Entrepreneur China Annual Conference 2018 in Beijing, an event that has successfully attracted prominent speakers and thought leaders in China since 2007. Themed ‘Break & Change’, the conference attracted some 5,000 guests and saw wide-ranging discussions on pertinent issues such as enterprise services, artificial intelligence, financial technology, the future of consumer experiences and the future of health.

“I am impressed by the deep appreciation [the Chinese] have for systematic technological innovation. Their hunger for success and their focus on human capital are key lessons we can learn for our business and professional development.”

– Mr Ken Toh, CEO and Director of Thinking Notes Pte Ltd

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“The main factor that motivated me to enrol in this immersion trip was the programme outline, which focussed on experiential learning through on-site visits to the many established companies in China,” said Mr Jerome Lau (EEE/2001), Managing Director of Splash Productions Pte Ltd. “Instead of just learning about them in a classroom setting, we saw the companies first hand and interacted with the key executives from the companies.”

Other alumni participants described the trip as “eye-opening” as they learned from the experts and from one another, sharing their personal and professional experiences.

But what most impressed Mr Ken Toh (WKWSCI/2014), CEO and Director of Thinking Notes Pte Ltd, was “the deep appreciation [the Chinese] have for systematic technological innovation. Their hunger for success and their focus on human capital are key lessons we can learn for our business and professional development.”

Meanwhile, Director of Mega Indah Cargo Mr Joseph Situwali (EEE/2008) felt that the immersion experience left him with a profound respect for how China has evolved and matured into an online consumption behemoth. The key to their success, he noted, was making technology easily available to people and the various communities in China. “I highly recommend this learning trip... In addition to the knowledge gained, I have made valuable friendships with my fellow participants,” he added.
Jack Ma’s true mission is not retail, but globalisation.

Jack Ma’s destiny, it seems, is not limited to leading the “A-team” that built Alibaba to where and what it is now. As he put it himself in a Bloomberg interview, “I think some day, and soon, I’ll go back to teaching. This is something I think I can do better than being CEO of Alibaba.”

By now, the story of Jack Ma, his partners, and how Alibaba grew is well-known to many people. As the story goes, Ma and his co-founders sought to help Chinese factories find foreign buyers, essentially to bridge the gap between China and the rest of the world. Many years and billions of dollars later, Alibaba has morphed beyond recognition, but the mission is still the same. Regardless of whether it is e-commerce, movie, cashless payment, cloud computing or whatever Alibaba sets its sights on, it is still about bridging China with the rest of the world.

This, then, is Ma’s true destiny. There is a timeless Chinese adage—“When drinking water, think of the source”—that extols the value of being grateful for how far a person has come and who has helped in the past. Alibaba, Ma and the rest of China are significant beneficiaries of a connected world and globalisation. There are no reasons why these benefits cannot also accrue to other countries, and Ma has been jet-setting around the world to promote globalisation, among others reasons—by his own estimate, he will chalk up 1,000 flying hours this year.

Despite stepping down, Ma will continue to be involved with Alibaba as a member of the board of directors and a lifetime member of the Alibaba Partnership. Outside of Alibaba, he has publicly stated that he wants to spend more time on education, environment and philanthropy.

At the corporate level, business is far from being done, and Alibaba will continue to connect the world with China through its vast and still expanding ecosystem, which of course encompasses much more than e-commerce. Outside business, education, environment and philanthropy transcend cultures and political divides, and it will be on these fronts that Ma will continue to connect China with the rest of the world personally through his own Jack Ma Foundation.

In some ways, Ma’s destiny reflects China’s own destiny as a nation. Indeed, both are intertwined at times. To help US small and midsize enterprises sell to Chinese customers, Alibaba launched “Gateway 17” in Detroit, in part heeding US President Donald Trump’s call to help create jobs in the US. Just last month, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad visited Alibaba in Hangzhou, and expressed his desire to tap on Alibaba’s technology to benefit Malaysians. It is worth noting that Alibaba’s contribution is taking place at a time when China’s relationships with the US and Malaysia are going through a difficult phase.

At only 54 years old, and backed by the might and reach of his foundation as well as Alibaba, there is still plenty left in the tank for Jack Ma, the teacher, to fulfil his true destiny.

This commentary was written by alumnus Mr Chong Lub Bun (MBS/1990) and originally published on Caixin Global. Mr Chong is the Director of C Consultancy Ltd. and has worked with Chinese entrepreneurs, Chinese joint ventures and foreign companies in China since 1993. He also is the author of Managing a Chinese Partner: Insights From Four Global Companies and a number of published articles on China.
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Mr Paul Chain, CEO for NTU Development and Facilities Management

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But we are bold enough to go back to basic principles to reinvent solutions.”

Above all, Mr Chain emphasised the need for original innovation in the push for sustainability in Asia. “What is applicable to the West is not always applicable to us as we have different environmental, societal and cultural problems,” he said.

All in the same boat

Mr Chain attributes NTU’s stellar track record of sustainability to three good governing principles, the first of which is a culture of forgiveness.

“If you want your researchers or subordinates to try something bold and take risks, you must be prepared to forgive them if they fail,” he said. “If you strike them out for genuine mistakes, you will not be able to reap any results.”

Mr Chain also mentioned that boundaries should be pushed, and rules should be challenged if they ran contrary to common sense. “Do not let a policy, practice or standard override logic or reason,” he said.

Finally, he mentioned that the most important principle was to view commitment towards sustainability as an act of righteousness, love and ethics.

“Sustainability is about us; about humanity. Look at the bigger picture and avoid the temptation of being side-tracked for selfish gains,” he said.

The audience found the intimate Tête-à-Tête session with Mr Chain enlightening. Mr Lye Rongfang (NBS/2009) felt intellectually stimulated by Mr Chain’s explanations of the three principles.

Ms Wong Chu Ting (NBS/2013) also left the talk feeling better informed. “It was an eye-opening session to know that NTU has an office dedicated to sustainability efforts. I’m really glad there is someone like Mr Chain who is taking a strong stand to make NTU more sustainable.”

Single-use plastic disposables have made life so convenient that most people have stopped thinking about their impact on the natural world. After all, it is just one plastic utensil, just one plastic straw and just one plastic bag—but the environmental problem they collectively pose is disastrous.

Plastic waste does not break down easily, and when they do under certain conditions, they release toxic chemicals, taking a toll on wildlife and human health. NTU is no outsider to the issue of plastic waste, said Mr Paul Chain, CEO for NTU Development and Facilities Management, who added that as much as 35 percent of the total waste generated on campus is plastic, mainly due to food packaging.

“We have been too pampered and refuse to give up convenience,” said Mr Chain to some 80 NTU alumni and guests on 8 November 2018 at the NTU Alumni House at Marina Square. “If I had my way, I would enforce a ‘no plastic bag’ rule instead of asking consumers to purchase plastic bags for 20 cents—the same goes with disposable utensils.”

Shrinking the environmental footprint

Even as NTU is taking steps to address the plastic waste problem, it is already one of the world’s greenest university campuses. To date, 95 percent of NTU’s buildings are certified Green Mark Platinum, and the latest six-storey academic building to be constructed will be just as environmentally friendly.

Made of mass-engineered timber procured from renewable forests and prefabricated for installation on site, the amount of pollution produced at the worksite is reduced, and the amount of manpower required is much lower compared to traditional construction methods. When completed in 2021, it will house the Nanyang Business School and the activities of several other colleges.

Such eco-friendly construction solutions stem from diligence with a dash of courage, said Mr Chain. “Our bold designs in engineering are not necessarily ‘smart’, but we are bold enough to go back to basic principles to reinvent solutions.”

Above all, Mr Chain emphasised the need for original innovation in the push for sustainability in Asia. “What is applicable to the West is not always applicable to us as we have different environmental, societal and cultural problems,” he said.
What does Sun Tzu’s Art of War—an ancient Chinese military treatise dating back to the 5th century BC—have to do with thriving in the modern world? Speak to Mr Daniel Theyagu, corporate trainer at human resource consultancy firm Lateral Solutions Consulting LLP, and you’ll learn that the timelessness of Sun Tzu’s words lies in their power to promote critical thinking.

Close to 40 NTU alumni spent two hours on 23 January 2019 unpacking the wisdom of Sun Tzu’s Art of War with Mr Theyagu at a workshop titled ‘Critical Thinking for Situational Analysis & Peak Performance’. Held at the NTU Alumni House at one-north, the discussion kicked off with Mr Theyagu explaining that critical thinking involves how we ‘critique’ our own thinking processes. In the Art of War, such self-critique is embodied in the saying, “know thyself, know thy enemy”.

“Knowing yourself is the guiding principle of critical thinking, because you are your greatest enemy, and it is not because of what you do, but how you think,” said Mr Theyagu. He further elaborated that our egos and biases have a tendency to cloud our thinking, leading us to make decisions that may not generate the best outcomes for ourselves and those around us.

But putting aside our egos and acknowledging our biases is easier said than done. Thankfully, Mr Theyagu provided the audience with five guiding principles found in Sun Tzu’s Art of War that can be used as a mental checklist for everyone to improve their critical thinking skills.

“A good general will keep five things in mind: the doctrine, the weather, the terrain, the commander and the moral law,” he said.

By understanding the reasons behind other people’s intentions, one develops perspective, which helps to combat one’s ego and biases (the doctrine). For example, Mr Theyagu said that understanding ‘the doctrine’ can be helpful for dealing with problems in the workplace.

“An instruction given to you might be very clear, but the way you perceive it may be different, and that’s why screw-ups happen at work... [if you reflect on the situation later] you will find a mismatch between what you perceived and what was actually said,” Mr Theyagu noted.

Meanwhile, by logically assessing the weather and terrain, one can then take stock of available resources and come up with a feasible solution to a problem. Once a solution or course of action has been found, Mr Theyagu highlighted the need to appreciate how that action can influence the actions of others. This means taking into consideration the reactions of colleagues, clients or competitors—characters equivalent to the rival commander in the Art of War.

Last but not least, it is important to act in accordance with the moral law to avoid bad consequences, said Mr Theyagu. Critical thinking should therefore not be independent of ethics and values.

To help alumni better appreciate how their perceptions can misguide their thinking, Mr Theyagu then invited them to play, in small groups, several puzzle games which involved ice-cream sticks. The goal was to create various shapes using the sticks. Once each group had their solutions, Mr Theyagu would ask them to look at how others have approached the same problem, revealing logical missteps or missed opportunities to come up with a better solution.

At the end of the workshop, Ms Fiona Kwan (WKWSCI/2007) felt that Mr Theyagu had struck a right balance between ‘entertainment and education’, adding that by making the learning fun, Mr Theyagu had helped her better internalise the critical thinking skills and concepts.

Mr Khew Zong Jie (EEE/2009), who had attended similar workshops when he was a student, came to the session keen to strengthen his critical thinking skills and left enlightened.

Regarding the use of Sun Tzu’s five principles, Mr Norman Tan (NBS/2018) said, “I thought Sun Tzu’s principles were intriguing and useful, especially when it comes to being mindful of our own biases for critical thinking.”

“A good general will keep five things in mind: the doctrine, the weather, the terrain, the commander and the moral law.”

— Mr Daniel Theyagu
With the launch of the NTU Alumni Association (AA) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), alumni in the GCC now have an official platform to keep in touch with their alma mater.

The launch ceremony took place at the Royal Le Méridien Abu Dhabi on 19 October 2018 and was graced by His Excellency Mr Samuel Tan Chi Tse, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the United Arab Emirates. Mr Low Pit Chen, Consul-General of the Republic of Singapore in Dubai, and Professor Alan Chan, NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), were also in attendance, along with some 40 alumni residing and working in the region.

AA President Ms Rasiah Raslyn Agatha (WKWSCI/2010) welcomed all alumni and guests before introducing the AA committee members. Prof Chan then updated those present on NTU’s progress and development, also sharing more on the University’s alumni engagement initiatives.

It was a symbolic day for some 50 School of Social Sciences (SSS) alumni, faculty and guests who gathered to witness the launch of their School’s Alumni Association (AA) at the Alumni House at Marina Square on 24 November 2018.

Professor Alan Chan, NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), and Professor Joseph Law, Dean of College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, graced the event. Alumni and faculty from four College programmes—Economics, Psychology, Public Policy and Global Affairs, and Sociology—took the opportunity to interact with one another over a sumptuous high tea spread and ice cream.

SSS alumni also had fun capturing great memories at the photo booth. The highlight of the event was a book auction of the professors’ favourite books. Proceeds from the sale went to the SSS Advancement Fund.

NTU (GCC) President Ms Rasiah Raslyn Agatha (seated, 5th from left), Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the United Arab Emirates Mr Samuel Tan Chi Tse (seated, 6th from left), NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), were also in attendance, along with some 40 alumni residing and working in the region.

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THANKS FOR THE GOOD TIMES!

It was an evening of good food and gratitude as alumni, faculty and staff gathered at The Revel Bistro & Bar of the NTU Alumni House at Marina Square on 30 November 2018 for the Alumni Affairs Office (AAO) Year-End Appreciation Reception. Graced by Professor Alan Chan, NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), the event was organised to thank key members of the NTU community for actively supporting and championing alumni relations in their respective groups.

In his speech, Prof Chan shared about the achievements of the alumni community and explained his vision for 2019, which had a strong focus on alumni engagement. Ms Rachel Lim, Assistant Marketing Manager of Neo Group Limited, then gave a brief introduction of the services and promotions being offered by The Revel Bistro & Bar. Between sampling the delicacies and catching up with friends, alumni and guests had a fun time capturing great memories at a photo booth by Synthesis Effects.

EMBARKING ON AN ARTISTIC VOYAGE

Some 30 alumni and their families set sail on the magnificent cruise liner Costa Fortuna for a 5D4N Interactive Cruise Tour from 18 to 22 November 2018. The tour, organised by the NTU Alumni Affairs Office, included an exhibition of European art and a tasting of exotic international cuisines.

Alumni also embarked on an ‘Amazing Art Hunt’, where they had to form groups to locate items using a treasure map and clues scattered about the ship. They then showcased their artistic talents as they illustrated their favourite characters or images on tote bags. All in all, it was a fruitful trip, and alumni took home with them great memories and their personalised masterpieces.

ANTI-CLOCKWISE

NTU alumni showing off their handmade tote bags.
Solving the puzzles took patience and teamwork.
European art was on display on the cruise liner.
AN ENJOYABLE MID-AUTUMN EVENING

The NTU Alumni Toastmasters Club held its 167th Chapter Meeting and mid-autumn festival celebration at the NTU Alumni House at one-north on 29 September 2018. Club President Mr Chua Seng Cheong (Commerce/1975) delivered his opening speech, and Ms Wiwiek Najihah, the Singapore representative in the 2018 World Championship of Public Speaking, shared tips on how to improve speeches. Alumni then took part in a word-guessing game as part of the mid-autumn festival celebrations, whereby they had to guess a word based on pictures and hints provided by the game master.

DEFINITELY A LAUGHING MATTER

Heard of the reality singing competition ‘Singapore Idol’? Well, the Toastmasters Club had its ‘Humorous Idol’ contest on 24 November 2018 at NTU at one-north. Advanced Communicator Bronze, Advanced Leader Bronze, Mr Flex Tio (SCSE/2007) was the emcee and toastmaster of the day. Attendees were kept entertained as five toastmasters delivered punchline after punchline, vying to be crowned the ‘King of jokes’, Mr Wong Yew Chung (NBS/2000) eventually emerged as the champion, flooring the crowd with his unique brand of humour.

MORE THAN JUST SMALL TALK

On 27 October 2018, some 20 NTU Alumni Toastmasters Club members and speechcrafters attended the 168th Chapter Meeting and Speechcrafters Graduation at NTU at one-north’s Executive Centre. Opening the session was Club President Mr Chua Seng Cheong (Commerce/1975), who encouraged everyone to aspire towards becoming better communicators and leaders. He also congratulated speechcrafters on taking an important step in their public speaking journey. The meeting also included a Table Topic (impromptu speaking) session, where members made one- to two-minute speeches based on quotes by renowned individuals such as Albert Einstein and John F. Kennedy.

QUIZ NIGHT, WITH PRIZES!

Some 70 alumni from the Chemistry and Biological Chemistry Division of the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences (SPMS) got together for a lively night on 18 August 2018 at RedDot BrewHouse at Boat Quay. Themed ‘Ignite Old Reactions’, the event commenced with enjoyable activities including a quiz conducted by Associate Professors Tan Howe Siang and Edwin Yeow. The fun continued as the audience participated in a childhood photo-guessing contest, where winners walked away with attractive prizes.

SETTING SIGHTS ON A BRIGHT FUTURE

Everyone loves good career advice, and a healthy dose of it was doled out at the inaugural SPMS career talk series titled ‘Reimagining career possibilities’ on 1 November 2018. The SPMS Lecture Theatre 2 was filled with some 80 SPMS students and alumni. In addition to discussing career possibilities in a fast-changing and disrupted economy, participants had the opportunity to learn from Mr Vincent Ong, Managing Director of Evia Real Estate Management, and Dr Darrell Tay (SPMS/2013), Data Scientist of Agoda, who shared valuable lessons on planning for a successful career. Mr Michael Yap, Founder and Managing Partner of TNB Ventures, moderated the session.

OK TO BE MERRY AT OKTOBERFEST

It was a fun-filled evening for more than 80 SPMS alumni and professors at the inaugural SPMS Alumni Oktoberfest, held at the RedDot Brewhouse at Boat Quay on 12 October 2018. The event was graced by Professor Tan Choon Hong, Acting Chair of SPMS, and provided a great platform for alumni to unwind whilst catching up with one another. School of Materials Science & Engineering (MSSE) alumni held their own Oktoberfest celebrations at the Stuttgart Blackforest Boutique S-Café on 2 November 2018. Alumni were treated to sausage platters, pork knuckles, pumpkin soup and a free flow of beer, which got them reminiscing about the good times.
### Let the Good Times Roll

More than 100 School of Biological Sciences alumni from the Biological Sciences Club had a pleasant time catching up with old friends and establishing new connections at The Beacon at Marina Square on 14 September 2018. Associate Professor Andrew Tan, Associate Chair (Students and Alumni), SBS, graced the session.

Over good food and drinks, President of the SBS Alumni Association (SBSSAA), Mr Zeng Renchun (Class of 2008), took the opportunity to thank alumni for their service and encouraged them to help build a vibrant and engaged SBS alumni community.

### Magical Moments at the Movies

Mystery and magic surrounded a group of 100 alumni and guests on 17 November 2018 as they gathered for the movie screening of ‘Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald’. Alumni were in awe as they stepped into the wizarding world of Harry Potter to trace the adventures of familiar characters such as Albus Dumbledore and Newt Scamander.

### Unlocking the Potential of Blockchain

Some 100 NBS alumni and guests picked up valuable tips from financial technology experts at the NBS Focus Point on Blockchain Technology, held on 13 September 2018 at 80RR FinTech Hub. During the session, Mr Jimmy Ong (NBS/2000), Partner & IT Advisory Leader at Ernst & Young Advisory, noted that “the decentralised, tamper-proof attributes of a blockchain network makes it an excellent integration mechanism for inter-company processes”.

Dr Zhao Wei, Blockchain Lead at IBM Research, then shed light on enterprise blockchain applications, explaining how they are cost-effective and ensure mutual transparency. Finally, Mr Dave Friedel, Founder of start-up trading platform MarketAlly, touched on the possibility of using blockchain to mitigate the issue of fake news.

### Key Issues in Focus

There was no shortage of thought-provoking insights at the Nanyang Business School (NBS) Focus Point event held at the Mandarin Oriental, Jakarta, on 2 August 2018. Attended by more than 90 NBS alumni, the session commenced with a welcome address by Associate Professor Chung Lai Hong, Assistant Dean of NBS Alumni Affairs.

The audience then heard from Mr Wilianto Ie, President Director of Indonesia at Maybank Kim Eng Securities, who discussed the outlook of the Indonesian economy. Mr Johnny Widodo (MSE/2002), Director of fintech firm OVO, also highlighted opportunities in the payment, peer-to-peer-lending and the emerging healthcare sectors.

### Collaborative Innovation Gets Real

It was an enlightening gathering at the NBS luncheon with the Ambassador of Israel and East Timor to Singapore, Her Excellency Ms Simona Halperin. The event, held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Singapore on 30 October 2018, was attended by 50 NBS alumni, guests and staff who were eager to learn more about opportunities in Israel.

Besides giving alumni a brief history of Israel, Ms Halperin highlighted how her country is heavily invested in innovation, adding that it spends 4.3 percent of its gross domestic product on research and development—one of the highest R&D expenditures in the world.

Ms Halperin encouraged business partnerships between Singapore and Israel, highlighting the Singapore Israel Industrial Research and Development fund as a platform for close collaboration between the two countries.
A career sharing session for School of Humanities (SoH) students was held on 25 September 2018 at The Hive in NTU. The event, co-organised by the School and its alumni association, gave more than 40 SoH students the opportunity to hear from five alumni about the diverse career paths that awaited them upon graduation. A career coach also provided techniques to draft resumes and handle job interviews. The session saw lively discussions between students and alumni.

Some 20 SoH alumni gathered to unleash their creativity at a sewing workshop at 333 Kreta Ayer on 13 October 2018. Threading and locking were among the many techniques that alumni were exposed to. Furthermore, under the guidance of trainers from ‘Sew Into It’, participants created their own wristlets and tablet sleeves after three hours at the sewing machine. It was a great platform for alumni to catch up with one another while picking up useful skills.

On 1 December 2018, Baker’s Brew at Paragon Mall played host to a group of 20 SoH alumni who were keen to learn how to bake macarons from scratch. Participants picked up useful tips from Chef Vivienne Lim who generously shared her recipe and technique to perfect the “sometimes tricky” dessert. At the end of the workshop, alumni brought home their colourful personalised creations and sweet memories.

Whoever said business and pleasure don’t mix? On 22 September 2018, a group of 70 School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) alumni and guests gathered at Asia Pacific Breweries for a tour of the Tiger Beer brewery, followed by the EEE Alumni Association (EEEA) 22nd Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The exemplary achievements of Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI) alumni were celebrated at the WKWSCI Alumni awards. Held at Alter Ego at the Esplanade Mall on 21 September 2018, the event was attended by some 120 WKWSCI alumni, faculty and guests. Professor Alan Chan, NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), and Dr Mark Alan Cenite, Associate Chair (Academic) of WKWSCI, were also present for the memorable celebration.

EEE alumni were treated to drinks at the Tiger Beer brewery while touring the facility during their Annual General Meeting.
Promoting Holistic, Healthy Living

It was health insights galore at the ‘Cultivating Life—Ancient Wisdom, Modern Methods’ Speakers’ Series, jointly organised by the NTU Chinese Medicine Alumni Association (CMAA) and NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. The event took place at the NTU Alumni House at one-north on 29 September 2018 and drew a crowd of more than 30 participants.

The session provided a platform for a healthy discussion on the importance of holistic well-being and ways to maintain it, including meditation and exercises. The event concluded with light refreshments and interactions between faculty, alumni and guests.

Seventh Heaven at Hall 7

Laughter filled the air as some 60 Hall of Residence 7 alumni gathered for the Hall 7 Alumni Homecoming on 27 October 2018. Kicking off the event was Hall 7 AA President Mr Muhammad Zulhilmi Bin Ariff (MAE/2017), who introduced the incoming Hall 7 Alumni Committee. He also took the opportunity to share the Alumni Association’s direction for the upcoming year and thanked the NTU Alumni Affairs Office for supporting the event.

Alumni were entertained with amazing performances from Hall 7’s Jam Band and had a great time catching up with one another over great food and lively performances.

Three Good Reasons to Celebrate

The year 2018 is a significant year for the NTU Buddhist Society (NTUBS) as it marks the 35th anniversary for NTUBS, the 25th anniversary for NTU Buddhist Society Alumni (NTUBSA), and the 15th anniversary for the Little Bodhi Student Care Centre (LBSCC). To celebrate these milestones, alumni from the various associations gathered for a reunion on 3 November 2018 at Lotus Vegetarian Restaurant at Marlow Quality Hotel.

During the celebrations, NTUBSA took the opportunity to announce the launch of the NTUBSA Study Award, which will give future generations a chance to experience world-class education. Alumni had a great time catching up with one another over great food and lively performances.

A Memorable Meeting in Malaysia

The NTU Alumni Association (AA) (Malaysia) organised its Annual General Meeting on 6 October 2018 at Puchong, Selangor, which was attended by some 20 alumni. NTUAA (Hong Kong) President Mr Liew Han-Young (CIE/1995) was also present.

The meeting commenced with AA President Mr Chris Choy (CEE/1986) welcoming the members and reinforcing the objectives of the AA. He then delivered a presentation on the NTU Holistic Healing (TCM) collaborative project with NTU’s School of Biological Sciences. The meeting was followed by drinks and a game of pool.

Classmates Reunite in Indonesia

Dato’ Sri Dr Tahir (Commerce/1976) organised a 4D3N tour to Yogyakarta and Solo in Indonesia. It was a memorable reunion for the former classmates, as some of them had not met up for close to 42 years. More than 152 alumni, former lecturers from Nanyang University, and their families participated in the trip from 16 to 19 November 2018.

Highlights of the trip include visits to Borobudur, a world-famous attraction, and Prambanan, the largest Hindu temple in Southeast Asia. The group also had the chance to see the Solo River, known as the Mother River of Indonesia. The River has nourished the vast land and nurtured the local people, but it has started to dry up in recent years.

On the final night, Dr Tahir hosted a 16-table dinner at the Hotel of Aston, and alumni spent the evening singing classic songs of their yesteryears together.
ALUMNI CONNECT

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SHANGHAI NIGHTS WERE NEVER THIS FUN

The NTU Alumni Gala Dinner in Shanghai, themed ‘The Bund-Swing to Jazz’, was successfully held on 6 September 2018. Organised by NTUAA (Shanghai), the dinner was attended by some 120 distinguished guests and alumni. Consul-General of the Republic of Singapore in Shanghai Mr Loh Tuck Wai, NTU Board of Trustees member Ms Lien Siaou-Sze, NTU President Professor Subra Suresh, NTU Provost & Vice President (Academic) Professor Ling San, NTU Vice President (Research) Professor Lam Kin Yong, NTU Vice President (Administration) Ms Tan Aik Na, and NTU Vice President (Alumni & Advancement) Professor Alan Chan were also present.

Alumni and guests enjoyed entertaining performances, and Prof Suresh even joined in a dance. Thereafter, Prof Ling San and Ms Tan performed a duet, and a large mooncake was cut to mark the celebration of the mid-autumn festival.

TAKING ON THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP

The NTUAA (Anhui) 3rd term committee elections were held in Hefei City on 20 October 2018. Director of NTU Alumni Affairs Mr Soon Min Yam attended the meeting, which saw Mr Yue Chuanjing (NBS/2007) re-elected as President. Mr Ruan Yonggang (NBS/2007) and Mr Liu Jun (NBS/2007) were reappointed as Honorary Presidents, while Mr Huang Shaolong (NTC/2010) became the new Secretary-General.

A day later, in Chengdu City, NTUAA (Sichuan) also held an election meeting to form a new committee. Some 20 NTU alumni residing in Sichuan, together with Mr Soon, attended the meeting. Mr Gao Hongming (HSB/2003) was re-elected as the President, Mr Deng Minxin (HSB/2004) as the Executive Vice-President, and Mr Zhu Nan (NBS/2004) as the Vice-President-cum-Secretary-General.

On behalf of the new committee, Mr Gao mentioned that the AA will continue to build a complete alumni-service platform for the exchange of information and the sharing of resources between alumni and NTU. The AA also aims to support fellow alumni in starting their own businesses.

CELEBRATING CAMARADERIE IN CHINA

It was a monumental meeting of NTU alumni in China as the Alumni Associations (AAs) from Fujian, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Hainan jointly organised a combined gathering on 8 December 2018 in the city of Xiamen, China. Joining them were Consul General of Singapore in Xiamen City Mr Chi Chiew Sum, NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement) Professor Alan Chan, Director of NTU Alumni Affairs Mr Soon Min Yam, and Nanyang Business School Assistant Dean (Alumni) Associate Professor Chung Lai Hong. NTUAA Presidents and representatives from 14 provinces in China were also present.

Participants arriving in Xiamen on 7 December 2018 were received by alumni from Fujian, who hosted a dinner at a restaurant in Wetland Park, Wuyuan Bay. The following morning, alumni sailed out to sea for sightseeing before proceeding to the Xiamen Nanyang College to attend a forum, titled ‘Building human resources and training of much-needed talents in enterprises’, where Mr Lu Jiasheng (NBS/2008), President of NTUAA (Fujian), spoke about talent development.

NTUAA (Hong Kong) President Mr Liew Han-Young (CSE/1995) then gave a talk on ‘Reviews and reflections on China’s education’, delivering insights on the differences between the Chinese education system and those of developed countries. Last but not least, NTUAA (Hainan) President Mr Zhu Hao (NTC/2014) described the current situation of the social, economic and cultural development in Hainan Province. The forum concluded with a question-and-answer session, with Prof Chan giving closing comments.

Dinner was then served, during which Mr Chi gave a speech on the economic, educational and cultural exchanges between Singapore and China. The students of Xiamen Nanyang College also put up a performance, and alumni spent the rest of the evening networking.
Andy Leong Zhan Wen (MAE/2016)

Looking back on my days at NTU, it was no doubt tough trying to understand the many theories taught in class. However, the knowledge I gained at NTU laid a great foundation for my current role as a defence engineer—I was trained to think through problems logically and to design creative solutions. Schoolwork aside, I was widely involved in school sports where I led the NTU Swim Team to an overall 2nd position finish in the institute-varsity-polytechnic games in AY13/14. Hall activities kept me busy as well, as I was the chief programmer on Hall 2’s dinner and dance committee. My experiences at NTU have moulded me into who I am today and prepared me to tackle future challenges in the working world.

A SPRINGBOARD FOR SUCCESS

Andy Leong Zhan Wen
(MAE/2016)

Looking back on my days at NTU, it was no doubt tough trying to understand the many theories taught in class. However, the knowledge I gained at NTU laid a great foundation for my current role as a defence engineer—I was trained to think through problems logically and to design creative solutions. Schoolwork aside, I was widely involved in school sports where I led the NTU Swim Team to an overall 2nd position finish in the institute-varsity-polytechnic games in AY13/14. Hall activities kept me busy as well, as I was the chief programmer on Hall 2’s dinner and dance committee. My experiences at NTU have moulded me into who I am today and prepared me to tackle future challenges in the working world.

CRISTIE KENNEDY (SoH/2018)

The lessons at NTU, though challenging, were interesting as we delved into the world of how language structures and policies were derived. When I look back, the electives I took from the National Institute of Education, though out of my comfort zone, were very rewarding. From putting up a play to performing for an audience of one hundred, I enjoyed learning the various techniques and theories of veterans in the field.

Also, as Chairperson of the Emcee Club, I was moulded into a stronger leader and a more versatile emcee. The highlight of my emcee career and the greatest learning I received was from the dialogue session with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which I hosted before I graduated.

Cristie Kennedy
(SoH/2018)

When I look back, the electives I took from the National Institute of Education, though out of my comfort zone, were very rewarding.”

Zebrina Kelli Wu Cher Lynn
(SBS/2017)

It feels like just yesterday that I received my degree certificate, but it has been a year since I graduated from NTU. What mattered most to me was the journey that accompanied this achievement—both the heartache and the happiness.

The main reason for going to university is to get an academic qualification, but I think the social side of life on campus, which develops a person’s character, is of greater importance. I initially found it difficult to juggle my studies and host events as a member of the NTU Emcee Club, but eventually I found that sweet spot and things went more smoothly.

I believe that NTU helped build my tenacious spirit, teaching me to always push myself forward to become a better individual. I want to thank NTU for shaping me into a more confident individual as I find my place in the world.

Zebrina Kelli Wu Cher Lynn
(SBS/2017)

When I look back, the electives I took from the National Institute of Education, though out of my comfort zone, were very rewarding.”

Jinny Koh Jin Hui
(WKWSCI/2009)

School was a daily whirlwind of activities for me as I was involved in many extracurricular activities both in Hall and in school! Those activities helped me learn how to multitask better and to work in a team, both as a leader and as a follower. I also benefitted from the various overseas programmes offered by the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. For instance, I was selected for GO-FAR 2008, where my friends and I went on an 18-day journalistic trip to Karnataka, India, to report on the various crises the country was facing. It was an eye-opening experience which shaped me as a writer. In 2018, I launched my debut novel, The Gods Will Hear Us Eventually, at the Singapore Writers Festival.

Jinny Koh Jin Hui
(WKWSCI/2009)

When I look back, the electives I took from the National Institute of Education, though out of my comfort zone, were very rewarding.”

Kayden Kok Chin Yang
(NBS/2016)

My biggest takeaways from NTU, besides the network and the skillset I’ve gained, are the memorable experiences from school and Hall. I helped organise several camps as an undergraduate, which helped me form a unique bond with my peers from all walks of life. It was really heartwarming to graduate together!

I’m now a Senior Manager at Advisors’ Clique, leading a team and specialising in wealth advisory. NTU helped me acquire the presentation and interpersonal skills to excel in what I do. To give back to NTU, I intend to provide Hall sponsorships for needy students.

Kayden Kok Chin Yang
(NBS/2016)

When I look back, the electives I took from the National Institute of Education, though out of my comfort zone, were very rewarding.”

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Download the "NTU Alumni” mobile app now to receive your NTU Alumni Card instantly. For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg/Alumni/AlumniCard. Terms and conditions apply for each offer.
ALUMNI PARTICULARS UPDATE

We deeply treasure the relationship we have with our alumni. Do provide the NTU Alumni Affairs Office with your latest contact details so that we can continue to stay connected.

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AAO is committed to keeping all alumni's personal information private, safe and secure. To view AAO's personal data protection policy, please visit www.ntu.edu.sg/Pages/Privacy.aspx.

I hereby authorise, agree and consent to allow Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and its employees and agents (collectively “NTU”) and NTU’s third party service providers to:

a. collect, use, disclose and/or process personal data about me that I had previously provided NTU, that I now provide NTU, that I may in future provide NTU with and/or that NTU possesses about me including but not limited to my name, my identification number, my telephone numbers, my address, for the following purposes:

- To maintain a lifelong relationship with its alumni;
- To create awareness and promote alumni relations;
- To understand and study the profile of its alumni community for NTU's policy making and planning;
- To involve alumni in NTU's continual development and progress through the engagement of voluntary services and giving back to their alma mater;
- To assist ministries and government agencies in the development of national policies and guidelines through the sharing of necessary data.

b. send me such alumni-related marketing, advertising and promotional information through the following modes of communication:

(i) postal mail and/or electronic transmission to my email address; and
(ii) to my following telephone number(s) : ____________________ by way of:

(1) [   ] Voice call / Phone call
(2) [   ] SMS/MMS (text messages)
(3) [   ] Fax

Please indicate that you agree to NTU and its employees, agents and third party service providers using that mode of communication by inserting a √ in the box.

I hereby represent and warrant that I am the user and/or subscriber of the telephone number(s) provided by me above, and that I have read and understood the above provisions.

Signature/Date

Note: Regardless that you do not sign or complete this form, please note that the NTU reserves its right to send a specified fax message (as defined in the Personal Data Protection (Exemption from Section 58 Order 2013) (the “Exemption Order”) and/or a specified text message (as defined in the Exemption Order) to your telephone number if there is an ongoing relationship between the NTU and you and the purpose of the message is related to the subject of the ongoing relationship, pursuant to the requirements and conditions of the Exemption Order.
In order not to miss out on any upcoming events organised by the NTU Alumni Affairs Office, do remember to update your contact details with us.

Information is correct at press time. Events and dates may be subject to change.

For an updated list of upcoming local and overseas events organised by AAO, the Schools or the Alumni Associations, please visit www.ntu.edu.sg/alumni/alumnievents. If you wish to enquire about any of the events, or update us on your contact details, please write to us at alumniaffairs@ntu.edu.sg.

**MARCH 2019**

14
Intelligent Decisioning for Creating Better Customer Experience

29
Official launch of NTU Alumni Association (Germany)

30
Official launch of NTU Alumni Association (Switzerland)

**APRIL 2019**

3
Change Maker Series: Personal development workshop

27
Formation of NTU Alumni Association (Canada)

Researchers at the Nanyang Environment and Water Research Institute are partnering with the National University of Laos to teach students how wastewater from dormitory toilets is treated before being released into the nearby Dongbok wetlands. This helps increase students’ awareness about the various approaches and technologies for environmental management, paving the way for a greener future.

USE, TREAT, RINSE AND REPEAT
A GASTRONOMIC ADVENTURE

This bespoke multi-concept dining establishment offers plenty of delectable international cuisines as well as familiar Singaporean flavours to satisfy your local taste buds.

We have function rooms & event spaces that are catered to suit your corporate events as well as intimate soirées. With the bar just situated next door, this also presents the perfect opportunity to unwind at the end of the day!