

CN Yang Scholars all ready to go



SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION: Professor Alex Law shares a moment with his students at the annual CN Yang Scholars dinner. PHOTO | JONAH SONG

LEONARD HOW

NTU's first ever batch of 32 CN Yang scholars will be graduating in a few months.

"We're in our last few weeks of school, so it is a mix of emotions," said Daniel Leow, 24, a final-year student from the School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering. "We're a very tight cohort, so we'll miss hanging out with each other."

With an average cohort size of 40, the ties between the students are strong. Scholars in the programme go through a shared core curriculum during their first three semesters, regardless of their course of study. These core modules are a mixture of science and mathematics modules.

The programme, however,

lasts for the entire duration of the course they are enrolled in. CN Yang Scholars are a mix of undergraduates from the Science and Engineering faculties.

Leow likens the atmosphere in his cohort to a junior college class. "We still often hang out with each other," he said. This is despite the fact that their shared core curriculum ended a few semesters ago.

Professor Alex Law, the programme director, expressed his belief that the outgoing batch of students are primed to do well in life. While several plan to find work after graduation, a handful have begun applying to colleges overseas to further their education.

The CN Yang programme, which started in 2006, offers students a rigorous education in

the fields of science, engineering, technology and mathematics.

A hallmark of the course is the research major Prescribed Elective module freshmen have to complete. This module pairs students with faculty members who will guide them through their independent research.

Students then have the option of continuing their research at science or engineering labs in NTU or elsewhere in subsequent semesters and during the holidays.

Professor Law's only wish is for more local students to join the programme. At present, only slightly more than half the students are Singaporean.

"Since 80 per cent of the student population here at NTU are Singaporeans, the figure should be representative for our programme," he said.