



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **NTU Singapore disburses S\$1.5 million in financial aid to students impacted by COVID-19**

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has disbursed S\$1.5 million in financial support to assist students facing hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April, **President Subra Suresh** announced the **NTU COVID-19 Relief Package** to provide immediate help to students facing serious financial challenges due to the global pandemic. To support the Relief Package, NTU also launched new mechanisms to attract private philanthropic gifts from a wide variety of sources in addition to deploying available sources of public funding and resources from the University.

To date, more than 1,000 NTU students have received financial support from the Relief Package. The typical assistance package offered to the students ranged between S\$500 and S\$3,000, depending on the individual needs of the student.

More than 400 of these students are beneficiaries of the recently launched **NTU Priorities Fund**, a fund supported exclusively from private philanthropy. This fund aims to assist the University's neediest students who have no other recourse for financial support.

The NTU Priorities Fund was seeded and launched with a personal gift of S\$100,000 from Prof Subra Suresh and his wife, Mrs Mary Suresh. Thanks to the generosity and community spirit of more than 1,300 other donors who joined President and Mrs. Suresh, the Fund has grown to S\$1.5 million within four months.

This long list of donors includes many NTU faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and members of the Board of Trustees as well as organisations such as the Lee Foundation, GIC Private Ltd, and the Ngee Ann Kongsi. These external gifts also attract a matching endowment grant of another S\$1.5 million from the Singapore government to the University.

**NTU Deputy President and Provost Professor Ling San** said: "It has been very inspiring to see the NTU faculty, staff, students, alumni and the wider community come together to support our needy students during this time of great uncertainty. Alleviating their financial burden allows them to focus on their studies without worrying about their living expenses."

The NTU Priorities Fund is nurtured as an 'evergreen fund'. Recipients of support from the Fund are encouraged to 'pay it forward' after graduation so that future generations of students with pressing needs can similarly benefit from it.

**Ooi Jun Sheng**, a third-year undergraduate student in computer science, said: "Since COVID-19 affected my parents' source of income, I have been working almost every day to help offset our household expenditure. I think the NTU Priorities Fund is a great idea to help lighten the financial burden of needy students during these difficult times, and allow us to pay it back within two years of graduation so that future batches of students can benefit from the same fund too."

**Ashley How**, a final-year undergraduate student specialising in business and computer engineering, said: "Financial aid from the NTU Priorities Fund will go a long way in offsetting our family's loss of income during this period. It is a good initiative that helps students at a time of great need and stress. Motivated by the community spirit which has propelled this source of support, graduating students like me will be well energised to pay it forward to help future students who might face a similar situation."

One of the many donors to the Fund is NTU Trustee, **Mr Tan Chin Hwee**, Asia Pacific CEO of Trafigura Group. He said: "The true spirit of the NTU Priorities Fund is to perpetuate a virtuous cycle of philanthropy and imbue in beneficiaries the motivation to pay it forward. I have every confidence that the beneficiaries will appreciate the assistance they receive today and similarly want to extend the same helping hand to future generations of students when they are able to do so."

Beyond the pandemic, the Fund will be used to bridge digital inequality, a problem highlighted and exacerbated by the intensified use of digital technology for remote learning arrangements and communication during the outbreak.

Another personal donor to the fund from the NTU Board of Trustees, **Mr Lim Chow Kiat**, CEO of GIC Private Ltd, said: "In this digital age, we should strive to level the playing ground for students from less well-to-do families. Information and communication technologies should not be privileges only for those with access to the required digital tools. Closing this digital divide is an urgent priority to make sure that those without digital access are not disadvantaged and left behind."

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**About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore**

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. It also has a medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, set up jointly with Imperial College London.

NTU is also home to world-class autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Ranked amongst the world's top universities by QS, NTU has also been named the world's top young university for the past seven years. The University's main campus is frequently listed among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and it has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) building projects, of which 95% are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a campus in Singapore's healthcare district.

For more information, visit [www.ntu.edu.sg](http://www.ntu.edu.sg).