

THE POWER OF POTENTIAL

02 TAN CHIN TUAN
FOUNDATION BOOSTS
LIBERAL ARTS LEARNING

03 KEWALRAM CHANRAI
GROUP ESTABLISHES
SCHOLARSHIP

05 KWAN IM THONG
HOOD CHO TEMPLE
PROFESSORSHIP

AN EDUCATION REIMAGINED FOR THE FUTURE



Professor Pericles Lewis, President of the newly-opened Yale-NUS College.

Yale-NUS College, Singapore's first liberal arts college, opened its doors in August 2013. Professor Pericles Lewis, founding President and Professor of Humanities at Yale-NUS, talks about the College's distinctive approach to a liberal arts education, the diverse student body, the role of philanthropy in the College's success and plans for the future.

What is a liberal arts education?

The word "liberal" refers historically to what was most important for an educated person, free of other responsibilities, to study. So, the liberal arts are closely aligned with freedom – the freedom to pursue intellectual questions wherever scholarship takes us and the freedom to debate issues of current concern. The goals of a liberal arts education have long been to teach students to analyse carefully, to communicate effectively, and to make wise and humane decisions. The word "arts" refers historically not just to the visual or performing arts but to the whole range of human knowledge, from music to physics and beyond.

What is distinctive about a Yale-NUS liberal arts education?

Yale-NUS will offer a liberal arts and science education that is updated for the 21st century. That means giving students the breadth of knowledge to expand their minds and to be able to ask important questions in any field of endeavour, as well as the rigorous training in one field that teaches them how to pursue a subject in depth. I expect our students to master a body of knowledge and techniques,

“The College has been fortunate to have a number of programmes established due to the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations representing the Yale-NUS community.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

AN EDUCATION REIMAGINED FOR THE FUTURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1:

but I also want them to be able to approach and solve problems from many different angles. My vision of a liberal arts and science education for the 21st century brings the span of human knowledge together and allows students to develop their capacities to the fullest by encouraging active learning.

At Yale-NUS, we will provide a cosmopolitan education, in which students explore not only their own cultural backgrounds, but also the great contributions of cultures from around the world. The College, through its curriculum, its programmes, and its community, will contribute to deeper understanding between Singapore and the United States, and more broadly between Asia and the West, at a time when such understanding is going to be crucial to all forms of progress.

The residential model we are building at Yale-NUS will enhance the educational experience. Indeed, we are creating an extraordinary environment where the lines between learning and living blur, where the intentional learning in the seminar room or the lab will be amplified and augmented by the more serendipitous – but equally important – learning that takes place in the dining hall, or a study session, or in a club meeting. We hope that the ideas and debates sparked by their Yale-NUS education will shape their lives for many years to come.

Our students can also gain the advantage of this remarkable region, whether to study

biodiversity, the unique cultures of Southeast Asia, or patterns of global finance. We are educating citizens of the world, people who will have a broad familiarity with the great achievements of human art and science and will feel that their responsibilities extend not only to their local communities but also to the betterment of humanity at large.

The Yale-NUS education will promote a stronger sense of community and responsibility at a time in the students' lives when they are discovering themselves and reimagining their futures.

What contribution will Yale-NUS graduates make to Singapore, and the region?

What the future holds for our graduates in 2017 excites me. I strongly believe that a Yale-NUS education will create leaders who can adapt to diverse and challenging environments and who are well-placed to embrace uncertainties. Our programmes provide students with useful tools to interpret and tackle new problems and issues and navigate the complexities of today's world. I think of liberal education as the kind of education that will allow students to find a higher calling. My hope is for students to be mindful of their environment and society and useful citizens of the world, in whatever vocation they choose, and to develop ethically and have a life of action and service.

What role has private giving played, and will play, in the success of Yale-NUS?

The College has been fortunate to have a number of programmes established due to the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations representing the Yale-NUS community. This has given us the opportunity to start programmes that have a direct impact on curriculum development, attracting talented faculty, as well as providing scholarships and study awards to ensure that no deserving students are denied an education at Yale-NUS because of financial difficulties.

Philanthropy will play an important role in the success of Yale-NUS and of our students. It will allow us to continue to develop and deliver impactful programmes for our students especially when we reach a steady state of 1,000 students.

What are your fundraising priorities and why?

Yale-NUS is focused on raising funds for a number of priorities including academic and student support, teaching excellence as well as educational programmes. These broad areas enable the College to provide support for students, support professorships and fellowships as well as educational programmes that prepare leaders of tomorrow with a global outlook and an appreciation for diversity and the ability to communicate and lead effectively. ■

“Philanthropy will play an important role in the success of Yale-NUS and of our students. It will allow us to continue to develop and deliver impactful programmes for our students especially when we reach a steady state of 1,000 students.”



Prof Lewis speaking with prospective students in the College dining hall at an Experience Yale-NUS weekend. Photo Credit: Yale-NUS College