



Celebrating the Class of 2019!

Text by Melissa Wang | Image by Samuel He for Yale-NUS College

After an exciting two-week Orientation programme, which included the Amazing Race and RCX trips to regional countries to build the sense of community, the Class of 2019 was officially welcomed to Yale-NUS College at the annual First Year Assembly on 6 August 2015.

The significant event, which marked the very first official College event to take place at the new Yale-NUS campus, was attended by members of the Yale-NUS senior leadership, faculty, staff, student government representatives and family members of the incoming class. The College's brand new Multi Purpose Hall was decked out in the College colours and banners to welcome about 600 guests who graced the event. Kicking off the event was the ceremonial procession, led by Mdm Kay Kuok, Chair of the Yale-NUS College Governing Board, and President Pericles Lewis, President of Yale-NUS College.

Executive Vice-President of Academic Affairs Professor Tan Tai Yong gave the opening address, noting that the incoming class is one of incredible talents and achievements and included top students, elite sportsmen and women, published poets and novelists, accomplished musicians and artists, and dedicated and influential community leaders. He urged the new students

to align their greatest gifts with society's greatest needs, calling on them to make the most of opportunities to serve the community, whether as volunteers, interns or student groups. Professor Tan added that Yale-NUS students are part of a learning community where each of them has the opportunity to shape the kind of legacy and future they want.

"I urge you to take personal responsibility for your learning experience here. Take initiatives, ask questions, push boundaries – but do so honestly, responsibly and respectfully – build friendships, establish networks and make a difference," he shared.

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President Lewis also welcomed the new class, highlighting how the college will be a community and place where young people like themselves will be trained and prepared for society, and where character will develop.

"The values we designate by 'character' are clearly not the monopoly of any class, race, or sex—and yet different cultures, and different people within any given culture, may view them differently. I invite you therefore

not just to develop the habits that Aristotle, or Confucius, or current-day educational theorists, may think are most important, but to question your own assumptions and prejudices and to decide what sort of character you want to develop. We can then all work together, as part of a supportive community, to try to help each other learn the habits of character that we agree to admire."

The ceremony included musical performances by the sophomores – Abhinav Natarajan who sang a classical Indian song while Aishani Sen, Yee Jia Rong and Jane Zhang, performed two musical numbers, including a widely popular and

heartwarming rendition of 'Home'.

On behalf of the Yale-NUS students, sophomore Yonatan Gazit welcomed the Class of 2019 to the family with some heartfelt reflections of his own initial year in college. Sharing his own experiences, Yonatan spoke fondly of the opportunities that each new student will have to shape the young college into what it will be in future.

"I think it is a beautiful thing to matriculate to a school still in its infancy, and to leave it standing on firmer footing," Yonatan shared.

His warm welcome of the Class of 2019 was followed by what has now become a highly anticipated tradition – the balloon drop, with cheers echoing off the walls of the Multi Purpose Hall.

The First Year Assembly was followed by welcome dinners at the individual Residential Colleges. Later that evening, the new students gathered in the Saga courtyard, for a housewarming event planned by the Dean of Students' Office and the Orientation Committee. The Housewarming Ceremony was a symbolic event where the Class of 2019 was welcomed to Yale-NUS and their residential colleges through the passing of candle flames.

Risa Shindo, who hails from Japan and is one of the 190 incoming students, shared her thoughts on the First Year Assembly and Housewarming Ceremony.

"It was a nice little ceremony that really showed us our unity, and that we have just joined a super exciting and caring community of Yale-NUS that we can now call home. "



A peek at Yale-NUS College's new campus

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Images by Yale-NUS College

In July 2012, construction began at Yale-NUS College's new campus area, adjacent to the National University of Singapore's University Town (NUS UTown).

"The design of Yale-NUS College seeks to find an architecture which balances Eastern and Western contexts and traditions, but it has, in truth, created something new, something greater than the sum of its parts," said President Pericles Lewis at the Groundbreaking Ceremony held on 6 July 2012.

"Courtyards punctuated by towers set in lush landscapes, a close community of learning and social spaces, and a clear and inviting set of processional entrances, match the openness, energy, and optimism of the curriculum we are designing."

Three years on, President's Lewis' words have taken shape. With three residential colleges (RCs), a thousand student rooms, seminar rooms, laboratories, 30 sky gardens, an eco-pond, a library, a black box theatre, a performance hall and art studios among other facilities, Yale-NUS' new home is a 64,000 square-metre state-of-the-art campus.

Each RC – Saga, Elm and Cendana – has a central courtyard with a large, flat lawn and sky gardens that boast signature trees and plants. Selected for their botanical, historical and cultural significance, the plants reflect each RC's special characteristics. For instance, Saga will have rubber and nutmeg trees – plants that are significant in the

history of Singapore; Elm will have ferns and palms that are ubiquitous and well-adapted to Singapore, while Cendana will have plants such as clove trees that contributed to the region's economic development.

In the centre of the campus stands a towering tree – the *Margaritaria indica* – the only one of its kind in the entire country. This extremely rare tree was identified as a new species record for Singapore when it was discovered on our campus and conferred a Heritage Tree status by the National Parks Board in Singapore in 2014.

Spanning two floors, the Yale-NUS library has many cosy couches perfect for studying and essay writing, with windows that face the picturesque Campus Green. The library, a landmark feature in many liberal arts colleges, is situated at the top of a small hill as a symbol of the knowledge that is expected to be generated there, which will flow onto the rest of the campus.

The RCs have been designed to integrate green spaces with residential architecture. Each tower has 10 sky gardens with beautiful views of neighbouring estates.

The Multi Purpose Hall (MPH) will soon see a lot more action and will be home to many of our athletes and sports enthusiasts.

While our performers can look forward to using the black box theatre and performance hall.

The College is Singapore's first liberal arts college with a fully residential programme that integrates living and learning. Each RC has communal spaces such as the common lounges, where our students can study or immerse themselves in deep conversations.

All of our three dining halls are uniquely decorated, and cater to about 250 students each.

Over the next few years, the College will grow to 1,000 students across the three residential colleges, with more

than 100 faculty members and more than 120 staff members.

The Campus Green is a central space that was built with the theme of an 'Evolved Tropical Forest' – different layers of plants that are cultivated to resemble a multi-layered tropical forest. Six existing mature trees have also been conserved on site, anchoring the design concept.

Yale-NUS College will host its official Inauguration of the Campus in October 2015. The campus was designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli of New Haven, United States, and Forum Architects of Singapore, and has received the Landscape Excellence Assessment Framework (LEAF) certification from the National Parks Board (NParks) and the Green Mark Platinum Award from the Building and Construction Authority (BCA).



SAGA COURTYARD



LIBRARY, STUDY AREA



MULTI PURPOSE HALL



SAGA DINING HALL



HERITAGE TREE



PERFORMANCE HALL



BLACK BOX THEATRE

“Courtyards punctuated by towers set in lush landscapes, a close community of learning and social spaces, and a clear and inviting set of processional entrances, match the openness, energy, and optimism of the curriculum we are designing.”



Bringing the Class of '19 into Yale-NUS

Text by Melissa Wang | Image provided by the Office of the Dean of Students

Not every college has a two-week long orientation programme, but at Yale-NUS College, orientation is seen as a critical part of welcoming our students and helping them integrate into College life. As a residential college, where students will live and learn for all four years of their education, it is essential that incoming students become a part of their community of learning from the onset.

Yonatan Gazit, Class of 2018, an Orientation Group Leader (OGL) concurred.

"I think what makes our orientation unique is that it takes place over two weeks. This is great, considering we are a very small community, so the orientation programme really contributes to the Yale-NUS experience," he shared.

Sharing that his own orientation experience helped him form a tight group of friends, with whom he is still very much close to, Yonatan added, "I think what you get out of SingapOrientation also carries over into the year as you'll spend a lot of time with

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Aside creating a common experience across our diverse student body, the SingapOrientation programme is also aimed at developing the identity of the residential colleges, which is the hub of the student life at Yale-NUS College. Incoming students are also introduced to various intellectual opportunities that define a Yale-NUS education.

A hallmark of the Yale-NUS orientation programme is the Amazing Race and RCX trips. In the Amazing Race, students scammed around Singapore over two days to complete fun and exciting tasks. Designed to acquaint the First Years with their new home in Singapore and to facilitate bonding, they navigated the streets of Singapore while

hunting for clues to the pit stops. Local students had the opportunity to show off their hometown to their international peers and also got to explore some hidden gems of Singapore, such as being atop the Pinnacle@Duxton, where everyone enjoyed a bird's eye view of the city centre and admiring the nature and scenery at the Lorong Halus Wetland.

After exploring Singapore, the students embark on the RCX trips, where the Residential Colleges (RC) set off to different parts of South East Asia – Saga College to Siem Reap, Cambodia; Elm College to Luang Prabang, Laos; and Cendana College to Bagan, Myanmar. The trips were meticulously planned by the Office of the Dean of Students to tie in with the College's vision:

A community of learning, Founded by two great universities, In Asia, for the world.

RCX trips are designed to build community within the RC and across the student body. To encourage learning, students have to do research on their RCX destination, participate in discussions with their peers, ask questions and write about their experience. With the

opportunity to travel across borders, the RCX trips push students beyond their comfort zone so that they develop the confidence, creativity and cultural sensitivity to thrive in diverse environments.

The centerpiece of the Yale-NUS Orientation programme is the First Year Assembly on 6 August where the new class will be officially welcomed to the College. Students can look forward to this significant event which will be attended by the College's students, faculty, staff and family members of the new class. Following the First Year Assembly, the RC that wins the much-coveted Orientation Cup will be announced at Social Night on 7 August. Throughout SingapOrientation, the First Years were competing for points for their RCs through four activities and items – the Amazing Race, the Mass Dance video, the Singlish rap and the photo montage.

For the Class of 2019, the Orientation programme marks the beginning of their exciting four years at Yale-NUS College, where they will receive a unique liberal arts and science education, with friends who will become family, in a campus they will eventually call home.





Helping migrant workers learn English at Yale-NUS

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image provided by SDI Academy

It's late on a Sunday night, and most of the Yale-NUS College campus is quiet. In the Cendana Dining Hall, about forty construction workers listen attentively as a Bangladeshi man takes the microphone.

"Good evening, everyone! How are you guys?" he says in fluent English to a rapt audience.

The speaker, Mr Saiful, is a construction worker who has worked in Singapore for the last three years. He is also a graduate from the Social Development Initiative (SDI) Academy's Everyday English programme, which he says changed his life by helping him master English.

"Actually, I'm really nervous, but I'd like to share about my experience in the past six months," he continues. "Really, I never thought I could give a speech in public. This is a great moment in the history of my life!"

Founded in 2013 by Sazzad Hossain while he was still a student at Saint Andrew's Junior College, SDI Academy began with the goal of creating affordable English classes taught in workers' native language.

"It started off as a very small thing, more like volunteer work. It was first in a park with a small group of students, and after that, more and more students started coming to us," shared Sazzad. "That's when we realised that we had

to get proper materials like worksheets and textbooks, and we decided to institutionalise our effort and expand our efforts."

Sazzad, who is fluent in Bengali and English, took the time to write a textbook for the workers and started shaping the curriculum with the rest of the team.

The core team at SDI includes two Yale-NUS students, Valerie Pang and Manas Punhani (Class of 2018), who look after Marketing & Public Relations, and Strategy & Development respectively.

For Manas, it was his Week 7 project, Migrant Nation, where he first encountered the struggles migrant workers face on a daily basis, and the kinds of contributions made by the 'invisible workforce' of Singapore. After his Week 7 project concluded, he was enthused to help migrant workers and readily joined Valerie in helping out at SDI Academy.

"We really want to work with the migrant workers and also with the employers on making work more productive and creating safer workplaces," said Manas.

He added: "It really makes a difference between being able to communicate with your boss versus not being able to understand what he's saying, and we're trying to help with that."

To date, SDI Academy has helped more than 300 migrant workers from the construction, shipping and manufacturing industries become more proficient at communicating in English.

Mr Islam, a graduate of the Everyday English course, shared, "I work on a construction site, so if I don't understand what my foreman is telling me, it's going to be a big problem. For example, if he asks me to take a hammer and I take a cangkul (a hoe), then it becomes difficult to do work!"

As a youth-run social enterprise, SDI Academy participated in the 2015 DBS-NUS Social Venture Challenge Asia (SVC Asia), and was one of two Singaporean businesses to win a grant under the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programme (YSEP) for Start-Ups. The S\$50,000 grant was given by the Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise (raiSE), and greatly helped them cover the costs of SDI activities such as printing of textbooks and worksheets.

Another big help with keeping the costs low has been using Yale-NUS as a venue sponsor. For over a year since Valerie and Manas have gotten involved, SDI classes have been held at Yale-NUS College, first at Residential College 4, and now on the permanent campus.

"It definitely lowers our costs. It allows us to give a good

rate to the workers!" he said. "The earlier location we had was near Little India, which was really expensive, but it was the only place we could think of because it has to be somewhere near an MRT or a bus stop that the workers can get to easily."

Apart from English courses, they also created the Befrienders Programme, introduced at the tail-end of a course, where Singaporean volunteers help the workers practise the conversational English they've learnt, and introduce quintessentially Singaporean aspects of life such as ordering local kopi.

For Sazzad, who will soon enroll in Nanyang Technological University (NTU) after completing his national service, breaking down the language barrier is one close to his heart, as he moved to Singapore from Bangladesh at the age of 11, with his family.

"More than just being an English academy, we're trying to create a more inclusive society," he said. "Through our more social programmes, we try to create avenues for the workers to enjoy their time in Singapore and have fun, and at the same time, Singaporeans can meet and interact with workers, and have fun together."

For more about SDI Academy, visit www.sdi.academy

A 44-day journey through the Annapurna Circuit

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image by Woan Lin

For 44 days, Ami Firdaus (Class of 2017), Jake Goh Si Yuan (Class of 2017) and their friend, Woan Lin, travelled the famous Annapurna Circuit in Nepal over the summer break, and returned to Singapore with beautiful photos, unbelievable stories to tell, and experiences that changed each of their lives.

“One cannot even begin to imagine the sheer beauty of the Annapurnas without having been there,” said Ami, “and we surely cannot understand the things we try to learn in the classroom without actually experiencing them wherever they manifest themselves in this world.”

The idea for the self-funded trip was birthed in a Philosophy and Political Theory class, a module that is part of the Yale-NUS Common Curriculum. It was the brainchild of Jake, who found himself intrigued by the Buddhist and Hindu philosophies taught by Associate Professor Amber Carpenter, an expert on Indian Buddhist philosophy.

“My friends and I often hold long and hazy discussions about what we have learnt in class, and one topic that arose often was about the self and identity, or the lack of,” he explained.

“We decided that talk was only going to get us so far, but what would bring us to a complete understanding was to actually experience it. What better place than Nepal and the Annapurna Circuit to explore about the self and identity

within the Buddhist and Hindu context that we were looking for?”

Starting from Bhulbule, the trio trekked to Marpha on foot, and then travelled to Pokhara by bus. On the way to Pokhara, they disembarked and travelled from Tatopani to Beni on foot as they were passing through a landslide area.

Along the way, they met and befriended a number of Nepali people and fellow travellers, walked through villages, climbed mountains, and looked out at the breathtaking mountain ranges.

Both Ami and Jake agreed that the strongest learning point from their trip was the impact that experiences can have on learning.

“During the Vipassana segment of the journey, one of learning points from the course was about the need to not only understand something intellectually, which has only the potential to bring you so far, but also experientially, which will give you a more well-rounded and complete understanding on something, which in this case was enlightenment in the Buddhist context,” said Jake.

Ami added: “Even with impressive intellect, we will only end up waxing blind philosophy in trying to understand the various intricately-linked issues that affect and concern us as individuals, cultures and societies.”

Having already been back in Singapore for a month, they miss their time in Nepal and are really keen to return to explore more of the country.

As an Anthropology major with a strong interest in regional development, Ami would like to visit Nepal again in future, this time to possibly study the impact of economic development on culture, language and the environment, as well as the relevance of anthropological knowledge in the sustainable regional development.

After all, he says, “Reality cannot be understood, only experienced.”

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Jake & Ami at Manang, Nepal



Students celebrate the extraordinary at the SEA Games

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image provided by Kalya Kee

In 1959, the South East Asian (SEA) Games was held for the first time in Bangkok, Thailand. There were a total of 650 athletes from six countries who participated across 12 sports.

Since then, the SEA Games has grown more than sevenfold, with nearly 5,000 athletes from 11 countries competing across 35 sports.

In June 2015, Singapore hosted the 28th SEA Games, after a 22-year long hiatus. The country was gripped by an intense sporting fever, with video footage and photographs from the Games flooding mainstream and social media, while many flocked to stadiums and sports halls to catch the live action and cheer on their favourite athletes.

For some Yale-NUS students, their SEA Games experience was in the heart of the action.

Willie Khoo (Class of 2017), Kalya Kee (Class of 2018) and Nicholas Siew (Class of 2018) represented Singapore in Fencing, Waterskiing and Rowing respectively. Willie bagged a silver medal in the men's epee, while Kalya clinched a bronze in the overall women's event (slalom, jump and trick).

They were nervous but excited to represent Singapore, as it was their first time in the SEA Games on home ground.

"There was a lot of pressure for us to do well – especially on home ground," said Kalya,

whose parents are both waterskiers, "but with it came a lot of love and support from the public, which made us a lot more driven to win!"

"It was tough for sure, trying to get assignments done while trying to squeeze in time for training, but I think that all the sacrifices were worth it in the end, and the two medals definitely validate the time I took away from my studies," added the cheerful Kalya.

A rising sophomore, Kalya hopes to continue training and competing in regional tournaments while prioritising her studies in the coming academic year. She trains on the water three times a week during school term, once a week with the Yale-NUS Ski, Board and Surf Team, and heads to the gym twice a week.

"[This semester,] I will be really involved in the Yale-NUS Ski, Board and Surf Team, and maybe we can try to get us competition-ready! The team has been showing really great potential and I think that it's been a good way for us to get off campus and into the sun," she said.

Willie, who will be in his junior year come August 2015, initially planned to take a break from fencing after this year's SEA Games, as he typically dedicates five nights a week to training.

However, it is a decision he is reconsidering after narrowly losing the gold medal to Vietnam in the finals.

"If I have a chance, I definitely will want to come back," he said in an interview with The Straits Times. "Especially after today's match when I am much more fired up."

Willie was named Singapore's top fencer in 2014, and has been training and competing worldwide since 2007.

Apart from our athletes, Rakesh P (Class of 2017), stayed out of the sporting field but very close to the action – as an announcer for cue sports events.

"It was quite an experience, something very different from what a student normally does in the summer, so I was very lucky to get the role," he said.

As part of the job, Rakesh thoroughly enjoyed getting

audiences to cheer their national athletes on, and says that his most memorable moment from the Games was witnessing Myanmar supporters enthusiastically cheering on their player during an intense snooker match.

"The referee for the table had to stop play to make the audience quieten down but they didn't care," he related. "They just kept cheering for every ball their player sunk. It was great to see their energy and the aura it created in the hall."

Rakesh is thankful to have this unexpected opportunity of announcing for such a big event, thanks in part to his position as a broadcaster at NUS' campus radio station, Radiopulze.

"I really owe it to Radiopulze for having me, and to Sports Singapore for reaching out to budding broadcasters like me," he said. "I love sports and I was open to trying something different and amazing, so I simply had to take it!"

The 29th SEA Games will be hosted by Malaysia in 2017.

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The YSEALI Experience

Text by Sheryl Foo | Image provided by Sheryl Foo

At Yale-NUS, we are grooming leaders for tomorrow through programmes, fellowships, and learning experiences. The Centre for International and Professional Experience (CIPE) offers a variety of such initiatives for students to learn from and discover their interests and abilities.

The Youth Southeast Asian Leadership Initiative (YSEALI) is one of several external fellowships that CIPE pursues and manages a close relationship with for Yale-NUS students. The five-week YSEALI programme was held on the campus of a US College and included academic residency, leadership development and opportunities to engage with American peers, policymakers, governmental representatives and businesses.

This summer, Yale-NUS students Sheryl Foo and Jeffrey Tong, Class of 2017 and 2018, were the only two Singapore academic fellows in a contingent of 200 participants from the ASEAN region.

Sheryl shares her observations and reflections from the trip.

If someone were to tell me I would meet President Barack Obama at the age of 22, I would have laughed disbelievingly. However, this summer has turned out to be one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I was accepted for the US Department of State's YSEALI Academic Fellowship, and was one out of only two Singaporeans selected.

An intensive leadership-training programme for young Southeast Asian leaders, YSEALI is President Obama's signature programme. Being his last term in office, the Department of State arranged for all YSEALI 2015 Fellows to have a town hall session with him.

The programme was administered by the East West Centre, which follows the guiding principles of collaboration, expertise and leadership. These skills were imparted to us during the course of the programme, which took place in three different states, Hawaii, Colorado and Washington, D.C.

We first spent three weeks at the University of Hawaii where we learned to collaborate with other ASEAN youth leaders on workshops and projects. Despite the diversity of the cohort, we collaborated and succeeded in projects, which imparted lessons and skills in conflict resolution and negotiation. Stages in America's environmental history and development formed the content of our leadership course, particularly the problems and issues. Our mentors encouraged us to analyse and critically explore if Southeast Asia is following a similar trajectory, and discuss what could be done about it. This is in stark opposition to the common rhetoric that Southeast Asia should learn and apply wholesale from more developed regions. We were encouraged instead to craft our countries' own solutions suited to our contexts.

We received training on environmental leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, case studies analysis, and exposure to public policy and regional issues. My team won two out of three business plan competitions, and we led the third one, which was very well received. These learning experiences taught me how to work with people from vastly different cultures and

perspectives. We also had skills-based learning exercises and led other learning workshops for our peers, which aimed to simulate real-life negotiating exercises.

Hawaii is a beautiful state and an inspiring environment to learn in. There were many opportunities for us to explore the underlying stressful sentiments between the local natives and mainland Americans, as the annexation of Hawaii happened in recent American history. The conflict between development and preservation of local culture and history was very apparent, and is something we can learn from as developing countries in ASEAN focus on economic development. The important lessons that I learned were not taught in the classroom, but in conversations off-campus, on long drives with the local Hawaiians, and learning across the boundaries of time and geography in the beautiful historical sites.

In Colorado, we learned how to collaborate with external stakeholders to develop and manage expertise. Each team was matched with partners in the Boulder community. I worked with George Watt's architectural firm to create a workshop for the rest of the cohort. We worked closely to share lessons gleaned from Watt's game-changing architectural design of a community, aptly called "holiday neighbourhood". Concepts learned in environmental studies class came to life as I observed how small, face-to-face communities generate better overall human interaction, and greater consciousness of

energy use and environmental conservation.

In Washington DC where we met with President Obama and the US-ASEAN business council, we were presented with many opportunities for dialogues and interactions with key stakeholders. I was also interviewed by Channel NewsAsia and was present at the Voice of America press release for the programme. As such, I benefited from the extensive professional opportunities offered by the programme.

As a result of the exposure, mentorship, connections, and the experience in development work I gained during my stint in the US, I am currently organising a conference to bridge the two fastest-emerging markets in the world, Southeast Asia and Latin America. The ASEAN-LATAM Conference 2015 aims to provide a platform for dialogue between the two developing regions, since official bilateral regional relations have not yet been established. I am inspired by ideas that change the way we live and the way we see the world, and this conference is a first step towards charting new paths in cross-regional dialogue, and strategic work for the future.

The YSEALI Academic Fellowship 2015 has been an exhilarating and transformative experience personally, academically, and professionally. I am grateful to CIPE, the US State Department, the East West Centre, all mentors, and particularly the Georgette Chen Trust, for enabling my future.



Analysing real-world issues through television

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image by Samuel He for Yale-NUS Colletg

“Numbers are thrown up all the time. Are they proof of some truth, or just fluff that bluffs us?” says the host at the start of every episode of *It Figures*, a Channel NewsAsia (CNA) documentary series.

“These statistics need some serious looking into,” he adds.

Each episode of *It Figures* delves into the numbers behind issues that affect Singapore and the world, such as air pollution, ageing and crime, analyses and explains them for the layman.

At Yale-NUS, students are taught this skill in a course called Quantitative Reasoning (QR), which aims to analyse numerical data and use the information to demonstrate the truth or plausibility of a proposition.

In the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) course, which all students experience as part of the Yale-NUS Common Curriculum, the focus is on assertion of the truth.

How does one convince other people that an assertion is true? Theoretically, there is factual evidence. But in a real-world situation, the numbers alone are not enough.

In QR, students learn how to wield numerical evidence, to marshal quantitative evidence to demonstrate the truth or plausibility of a proposition.

Last year, students were tasked by Assistant Professor of Psychology Jean Liu to use

certain episodes of *It Figures* in their final assignment.

“The assignment required students to integrate content throughout the semester and apply it to a real-life situation,” explained Professor Liu. “We wanted to ensure that students could display knowledge of what they have learnt, but also understand the significance and context of the course thus far.”

Wertz, a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow of Science (Mathematics) at Yale-NUS, spent time vetting clips from all three seasons of *It Figures*, and shortlisted six episodes for students to analyse. These were chosen based on the opportunity for critical analysis and the ease in which QR knowledge could be applied.

“The student groups rose to the

a day of presentations by the various groups, and a bonus lunchtime discussion with the *It Figures* production team and CNA Vice President of Corporate Services, Ms Han Chuan Quee, who was intrigued by the assignment.

At the end of the semester, Yale-NUS student, Harini V (Class of 2018), signed up for an internship with the programme that lasted a little over a month.

Harini, who interned at Singapore Press Holdings’ Tamil Murasu newspaper before starting College in 2014, found the internship experience to be very interesting and enlightening.

“For our QR project, we had to analyse the data that the show presented, and many of us criticised the statistics. However, when I had to be in the position collating data myself, I realised the limitations researchers might face,” she shared.

She added: “Doing an internship with CNA showed me a broader problem of why statistics are often misrepresented even in the more reliable sources; the difficulty in bridging the gap between the experts and organisations, and common people.”

With the success of using *It Figures* in QR, Yale-NUS College hopes to continue utilising current media productions in its curriculum.

“The assignment required students to integrate content throughout the semester and apply it to a real-life situation.

We wanted to ensure that students could display knowledge...but also understand the significance and context of the course thus far.”

Students were to work in teams ‘hired’ by CNA to evaluate the success of *It Figures* in its mission of statistical analysis and explanation for a layperson.

What made the assignment doubly interesting for students and professors alike was the choice of a television programme for a case study. Professor Liu and Dr Timothy

challenge and produced high-quality work,” said Professor Liu. “Most importantly, they had the opportunity to use what they had learnt from QR in an everyday setting, challenging their understanding of how to convince others or themselves about an assertion, the overarching theme of the course.”

The assignment culminated in

The Wu Hsioh Kwang Family Study Award

Text by Melissa Wang | Image by Melody Madhavan

Yale-NUS College is fully committed to helping our students afford an education here. The Admissions team practises a need-blind admissions policy, so that the ability to pay for an education at Yale-NUS does not affect the admissions decision in any way.

In addition, the College also offers a range of need-based awards to help ensure that Yale-NUS will always be accessible to talented students from the widest possible backgrounds. The awards are available to all students in Yale-NUS who indicate that they need financial assistance.

The Wu Hsioh Kwang Family Study Award is one such award, made possible by the generous donations of the Wu Hsioh Kwang family. The award was established to provide for needy students at Yale-NUS College.

Amelia Chew (Class of 2017) speaks with the inaugural recipient of the study award, Soh Wee Yang, Class of 2017, to find out more about his experience and how he has benefitted from it.

Why did you choose to come to Yale-NUS?

The opportunity to pursue a liberal arts education in my home country was a huge draw. In addition, the prospect of being part of a pioneer batch of students, setting goals and traditions for the College instead of merely following the footpath that others have

trodden on, is a unique one.

How have you found the experience so far?

The Yale-NUS experience is indescribable – new sights, new knowledge and new experiences almost every day. Being able to hold deep conversations with people on anything, at any time and anywhere, has broadened my horizons in ways I could not have conceived of previously. Of course, being in the pioneer batch is far from a bed of roses, but it is heartening to see the growth of not just my peers but also the entire College.

What activities and student organisations are you involved in? Have you had the opportunity to pioneer a new group or activity at Yale-NUS?

Opportunities to pioneer a new group or activity at Yale-NUS College are aplenty. Along with a few peers, I founded the Yale-NUS College Investment Masterminds, which aims to educate students on financial literacy and current business affairs, as this will help ease them into a corporate career in the future. Through Masterminds, I organised a college-wide stock pitch

competition and started a training programme that teaches students the basics of value-investing. I am also in various a capella groups and sYNC'd (the society of Yale-NUS College dancers) where I dance K-pop.

Moving forward, I hope to organise Yale-NUS' first liberal arts festival for Singapore, which will showcase the multi-faceted side of the Yale-NUS experience to Singaporeans, as well as allow them to better understand the liberal arts curriculum and make more informed choices about their education.

Describe Yale-NUS in three words.

Experimental; Collective Effervescence (to quote Durkheim)

Describe yourself in three words.

Curious, audacious, reflective

What are your top three wishes for the College?

My first wish is for the College to be able to find its place in the world and for students to

find their place in the larger community. Secondly, I hope that students and faculty alike will be patient and understanding in resolving difficulties and smoothing out the creases as the College finds its footing. My last wish is for Yale-NUS to remain true to its values and continue to be a bastion for free and responsible speech.

How have you benefitted from the study award?

Last semester, I was able to devote more time and attention to my studies and general well-being instead of fretting about part-time jobs to make ends meet. The study award has definitely eased the financial burden of my parents as well, which allowed them to channel more of their limited income into basic amenities and supplies for my family. I am honestly really thankful for the study award as it could not have come at a better time.

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Wee Yang will be heading to India in August for the Pitt in the Himalayas Study Semester Study Abroad, made possible by the Centre for International and Professional Experience (CIPE).

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