When the first class of students enrolled at Yale-NUS College, they made their temporary home in Residential College 4 of National University of Singapore’s University Town (NUS UTown).

Today, three years from that humble beginning, Yale-NUS’ permanent campus was officially inaugurated by Singapore’s Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong. The ceremony was also graced by Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Senior Minister of State for Defence, Mr Ong Ye Kung, and over 30 university leaders from around the globe, including President Barthélémy Jobert, Paris-Sorbonne University; President David W Oxtoby, Pomona College; President and Vice-Chancellor Joseph JY Sung, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; and President Sung Nak-in, Seoul National University, who also attended the Symposium on International Liberal Education hosted by the College on 11 October.

“Yale-NUS College already represents the best of both Asian and Western academic traditions; the creation of its new campus will reinforce its pioneering role,” commented Professor Andrew Hamilton, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, who attended both the Symposium and Inauguration of the Campus.

“It’s an enormous pleasure, as a representative of one of the very oldest academic institutions in the world, to participate in the inauguration of one of the very newest. I am certain that Yale-NUS College will contribute enormously both to the free exchange of ideas that characterises our shared academic endeavour and uphold the cherished ideals of academic freedom that are the bedrock of intellectual enquiry.”

In his speech, Prime Minister Lee highlighted the new phase Singapore’s educational landscape is entering, of which Yale-NUS College exemplifies through its unique interdisciplinary curriculum, robust residential life and array of extracurricular activities. He encouraged Yale-NUS and other universities to continue rejuvenating their students’ passion for learning, and to instill in these students the skills to approach real-world problems from different perspectives, integrating different domains of knowledge in discovering solutions.

“Yale-NUS College adds something different and valuable to Singapore’s ecosystem. It offers the unique experience for students to explore a broad-based, liberal arts programme... It will train students to think critically across disciplines and build up their communication and leadership skills,” Prime Minister said.

In appreciation of Prime Minister gracing the event, Yale-NUS College presented him with a 3D model sculpture of a three-sided helical pyramid, created by Parag Bhatnagar, Class of 2017.

The sculpture converges upwards in a tapering mathematical exponential function. Its three sides represent the Trivium, the three disciplines of logic, rhetoric and grammar, which make up a traditional liberal arts and sciences education. They also embody the three residential colleges of Yale-NUS College at its base. The helical structure takes inspiration from the double-helix structure of DNA, symbolising our distinctive heritage and origins from the College’s parent institutions.

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After the campus inauguration ceremony, Prime Minister Lee, Minister Ong and other distinguished guests toured the grounds of the new campus. At the Multi Purpose Hall, they met members of the College community and enjoyed a rendition of the popular National Day Song ‘Home’ sung by The Scheduling Club, a Yale-NUS a cappella group.

“I’d just like to say how happy I am to be here, and happy for you that you’re a part of this new institution. It’s new, it’s off to a very promising and ambitious start,” Prime Minister Lee said in his remarks to the community.

“First, you’ve got very good parents, both Yale and NUS and they’ve given you ideas, concepts and fellowship. Secondly, you’ve got a very beautiful campus, we’ve planted the trees, we’ve planted the seeds, it’s grown and you are helping it to grow. And thirdly, we’ve got a
very good group of students here from all over the world – Singaporeans, from Asia, all over the world... I hope you'll make the most of this, I hope you'll enjoy it at the same time, and I hope that for many more years to come you'll keep your links to NUS, Yale, to Singapore.”

In his own address, Yale-NUS’ Founding President President Lewis expressed his gratitude to everyone who has supported the young College in its starting years.

“The College has not sprung from the ground without great effort, I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to making this day possible,” he said. “Colleagues, students, friends—together, we have built this campus. Let us continue to work together to build a community here in Asia that will educate citizens of the world for many generations to come.”

Gifts from parent institutions

To commemorate the inauguration of the campus, Yale President Peter Salovey and National University of Singapore (NUS) President Tan Chorh Chuan each presented their institution’s commemorative gift to Yale-NUS College.

Yale University presented a bronze statue of Nathan Hale, Yale College Class of 1773, a replica of an original statue of Hale that fronts Connecticut Hall, the oldest structure on Yale’s campus. The gift from Yale, said President Salovey, represents the dedication from Yale to NUS and Yale-NUS College, and symbolises the devotion of the Yale-NUS community to learning and the service of their home countries and the world.

From NUS, the College was gifted with a specially-commissioned painting entitled ‘Spirit of the Explorer’ done in Chinese ink with colours on rice paper. The enchanting painting depicts a monumental landscape with different routes, some obvious and some subtly hidden, as a reminder that exploration has both external discovery of the world around us and self-discovery of the explorer’s own personality. The ‘Spirit of the Explorer’, shared President Tan, represents the basis of NUS’ and Yale’s partnership in founding the unique and groundbreaking initiative that is Yale-NUS College, and the spirit that continues to drive the partnership between NUS and Yale-NUS.

A momentous occasion for the community

For many members of the Yale-NUS community who have seen this College grow since the beginning, it was an unforgettable day.

“I came on board in 2010, so seeing the campus inaugurated is especially meaningful because for me, it started out as plans on paper,” shared Ms Alyson Rozells, Manager in Yale-NUS’ Public Affairs team and the first staff member to be hired at the College.

She added: “It’s amazing because I’ve watched it being built while we were located in Residential College 4, and right now, being in the new campus also reminds me of how quickly the Yale-NUS community has grown into the vibrant, active institution it is today.”

Similarly, students were excited to celebrate the milestone, especially those who spent the first one or two years of their College life in the temporary campus.

One student group, the Committee for Appreciating and Meeting People On Campus (CAMPOS), created a video that featured snippets of interviews with construction workers who spent time on the Yale-NUS campus.

“These people made it possible for us to live in this amazing campus, and we wanted to celebrate that,” said Jordan Bovankovich. “When the site was still active, CAMPOS was a great way to talk to the construction workers, but now that they’re not around anymore, we want to remember them and help other people of the community remember them too.”

While the campus was still under construction, CAMPOS organised various appreciation and social events for students, staff and faculty of Yale-NUS to get to know construction workers, such as a Chinese New Year dinner, and an appreciation carnival.

In the same vein, a group of students from the Class of 2017 came together to work on ‘The Legacy Project: An Exhibition’, which showcased photographs and videos taken while the campus was under construction over the past two years.

“Our team realised that the archives of photography,
Today, Yale-NUS College hosted its first Symposium on International Liberal Education. More than 30 university leaders from global educational institutions attended the Symposium, where they discussed trends in higher education worldwide.

In his welcome remarks, Founding President Pericles Lewis, Yale-NUS College, touched on the rich histories of liberal arts in Asia and the West.

Linking it to Yale-NUS’ place in higher education, he said: “We at Yale-NUS draw on the great traditions of both Asia and the West...our ideal of forming a well-rounded person capable of taking on challenges from multiple perspectives would be recognisable to educators of earlier generations in Asia and the West.”

The first panel, ‘Founding Yale-NUS College: Dialogue Among Presidents’ was an insightful discussion between Professor Richard Levin, President Emeritus of Yale University and CEO of Coursera, and President Tan Chorh Chuan, National University of Singapore, as they highlighted the key moments in the founding of Yale-NUS College.

The second panel discussion delved into ‘The Future of International Liberal Education’, and featured plenary presentations by Vice-Chancellor Andrew Hamilton, University of Oxford; President Zhang Jie, Shanghai Jiao Tong University; and President Catharine Bond Hill, Vassar College. Each spoke on the issues their universities are facing, and the trends they have noticed in higher education worldwide.

The Symposium on International Liberal Education was organised as part of Yale-NUS College’s celebrations of its 11 October 2015.

Over 30 leaders at inaugural Yale-NUS Symposium
Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Images by Weave for Yale-NUS College

“We at Yale-NUS draw on the great traditions of both Asia and the West...our ideal of forming a well-rounded person capable of taking on challenges from multiple perspectives would be recognisable to educators of earlier generations in Asia and the West.”

(cont’d from p. 2) film, and interviews had much to offer not only in raising the technical understanding of our campus, but also in telling the stories of the people who had put so much into building the space we now call home,” said Tan Heng Yeng (Class of 2017), one of the four students who worked on the project.

She shared that while many have been caught up with the small kinks of moving into the new buildings, the team felt it was important to remember and appreciate how much effort was put into the construction.

“It’s easy to get frustrated with the little things, for example when facilities aren’t working perfectly, but there is a bigger picture, and we often forget that,” she said. “The curating team felt it was apt to pay a tribute during the campus inauguration weekend – while we celebrate our beautiful new school, let us remember what came before.”

The Scheduling Club, an a cappella group at Yale-NUS, performed the crowd-favourite ‘Home’ for the Prime Minister.
In January 2016, Yale-NUS College will welcome its new Dean of Students, Dr Christopher Bridges, who will oversee student life and residential living at the College.

Rich experience in student affairs
Dr Bridges is currently the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, a public liberal arts university. He has had extensive student affairs experience overseeing Enrollment, Residential Life, Orientation and Student Activities, amongst many other portfolios. During his time at Mansfield, Dr Bridges led the team that pushed retention rates to a twenty-year high. He has also played an active role in campus strategic planning, accreditation and the operations of the campus. With over a decade of experience within the higher education industry, mostly centred on student affairs, Dr Bridges explained that his career development stemmed from his own college experience, which he describes as “transformative”.

“When I found out that student affairs could be a career path, the idea was mind-blowing,” Dr Bridges revealed. “I continue to be interested in student affairs because I believe I can be an impactful part of a student’s growth during their college years,” he added.

Firm believer in the residential living and learning model
As Dean of Students at Yale-NUS, Dr Bridges will be a champion for student life, overseeing Student Affairs, Housing, Athletics, Counselling, Wellness and Dining. A firm believer in the residential living and learning model, which aims to grow and nurture holistic graduates, Dr Bridges explained, “The ability to live and learn, not only with other students, but also with faculty and staff is yet another opportunity to take the lessons learned in the classroom and incorporate them into their life... it gives students a space to share ideas and questions as well as to combine multiple classroom and co-curricular experiences with each other.”

Dr Bridges also shared fondly about the impact his own Dean of Students had on him, and reminisced his personal experience of the residential living and learning model. Dr Bridges said: “I discovered music in a new way in college – I took a great class, taught by my Dean of Students, about country western music, and I had a roommate who played guitar and who exposed me to groups like The Rolling Stones (I even made it to a couple of their concerts). Thanks to that class, I could be at a punk rock or bluegrass concert and appreciate their roots in a different way.”

Impacted by our community of learning and committed to strengthening it
During his visit to Singapore to meet with the College community, Dr Bridges was impressed by the connection and sense of belonging that the community felt for the College.

“College campuses often have a great sense of energy, but I found passion at Yale-NUS,” Dr Bridges highlighted. “People identified current and upcoming challenges, and everyone was clearly committed to meeting those challenges. I was struck again and again by the fact that people at Yale-NUS choose to be here – to be a part of something new in Singapore.”

Dr Bridges sees his role as being the link between administration and the student body. He aims to do so by inviting the various stakeholders into conversation and supporting voices from all sides of the table. Hence, Dr Bridges’ top priority is to get to know the people at Yale-NUS – to listen, observe, learn and work, to understand where the College and its community have come from, as well as where they are headed.

He believes that the main role of the Office of the Dean of Students is to provide advice and be the students’ resource for expertise and experiences, skills and talent.

“Our roles are to set the stage more often than perform on it,” he concluded.

Excited about Yale-NUS and his new role
Dr Bridges is excited about the opportunities at Yale-NUS, particularly with the College’s strong commitment to liberal arts education. He believes that the unique partnership between Yale and NUS will allow the College to “not only be a leader in Singapore, but in the entire region and the world”.

Hailing from a liberal arts college himself, Dr Bridges described taking on the role as Yale-NUS College’s Dean of Students a form of homecoming. “When I fell in love with education, it was on a small liberal arts campus, where faculty, staff and students worked together to build a real community of learners. It might sound odd, but stepping into the role of Dean of Students at Yale-NUS is like coming home in some ways,” he shared fondly.

He added: “I look forward to learning from, and becoming a contributing member to, the Yale-NUS community. The Dean of Students role is one that combines leadership with team play and I can’t wait to get started.”

It seems he isn’t the only one who is excited. A father of four, Dr Bridges revealed that his family is excited about the move, describing it as their “biggest adventure yet”. Singapore’s strong focus on education is also a draw for Dr Bridges and his wife (also Dr Bridges), and they have received strong support from their family about the move.

He added candidly: “Almost everyone in my extended family is talking about coming to visit, so Yale-NUS and Singapore should prepare for an infusion of Bridges over the next couple of years!”
On 31 August 2015, Yale-NUS College further strengthened its leadership team with the appointment of Ms Kristen Lynas as its Executive Vice President (Administration). Ms Lynas will be managing Finance, Human Resources and Admissions for Yale-NUS, succeeding existing EVP of Administration Mrs Doris Sohmen-Pao who will be moving on her new role as Executive Vice President (Institutional Affairs) where she will focus more on external relations for the College.

Formerly the Director of Executive Programmes at INSEAD, Ms Lynas brings with her more than 14 years of experience within the higher education industry. She has assumed a variety of diverse roles in higher education, having lectured on finance at INSEAD and at the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris as well as taking on senior leadership responsibilities at INSEAD since 2009. During her time at INSEAD, Ms Lynas was responsible for the executive degree programmes in France, Singapore, and Abu Dhabi, as well as a partnership in Tsinghua University.

“I have been captivated by this historic partnership between Yale University and the National University of Singapore since it was first announced just over four years ago,” Ms Lynas shared. “I am thrilled to now play a part in bringing its innovative liberal arts and science curriculum to Asia and abroad.”

A liberal arts graduate herself, Ms Lynas speaks of the exposure and diversity that a liberal arts education affords. Having had a hand in marketing, admissions, career management and human resources, Ms Lynas is a true testament to the myriad of job opportunities that are available to liberal arts graduates. She notes that her career transitions were made possible because of key skills such as critical thinking and reasoning, built through her education. This has stood her in good stead in the course of her career and afforded her the professional flexibility she enjoys.

On what excites her about the College, Ms Lynas highlighted several points, including the opportunities that Yale-NUS students are presented with, particularly with the support of the Centre for International and Professional Experience (CIPE), as well as the residential living experience. Ms Lynas believes that these will cultivate a rich exchange of ideas, as well as a deeper and wider exploration of subjects that extend beyond the classroom. These extra-curricular aspects of the college life will help to complement classroom learning for students, breaking down the walls between the two to help build broader perspectives.

But the biggest draw for Ms Lynas is the prospect of a young college like Yale-NUS.

“I’m excited to be joining the College, particularly because of the pioneering spirit,” she highlighted.

A big fan of nature and the great outdoors, you will often find Ms Lynas and her family engaged in activities that get them on their feet and getting active. So don’t be too surprised if you catch her cycling or rollerblading to campus!

“‘I’ll be working to build a culture amongst our faculty and staff, where we collectively strive towards a common vision, mission and objective.’”

With her BA in Philosophy from the University of Michigan and her MBA from the University of Chicago, Ms Lynas has a strong commitment to and understanding of the liberal arts, which will help her in fulfilling the “social engineer” role she foresees herself playing in the College.

“As the EVP of Administration, my main objective is to facilitate the learning and research goals of the Yale-NUS community while also ensuring that Yale-NUS College is a great place to work,” Ms Lynas noted.

“I’ll be working to build a culture amongst our faculty and staff, where we collectively strive towards a common vision, mission and objective,” she added.

“I look forward to sharing the best practices I have developed over years of working in finance, human resources and academic administration with the school and I hope to contribute significantly to the growth and development of the college,” she added.
Learning through international experiences
Text by Amelia Chew | Image provided by Daniel Soo

For more than a week, a short walk through the Yale-NUS College Library would take you past display boards featuring photographs, write-ups, poems and reflections chronicling the summer experiences of various Yale-NUS sophomores and juniors.

Ranging from internships to summer school programmes, many of these opportunities were supported by Yale-NUS College’s Centre for International and Professional Experience (CIPE) and funded by donors to the College.

Learning on the job
For Janel Ang, Class of 2017, her internship at the prestigious Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy, was the first CIPE summer programme that she had undertaken. The internship was sponsored by Dr Alan Chan, whose gifts have not only aided financially-needy students, but also supported innovative student programmes such as this one at the College.

Janel, who considers herself ‘more of an artist than an art historian, critic or curator’, was initially apprehensive about delving into the other side of the art world.

That apprehension dissolved once she began work, where she had the opportunity to experience museology in a practical setting; her responsibilities included completing daily gallery operations such as ticketing, guarding and administration, conducting workshops for children, and delivering public presentations on works of art.

An added bonus was the opportunity to interact with an internationally diverse public and work with an equally diverse yet like-minded group of colleagues.

Students who participated in other summer school courses abroad were similarly thankful for the opportunity to situate their learning in local contexts.

Over the course of two months, Martin Vasev, Class of 2018, who is from Bulgaria, took Intensive Chinese Language classes with CET Academic Programs in Beijing, China, as a recipient of the Chinese Language Scholarship funded by the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation.

He was assigned a roommate from China, from whom he learnt about Chinese history, culture and politics, and who provided help whenever Martin encountered the challenges of living in a foreign place.

Beyond the language immersion, Martin immersed himself in local culture by taking up traditional Chinese activities such as calligraphy and wushu classes.

Similarly, Alaine Johnson, Class of 2018, who embarked on a Spanish language programme as a recipient of the Spanish Language Scholarship funded by the Santander Universities, engaged with her host family, Argentinian friends and even a taxi driver-turned-friend on issues ranging from politics to pop culture during her time in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Learning new languages was not just for students on language programmes, as Joshua Wong, Class of 2017, discovered when he participated in a Yale Summer Session (YSS). He was able to pursue his interest in Africa by taking up a module on Society and Politics of North Africa in Morocco, made possible by the J Y Pillay Global-Asia Programme.

Joshua initially thought that he would be able to get by with French, a language that Moroccans speak, he eventually picked up Arabic as he ‘realised that using Arabic opened up so much more of the country to [him]’ and discovered the ‘potency that language has to facilitate personal interaction and connection’.

Likewise, Martin and Alaine immersed themselves in the local culture by picking up new skills beyond the classroom.

While Martin engaged in traditional Chinese activities such as calligraphy and wushu classes, Alaine trained at a martial arts gym in Buenos Aires and learnt to dance the tango as well.

New skills and perspectives
Indeed, the opportunity to step out of one’s comfort was a common highlight of the summer experience for these Yale-NUS students.

For Daniel Soo, Class of 2017, the challenge was in the programme itself. He attended two consecutive week-long poetry workshops and four craft seminars at the Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver, Colorado, an opportunity sponsored by Alice and Peter Tan.

“I had a fantastic experience with my workshops as my workshop leaders (award-winning poets Major Jackson and Kim Addonizio) led sessions that were deliberately uncomfortable for us — prompting us to ask the hard questions within our writing, to always dig deeper into the experiences that we often try to bury, and to come out of our comfort zones,” Daniel shared.

Perry Kwan, Class of 2018, who attended the Inter-University Programme (IUP) for Chinese Language Studies at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China as a recipient of the Chinese Language Scholarship funded by the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, discovered the value of ‘approaching an issue from multiple angles and considering the perspectives of different stakeholders’. He shared that this helped him develop into a more agile and adaptable learner.

Back to school
While the semester is in full swing now that summer has drawn to a close, the students share that their summer experiences have had an impact that will last well beyond the summer.

For some, this comes in the form of continuing the pursuit of their academic interests.

Joshua, who is majoring in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE), plans to count...
Students organise SEA-LatAm Conference
Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image provided by Asia-LatAm Connection

100 executives from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gathered on 14 September 2015 at the Singapore Exchange (SGX) Centre for the inaugural Southeast Asia – Latin America Conference (SEA-LATAM) 2015.

Themed ‘Bridging Emerging Markets’, it was organised by the Asia-LatAm Connection (ALC) in partnership with the Latin American Chamber of Commerce, and the INSEAD Emerging Markets Institute as the official knowledge partner.

ALC was founded by two Yale-NUS students, Sheryl Foo and Shermin Chan (Class of 2017), whose mutual interest in SMEs, global business trends and emerging markets led them to conceptualise SEA-LATAM.

“[This conference] establishes our first foray into bringing together business leaders, government and trade representatives and thought leaders,” said Sheryl, Founder and Director of ALC and an Environmental Studies major.

In her welcome remarks at the conference, Sheryl expanded on the benefits to be gained from having such a platform for discussion.

“More Singapore-based companies have looked at expanding their markets in Latin America, to diversify their operations and skills,” she said, “and many early movers have successfully shifted their values and activities to these competitive markets.”

She added: “With the rapidly-developing, inter-regional government engagements such as the Pacific Alliance and the ASEAN economic community, there is no better time to follow suit.”

The day’s programme featured panelists and speakers who shared valuable insights on the new opportunities available in emerging markets. The prolific speakers came from various high-profile companies and organisations, including DHL, Proctor & Gamble (P&G), Kensteel Group, ProMexco, the Asian Trade Center, and Ernst & Young.

Mr Emmanuel Daniel, Founder and CEO of the world-renowned The Asian Banker, remarked in his opening address: “When we look at Latin America and parts of Asia, we do not necessarily look at countries that are middle income or high income, there are opportunities to be found in countries that are low income, depending on where in the value chain you want to play.”

It was a theme echoed throughout the rest of the day, with panels focused on ‘Emerging Business Opportunities’, ‘Business Development Strategies in Emerging Markets’ and ‘Insights into Financial Issues for SMEs’.

Latin American ambassadors to Singapore also graced the conference, namely His Excellencies Luis Fernando Espinar (Peru), Manuel Gerardo Talavera Espinar (Peru), and Singapore’s Non-Resident Ambassador to Peru, Mr Giam Chin Toon.

ALC is composed of seven students from local universities: four from Yale-NUS College, two from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and one from the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Official sponsors for the conference include SGX as the official venue sponsor, P&G and DHL. Other official supporters include the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Asian Trade Centre, Kensteel Group, and the Singapore Embassies of Brazil, Costa Rica and the Republic of Peru.

The next edition of the SEA-LATAM Conference will be held in early-2016 in Mexico City. Stay tuned to the ALC website for more details!

(cont’d from p. 6) the course towards a minor in History, while Martin intends to pursue a major in Global Affairs with a focus on Chinese politics and international relations while continuing to practise his Chinese.

For others, their summer programmes prompted them to re-examine their choices.

Working at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection allowed Janel to learn ‘the importance of using art as a language to speak to audiences of a certain time and age’ and prompted her to make new decisions in her course selections to further inform her art-making in a more holistic manner.

Beyond the classroom, some have also sought to give back to the Yale-NUS community.

For example, Alaine currently tutors Spanish and is an active participant in the Yale-NUS College Hispanic Society, which aims to grow the presence of Latin American culture in the College.

Ultimately, what is apparent is that this collection of summer experiences exemplifies the reasons many choose to come to Yale-NUS College in the first place – the unparalleled opportunities to engage with individuals from a diverse array of backgrounds and cultures, acquire hands-on experiences and step out of one’s comfort zone.

And for many of these students, their summer experiences were but a checkpoint in what is ultimately a continual process of growth. We can’t wait to see what these students will go on to achieve thanks to the support of our donors!

For more Giving stories, head on over to giving.yale-nus.edu.sg/giving-stories
On 17 October 2015, more than 100 undergraduate students and faculty filled the Yale-NUS Performance Hall to attend the Grand Finals of the inaugural ASEAN-China Case Competition (ACCC).

Organised by the Yale-NUS Global China Connection (GCC), the competition was graced by Guest-of-Honour Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Member of Parliament for East Coast GRC, and focused on how environmental sustainability can be developed in China.

The former Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of National Development gave a keynote address, touching on Singapore’s sustainable development experience and the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city, emphasising the importance of transnational discussion and partnerships.

“Given similar challenges faced by all countries, we can benefit from sharing experiences in areas such as urbanisation, economic modernisation, governance and the promotion of social harmony,” he highlighted in his address.

“Together, hand-in-hand, we can continue to do our part to make the world a better place for future generations.”

The case required participating groups to propose an implementation plan for an eco-city development project in the Liangjiang New Area of Chongqing, China. Teams assumed the role of a nongovernmental urban development consultant proposing to the Development and Reform Commission of the government of Chongqing.

About 420 youths participated in ACCC 2015, forming 89 teams from over 60 universities across 18 countries.

Eight finalist teams from Singapore, Hong Kong & China, Thailand, Philippines, and the United Kingdom & Malaysia were shortlisted after three weeks of preliminary and semi-final selection rounds.

“Participants had to think creatively, while being constrained by practical realities,” commented Colette Chiaranussati (Class of 2018), Vice-Chairman of the ACCC 2015 committee and Vice-President (Networking) for GCC, on the case solutions presented by participants throughout the competition.

She added: “Sustainability and eco-concepts are industries of the future. By engaging with these interests early on while still undergraduates, we hope to get participants thinking about how they can be involved in these industries of the future.”

At the Grand Finals, the top three teams that emerged from the semi-finals competed for exclusive internship opportunities in Greater China with multinational technology company IBM and a cash prize of S$3,000 for the winning team, and cash prizes of S$2,000 and S$1,000 for the second and third places respectively.

A team from Yale-NUS College clinched the first prize, while second prize was awarded to a team from the University of Hong Kong, and third prize to a group from the National University of Singapore.

Zhang Yaolin (Class of 2018), President of GCC, explained in his closing speech the thought process that went into designing the interdisciplinary competition.

“We wanted to engage with contemporary Chinese issues at an in-depth level and generate solutions that take into account the context of China,” he said. “We chose the theme of urbanisation because of its impact on all our aspects of our lives.”

“Over the past few days, I have been extremely impressed by the innovative solutions to a more sustainable future that were presented by our participants from all around the world,” he added.

“I am confident that our youths and leaders of the futures will rise to the challenge to create a more sustainable future for all of us.”

The ACCC was generously supported by its main partners Business China, the Urban Land Institute, and Future Cities Laboratories, and received sponsorship from City Developments Limited, Ascendas REIT, and the Singapore International Foundation.

Find out more about Yale-NUS GCC at gcc.commons.yale-nus.edu.sg!

“[O]ur youths...will rise to the challenge to create a more sustainable future for all of us.”
Since 2010, the American Writers Festival (AWF) has become a staple in Singapore’s literary circuit, known for bringing in notable names such as Caryl Phillips, Matthew Bloomfield, Rowena Torrevillas, Moira Crone, Shawn Wong, Ravi Shankar, among others.

This year’s AWF was the second year Yale-NUS College co-hosted the event alongside the Wee Kim Wee Centre at Singapore Management University (SMU) and with the generous support of the US Embassy Singapore and the Singapore American School.

“I was gratified to see so many enthusiastic members of the audience at each event,” Professor of Humanities and Director of the Yale-NUS Writing Programme, Robin Hemley, said. “Such events are a work-in-progress and we learn from them one year to the next.”

AWF 2015 welcomed Pulitzer Prize winner Professor Adam Johnson, who gave the opening reading on 14 September at the National Library. Other speakers included two poets, Ms Tina Chang and Ms Lisa Wells, two playwrights, Mr Rajiv Joseph and Ms Eleanor Wong, two nonfiction writers, Mr Michael Meyer and Mr Nisid Hajari, novelist Mr Jon Fasman, and writer Mr Desmond Kon.

“The writers were chosen by members of the committee last year, including representatives from SMU, Yale-NUS and the US Embassy, after much discussion,” shared Ms Heidi Stalla, Lecturer and Assistant Director of the Writing Programme at Yale-NUS. “We wanted to make sure that we had a diverse group of dynamic, award-winning writers across genres who shared an interest in writing about Asia.”

By and large, the event was greatly beneficial and enjoyable for the Yale-NUS student body, faculty and administration.

“I’ve had people take the time to write to me to let me know they were impressed by the high quality of every single event,” Ms Stalla said. “Some events were sold out – all were just about filled to capacity.”

Adlin Binti Zainal, Class of 2017, who helped to plan the event as part of the ‘Yale-NUS Writers’ Centre, was very excited to have met Professor Adam Johnson, and to attend all the AWF events.

“This year’s AWF was absolutely amazing! It was the first time we had four co-sponsors on board, and each brought something unique to the table so the festival was well-planned, well-executed and an overall success,” she said. “It was also great that our students were given the fantastic opportunity to tap onto the talent of our keynotes through private workshops.”

Professor Hemley shared that the organisers may look into partnering with other established literary festivals in Singapore, such as the Singapore Writers Festival, and to perhaps even pool resources for next year. Stay tuned to find out more!

For more information on AWF, head over to www.americanwritfest.org
Over the last week, you may have noticed that the campus was a little quieter than before. This was because our Yale-NUS freshmen were out and about in 10 projects that spanned across the world, as part of their Week 7 Learning Across Boundaries (LABs) programme.

Week 7 is a co-curricular programme organised by the Centre for International and Professional Experience (CIPE), and is now one of Yale-NUS flagship offerings for our freshmen. It seeks to encourage collaboration across disciplines and encourage our students to take their skills and knowledge into real world situations helping them take their learning beyond the boundaries of the classroom. The Week 7 LABs also tie in with the Common Curriculum, which encourages collaboration across disciplines among faculty, so that students have the best possible interdisciplinary experience.

This year, Week 7 saw our students going through a multitude of experiences – from dining in absolute darkness here in Singapore to a typhoon in Fujian, China, to seeing wild animals live in the reserves while learning about the Conservation and Reintroductions in South Africa. This year’s projects realise the potential of the region with three projects based in Singapore, and six others within Asia.

Ms Adelle Lim, CIPE’s Senior Manager and overall coordinator of the Week 7 projects, shared, “The Week 7 Symposium this year showcased many LAB (Learning Across Boundaries) activities in neighbouring countries – demonstrating that there is a great deal of potential for experiential co-curricular programming around the region.”

“We will continue this meaningful suite of programming to leverage on our geographical location to create opportunities for students to explore, understand and give back to our regional locales,” Ms Lim added.

At the end of the week, students returned with their adventures, experiences and stories, which they shared at the Symposium last Saturday, 3 October 2015. Through presentations, photos, videos and exhibitions of posters that the students set up, the Symposium gave students the opportunity to share their experiences with their peers, faculty and even their family members.

For many students, Week 7 was an intellectual exploration – achieving the aim of exploring the Common Curriculum in a broader context. Gemma Green, Class of 2019, whose Week 7 project was to Huizhou, China to learn about the History, Agriculture, and the Future of China’s Villages shared that their group had to study and analyse the development of four different villages, learning about the effectiveness of the different strategies that were employed.

“I learned a lot about urban planning, something I had never explored before, and found it very enriching,” Gemma shared. This included those who stayed in Singapore for Week 7, such as Anandita Sabherwal, who was on Stories of Ourselves, a project that partnered the National Heritage Board, Singapore Heritage Board and Project 50/100. This LAB challenged students to think about what collective memory means and to explore how individual memories work, considering their biological foundations, their fundamental relationship to personal identity, and the consequences of their failures.

“Further delving into the cognitive aspects of memory, we realised that it not only connects us to our past, but also actively constructs possibilities for our future. Exploring this trail has left me with more questions than answers,” Anandita shared.

For others, the exploration came in the form of physical challenges. From encountering blood-sucking leeches in Malaysia, for those on the project From Clusiaceae to Supertrees, to floating down the river in the middle of the Bruneian jungle for those on Genomics in the Jungle, to going without showers in the Himalayas while learning about the Ecology, Economy and the Environment, our students were certainly taken out of their comfort zones.

“The highlight of this trip was definitely the yurt stay in the Mongolian countryside where we did not have electricity or running water. Our toilet was a hole in the ground with a wooden shed covering it,” shared Rachel Tan, who was a part of the project Touching the Sky, which explored Mongolia’s Universe of Art and Culture. Despite this, Rachel shared that the experience was a very positive one.

“This past week I have enjoyed myself thoroughly being disconnected from civilisation and looking at the world from a whole new perspective.”
Science Div Dir talks about Science curriculum
Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image by Weave for Yale-NUS College

As a young university, Yale-NUS College has developed a highly interdisciplinary curriculum and employed distinctly unique approaches to traditional forms of study. Over their four years of study, students experience a range of modules that span the humanities, sciences and social sciences.

For example, while the study of science may bring to mind numerous formulae, computing numbers, or conducting experiments in a lab, Yale-NUS seeks to complement this traditional form of study with a fresh, innovative approach.

“Although we tend to think of it separately as the humanities, sciences and social sciences, there’s a lot of cross-talk amongst the three,” commented Professor Steven Bernasek, who took up the role of Divisional Director of Science this semester.

“One can learn the tools of science,” he explained, “but this sort of creative thinking and being able to work through a problem on your own – to find the answer though the answer is not given to you – is a real hallmark of a liberal arts education.”

This approach to intertwining liberal arts with the sciences is exactly what the inaugural faculty aimed to impart to students.

In the initial stages of constructing the Yale-NUS curriculum, one of the most important considerations was for the curriculum to answer the question: ‘What must a young person learn in order to live a responsible life in this century?’

While mastering a shared body of knowledge and techniques in the Common Curriculum helps create a collective learning experience with their peers, our students also learn to approach and solve problems from many different angles. This skill, says Professor Bernasek, is a useful one no matter which major they eventually embark on.

“Everyone needs to be able to think critically, to reason through arguments, to write and defend those arguments, whether you’re a scientist, a comparative literature major, or if you’re interested in languages,” he said.

In preparation for ‘depth’, these Common Curriculum courses are not mere introductions to majors, but are comprehensive studies in their own right that give students rigorous introductions to broadly defined areas of inquiry. Yale-NUS majors are designed to ensure the right balance between maintaining the integrity of individual disciplines and adding the breadth of the Common Curriculum to the subject to augment the learning experience.

“In Science, our biggest focus right now is putting the final touches on our capstone projects for next year, thinking about what exactly these would entail and making sure we clearly communicate the framework so that everyone knows what to expect,” said Professor Bernasek.

“We’ve also been working hard to fine tune the courses for our third and fourth year students,” he added. “We’re teaching some of these courses now, but we’re adding to that and making sure that things are straight all around... Every course like this needs reviewing from time to time!”

Scheduled reviews in the Yale-NUS curriculum are part of the College’s ongoing process to adopt and adapt the best ideas and pedagogies. Feedback from students and faculty is consolidated as a key part of the process. Currently, a committee comprising representatives from Yale, NUS and Yale-NUS College are reviewing the Common Curriculum.

To find out more about the 14 majors offered at Yale-NUS, head over to http://www.yale-nus.edu.sg/curriculum/major/