



## Diversity at Yale-NUS

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image provided by Dean of Students' Office

Yale-NUS College, much like Singapore, is a multicultural and multi-religious community.

With over 500 students from 38 countries, the diverse make-up of the student body has influenced much discussion on campus about different facets of identity: from culture to race, religion to sexuality.

Ms Sara Amjad, who runs the diversity programming from the Dean of Students Office, has invested much time and effort in organising or helping to organise events with a focus on diversity for the community.

"It's really about taking the multicultural to the inter-cultural aspects," Ms Amjad explained the primary intention behind the diversity programmes.

"We have numbers that show our diversity, and we also have engagement with those numbers and between those numbers."

She added that the College also wants each individual to be able to "bring their whole self" to Yale-NUS, "and not feel like they have to hide a part of it or be ashamed".

In March 2016, Ms Amjad launched Diversity Week, a week-long series of events

that sought to create discussions on diversity.

"It was during a time when many things were already happening on campus, so we wanted to combine the different ideas we'd heard or seen in the past into one, effortless week, to give people the options to experience different kinds of programming," said Ms Amjad.

The Week launched with an introduction to Hijab Day, organised in collaboration with two Muslim students, Ilya Katrinnada Binte Zubaidi (Class of 2018) and Hazirah Binte Mohamad Helmy (Class of 2019).

"Since my freshman year, I've been getting questions from my friends about my experiences wearing the hijab," said Ilya, who had organised World Hijab Day on campus spontaneously in 2015 to give her friends the opportunity to wear the hijab for a day.

She also took the opportunity to answer questions from her peers, and gave a brief explanation on the rationale behind the hijab beyond what is stated in the Qu'ran.

"With the help of the Dean of Students' Office, we made [this year's] programme more thoughtful, structured and

elaborate to include our own personal stories about the hijab, as well as the concept of World Hijab Day and any problems associated with it—for example, the issue of cultural appropriation," Ilya described.

For Ms Amjad, Hijab Day was a good opportunity to start conversations and "talk about disagreements in a civil way".

She said: "When I evaluate ideas for events that come my way, I think about sustainability, consistency, but also how to make it more meaningful—how do we create meaningful engagements with some of these questions, and how do we root it in personal experience rather than intellectual disagreement."

Apart from Diversity Week, this thinking is applied to all diversity programming, including one called Makan Makan (Malay for 'eat eat'), where staff or students lead a trip to one of their favourite eating-places in Singapore.

"What we're doing with Makan Makan is exploring personal connections to places through food," Ms Amjad explained.

"It's about being able to show the personal connection, talk about it, and share food as well...It's about being able to

make some of our cultural exploration more meaningful and more rooted in personal stories."

Mr David Royster, an Admissions Counsellor, was the first person to lead a trip with Makan Makan.

He brought the group of seven to his neighbourhood, Tiong Bahru, where they spent some time talking about the history of the area and his personal connection to it.

"It's wonderful to get to know a place's history—you become more invested, it becomes another home," he shared.

Mr Royster, who grew up in New York, USA, has lived and worked in four countries, and lived in three different areas of Singapore during his time here.

"What we have here at Yale-NUS is a unique opportunity to go further into conversations of diversity, equality and inclusion...it forces you to think harder, to question your assumptions, but also to reaffirm certain beliefs."

Keep updated on Yale-NUS' Diversity programming at <https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/diversity-engagement>



## Two Yale-NUS staff recognised for five-year service

Text by Clare Isabel Ee | Image by Wayne Xu

On 26 May 2016, Founding President Pericles Lewis presented Yale-NUS College's two staff members with their five-year Long Service Award.

The recipients, Ms Alyson Rozells, Senior Manager of Public Affairs, and Professor of Science Charles Bailyn, the inaugural Dean of Faculty, were recognised for their meaningful contributions over the past five years with thunderous applause from the community.

Interestingly, their journeys began on different sides of the globe: Ms Rozells began working in the Yale-NUS administration in Singapore, while Professor Bailyn started faculty work from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

Professor Bailyn, who holds a dual position as the A. Bartlett Giamatti Professor of Astronomy and Physics at Yale University, oversaw the recruitment of faculty members and was a key figure in creating the College's unique curriculum.

Looking back, Professor Bailyn shared that his favourite memory from his time at Yale-NUS was right at the beginning.

"It was the very first Yale-NUS faculty meeting, where for the first time we had a group of three dozen scholars and I had the privilege of bringing down the gavel," he shared.

"That was one of the proudest moments of my

life!"

That historic meeting was held at Yale University, and in the room were many faculty members who would help build the Yale-NUS curriculum.



For Ms Rozells, she treasures a more recent memory.

"It was just last year in June, when we had our first tour of the built campus," she recalled.

"I've seen the campus as plans on paper and later as renderings, so to see it come to life was a great feeling! It's not every day you get to be a part of the whole process."

As the first employee of the College and a member of the Public Affairs team.

Ms Rozells had a hand in organising nearly all the major events the College has celebrated, including the Launch of Yale-NUS College in 2011, the Inauguration of Yale-NUS College in 2013, and the Inauguration of the Yale-NUS College Campus and Symposium on International Liberal Education in 2015.

She also launched the College website and was heavily involved in building Yale-NUS' branding and identity.

Next year, Ms Rozells will be part of the organising committee for the graduation

graduation of our very first class."

Ms Rozells, who also received her 10-year Long Service Award from the National University of Singapore (NUS) earlier this year, previously managed academic conferences at the Asia Research Institute (ARI) before joining Yale-NUS College.

Professor Bailyn, who will return to Yale University to continue his academic role in mid-2016, is excited to see how Yale-NUS will develop in future.

"We've made amazing progress in five years," he said.

"Five years ago, our campus resembled a golf course, and now we're a college. Who knows what it will be in five years' time?"

ceremony for the first class of Yale-NUS students, the Class of 2017.

"The 2013 Inauguration ceremony signifies the true beginning of the College for me, because that was the first major event we had with faculty, staff and a student body," she said.



She added: "I'm looking forward to the first graduation ceremony next year. That's what will bring it full circle for me—from seeing the launch of the College, to the opening of the campus, and now, the



## Student-run butteries answer supper cravings

Text by Diyanah Kamarudin | Image by Weave for Yale-NUS College

With a fully residential, four-year programme, Yale-NUS College's campus is filled with spaces meant for social interaction and community bonding.

Some of the popular hangout spots include the butteries — three student-run cafés that serve snacks and meals to famished students during suppertime.

Located in Saga, Elm, and Cendana Colleges, the butteries are named the Shiock Shack, Thirty Plates and The Nest, respectively.

During term time, a team of Buttery Managers and Cooks runs each buttery, and the entire team is involved in shaping the menu of the buttery.

While classic suppertime favourites such as burgers and instant noodles are featured, each buttery is also known for its own signature dish.

At the Shiock Shack, for example, students frequently order the 'Adlin'.

Inspired by one of the buttery's frequent patrons, Adlin Zainal (Class of 2017), the dish consists of instant noodles accompanied by a runny sunny side up egg and a succulent burger patty — and only sets a student back by S\$2.50.

In order to avoid direct competition with each other, the butteries work together to ensure that they open on different nights.

However, they also try to differentiate themselves from one another in certain aspects.

Holly Apsley (Class of 2018), a cook at Thirty Plates, notes that her buttery is "particularly affordable and fast".

Meanwhile, the Shiock Shack's Buttery Manager Jason Carlo Carraneja (Class of 2018) says that the Saga buttery capitalises on branding, since it carries on the name of what used to be the first and only buttery on campus.

deciding what to spend on.

"We've had to be creative in our use of the budget in order to cover both ingredients and things like furniture," she mentioned.

For Jason, on the other hand, a shortage of staff members became a problem in the middle of last semester, when some staff needed to reduce their working hours due to time constraints from school priorities.

"We understand the needs of our staff, but we also want to ensure that we are still ready

certain sporting events that take place every Saturday and Sunday night. If possible I would like to have us open on more days too," he said.

Holly, on the other hand, is most excited about adding more food and drink items to the menu for the coming academic year.

She added that Thirty Plates will also feature new decorations and seating arrangements when it re-opens in August this year.

Yale-NUS' butteries were inspired by the butteries of

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"We want to be a window to what life was like in the formative years of the college," Jason explained.

Running a buttery, however, is not without its own set of challenges.

Puvan Raj (Class of 2018), Buttery Manager at The Nest, shared that one of the biggest problems the Cendana buttery faced was a logistical one: after enjoying their satisfying supper, students sometimes forgot to return the cutlery and dishware to the buttery.

Holly added that the team also had to be strategic in

to serve the community," he said.

To Jason, working at the buttery is not only a part-time job, but also a commitment to "truly show how we care about the Yale-NUS community."

Students are hopeful that the buttery spaces will be an integral part of student life as the College grows.

Puvan envisions The Nest to be utilised more often as a social space in the near future.

"Ideally, [The Nest] can be a place for students to watch

Yale University, which are also student-run and found in each of the university's 12 residential colleges.



## 3 plays written, directed & performed by students

Text by Daryl Yang | Image by YNC Photography

On 21 and 22 April 2016, Green Room Theatre presented three original short plays as part of Rule of Threes.

Written, directed and performed by Yale-NUS students, the production filled the Yale-NUS Black Box to maximum capacity on both nights as the audience was treated to three riveting tales.

Green Room Theatre is a Yale-NUS drama club that produces original plays, conceptualising productions from the ground up.

The group also seeks to make theatre accessible to anyone who may be interested in the theatrical arts.

According to outgoing Executive Producer, Glen Koh (Class of 2018), Rule of Threes was the group's first formal step in putting out more original works written by Yale-NUS students, following two iterations of the 24 Hour Play earlier in the year.

"Our team has talked a lot about wanting to build up the group in a progressive manner leading up to a full-length production, and we decided upon doing short plays written by students first," Glen shared.

A call was put out in the first semester of Academic Year 2015/2016 and writers worked on their plays over the December break.

"We had an original pool of

12 plays, and the first time I read all of them I was just so amazed at some of the ideas which were being presented," Glen said.

"It was one of those moments where I get reminded of the amount of talent that we have in the school, as well as how much I enjoy theatre as a medium for bringing these ideas to life," he added.

Directors were subsequently recruited to direct the plays that were written.

provide an experience for the audience that will not only create aesthetic beauty but also emotional engagement."

Audience member Keith Tong (Class of 2018) says what appealed to him most was the collaborative nature of the production and the fact that it is entirely the vision of fellow students.

"Each play is the coming-together of talented writers and wonderful actors, brought to life and directed entirely by

comprising a first-time director, a group of first-time actors and several second-time actors.

This pleasantly surprised Glen, who realised that the nature of the production served as a very non-threatening introduction space into theatre. It was a great learning opportunity for everyone involved.

Phang Zi Xin (Class of 2019) echoed his sentiments.



One of them was Nikki Chen (Class of 2019), who directed Wake written by Roshan Singh (Class of 2018).

"I was particularly drawn in by the idea of presenting work that was written by a peer," Nikki explained, on her motivation to participate in this production.

"My job was to transfer words on pages into a staged production. The goal is to

Yale-NUS students," he said on reflection.

"It is a glimpse into the potential for a quintessentially Yale-NUS long-form production, like a teaser of the kind of original productions that theatre groups at Yale-NUS could aspire and create if they ever decide to truly come together to make something big."

The production involved a total of 33 members,

"As much as we strive towards doing bigger and better productions, I really appreciate Green Room Theatre's intention to include anyone who is willing to just try their hand at writing, directing, acting or producing," she said.

"The focus really was not about how good you are but just how much you are willing to push yourself and just try."



## Students explore neighbourhoods in Intro to the Arts

Text by Daryl Yang | Image provided by Ernest Tan

For his final project, Ernest Tan (Class of 2019), together with his team, had to design and model locally-inspired outfits that are reflective of the character of Toa Payoh's various land uses, as well as captured the embodied experience of the pedestrian in the city.

He was taking the Introduction to the Arts course jointly taught by Professor of Humanities (Art) & Director of Art, Mark Joyce and Associate Professor of Humanities (Music) Sarah Weiss, who is also Rector of Saga College.

A required module for students majoring in Art and Humanities, the course gives students the opportunity to engage with arts practice in several different media ranging from visual arts, music and architecture.

At the same time, students are also exposed to broader questions about art and artistic expression such as "What is art and who is an artist?" as well the relationship between art, politics and ideology. The theme for this semester's class was "Urban Spaces, Urban Sounds".

For Rachel Lim (Class of 2018), a student in the Urban Studies major, the theme was what drew her to sign up for this course. "I was very interested to see how sounds and spaces of cities can be represented and manifested

through various art forms and styles. We were given many chances to explore our potential, and the exploration of urban spaces through field trips and workshops that really helped cement my interest and understanding of the urban environment."

One such workshop was facilitated by Sarah Wookey, a performance artist based in London who was invited for an Urbanisms Conference organised as part of this course.

The conference comprised a series of papers presented by different artists and speakers who came from different fields, but all addressing the relationship between art and the urban environment.

Sean Cham (Class of 2019) was one of the participants in this workshop. "I particularly enjoyed the performance exercises we did with Sarah. She had us go through the 'Body Weather Laboratory' exercises, which helped us become more in tune with our body movements and understand how our body relates to the environment around us," shared Sean.

Sean had earlier worked on an artwork titled "Yesteryears" which showcased 50 places that are historically or culturally significant to Singapore. "My project addressed conflicts in our urban space and issues such as conservation and collective memory, which resonated with this course. Conflicts in

conservation and preservation of urban spaces have always been dear to me, from first-hand witnessing homes and places being torn down, along with the stories and memories," he added.

For the course's final project titled 'Hole in the Map', each group was given a map with a blacked-out area in Singapore. Students were expected to use the artistic process to understand the places within the hole, and present a response through art.

a deeper understanding of the place," Ernest shared.

"My greatest takeaway from this course has been to acquire a new multisensory sensitivity to my surrounding. This has deeply enriched my ability to understand and articulate the experiences and meanings that I experience from day to day," he added.

For Sean, the greatest takeaway from the class was the relationship between artists and different art forms. "Putting two different skillsets



The "hole" Ernest and his team was given was Toa Payoh and after much discussion, they settled on presenting a fashion showcase, titled 'Made in Toa Payoh'.

"Each of us designed an outfit that characterised one land use in Toa Payoh – residential, culinary, religious, natural and industrial. Through the process of exploring, designing, creating, photographing and modeling these outfits, we engaged in a multidimensional study of Toa Payoh and therefore acquired

and mediums together to create an artwork can be both a creative and destructive process. It is the ability to negotiate the different forms and ideas that allow the creation of better artworks. I have had the chance to collaborate and work with my talented peers, and it was a very humbling and exciting process to witness the final projects that everyone has put up," he reflected.



## Third run of NGO Boot Camp

Text by Daryl Yang | Image provided by CIPE

Five days of intensive workshops with established Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) practitioners left Darrel Chang (Class of 2019) with a healthy dose of reality.

“Prior to the programme, I have always looked at NGO work from a purist, idealist standpoint and harboured a distrust of the corporate sector. Where I’d once regarded ‘entrepreneurship’ as a dirty word, the ‘smart money’ in social entrepreneurship is now seen as the more efficient, effective, and sustainable method of creating change.”

sectors. 52 participants, comprising students from Yale-NUS and NUS, and NGO partners attended the event from 9 to 13 May 2016.

Speakers included Dr Tan Lai Yong, Director for Outreach and Community Engagement, College of Alice & Peter Tan; Ms Fiona Kanagasingam, Senior Consultant (Innovation) at Community Resource Exchange; and Dr Vivienne Wee, Research & Advocacy Director at the Association of Women for Action & Research (AWARE).

Topics covered over the five days ranged from human-centered design for

students who were heading off to work at NGOs over summer.

“After the boot camp, many students will intern at non-profit organisations whose work fall along a wide range of themes such as anti-corruption (Transparency International, Cambodia); environmental conservation (Conservation International, Samoa); and technology (Code for Asia, Singapore).”

Denise See (Class of 2019) was particularly struck by the segment titled ‘Resourcing social impact and change’ by Ms Mae Anderson, Head of Credit Suisse Wealth Institute.

that I believe is often overlooked in social work: the importance of listening and truly understanding the beneficiaries.”

“Dr Tan also stressed the need to empower the beneficiaries to take responsibility for themselves, and not foster a culture of dependency that would result in a vicious cycle of vulnerability.”

Darrel shared that the five days had not only widened his horizons and opened his mind to new, constructive ideas, but also equipped participants with a diverse, albeit notably technical, toolset that will help them take their first steps into the NGO world.

“I’ll be taking these new perspectives, as well as the technical skills learnt, into my forthcoming tenure as President of the Yale-NUS Association for the Protection of Animals,” he shared.

A flagship programme of the Yale-NUS CIPE Office, the NGO Boot Camp is now into its third year.

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Organised by the Yale-NUS Centre for International & Professional Experience (CIPE), the NGO Boot Camp is a 5-day intensive training that aims to equip students and partners with knowledge and skills for social impact and transformation.

To reflect the diversity of perspectives and experiences, speakers across a mix of non-profit, social impact, academic and corporate

social impact to financial management for NGOs.

The latter was led by representatives from Empact, a Singapore-based social enterprise that provides a range of services to NGOs.

Ms Tan Yock Theng, Programme Manager (Leadership & Global Citizenship) at CIPE explained that the camp also served as a pre-internship training for

“Ms Anderson’s talk was extremely useful because funding is so crucial to implementing any idea, and the session reaffirmed my perception that there is no way to go about fund-raising except through sheer hard work,” she noted.

For Darrel, it was Dr Tan Lai Yong’s talk that inspired him the most.

“He touched on something



## Exploring the history and the road ahead for Cuba

Text by Daryl Yang | Image by Nguyen Xuan Ngoc Hoa

From 13 to 30 May 2016, a group of Yale-NUS students visited the Caribbean island nation of Cuba for a two-week Learning Across Boundaries (LAB) trip.

The students visited Havana and its surrounding area to gain a sense of the country's past and recent history, the challenges the country has faced under socialism, and how it is adapting to the new reality.

Led by Dr Eduardo Lage-Otero from the Humanities Division, the trip combined history, art, architecture, politics, religions and nature, providing a rich multidisciplinary experience to students.

Herman Lim (Class of 2018) was particularly drawn to the broad scope that the trip covered. "We had the opportunity to explore the numerous intersections between philosophy and political thought (particularly that of Marxism, which all students read and discuss as part of Modern Social Thought), environmental conservation, and the impact of the current age of the Anthropocene), history (including topics such as slavery and colonialism) and the arts – written, visual and performative – and its impact and influence on society."

Places that students visited included politically significant locations such as Museo de la Revolución, cultural spaces such as the Fabrica de Arte

Cubano and natural sites such as the Playa Giron, which Regina Ng (Class of 2018) found most striking for its historical role in the Bay of Pigs Invasion.

"Playa Giron is a very beautiful place with its soft white sand and invitingly clear blue waters. It was ironic and interesting to look out onto that picturesque horizon and blissful shores to imagine that it was once upon a time the setting for such drama, disappointment and embarrassment."

Tinesh Indrarajah (Class of 2017), who is majoring in History, was inspired to learn more about Cuba from his intellectual engagement with the African diaspora in an Afro-Latin America class he had taken while on exchange to Pomona College.

"For my capstone project, I am interested in exploring how the Indian diaspora was represented in the nationalist discourses of Malaysia and Singapore within the time period of 1955-1965. The notion of how "blackness" as an identity can shift depending on specific historical and cultural contexts fascinated me, and I sought to witness how race politics were played out in Cuba."

Students also conceptualised and carried out research projects on any topic of interest that struck them as they learned about the country and its history.

For instance, Gabriel Lim (Class of 2019) worked with Herman on a film titled Adaptations about the rising maker movement in Cuba, a response towards the blockade imposed by the US.

"The lack of imported material prompted Cubans to work their way around different uses of household

glimpse of in the Cubans we met."

For Herman, the trip helped to dispel preconceived notions that he would find "the face of communism" in Cuba, and encounter people who will be vastly different from himself in many ways.

"In reality, these preconceived notions could not be further



materials to go about their daily life. Herman also wanted to look at how religion has changed and responded towards the political climate of the country. We decided to broaden our focus to look at how different groups of people in Cuba adapt within their society."

On takeaways from the trip, Regina shared that it was Cuba's testimony of socialism against the dominance of capitalism. "Education and healthcare is free for all, and this has had tremendous effects on the population. For instance, Cuba's literacy rate is higher than Singapore's. Sponsored education has sparked a genuine quest for self-discovery and thirst for knowledge that we caught a

from the truth. Cubans do not 'espouse' communism in as much as we 'espouse' capitalism: they are individuals with the same everyday concerns, desires and dreams that we are all too familiar with in our lives," he reflected.

The LAB programme is developed by the Yale-NUS Centre for International & Professional Experience (CIPE) in collaboration with Yale-NUS Faculty. LABs are programmes of short duration that allow faculty to share their scholarship with students outside of the traditional classroom and create an opportunity for students to explore themes of the curriculum in a broader context.