Letter from the President

21 March 2016

Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Friends of NUS

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends

The new year is passing very quickly, with many exciting and notable events that have taken place or which are about to happen. I would like to share a number of highlights with you.

2016 NUS Open Day

This year’s NUS Open Day held on Saturday, 12 March at University Town attracted more than 21,500 visitors. The use of the full range of facilities in University Town ensured that the programme booths and talks were much less crowded while preserving the vibrancy that has become the hallmark of this event. I would like to thank our enthusiastic and dedicated students, faculty and staff for their hard work and tireless efforts in making NUS Open Day 2016 a great success. You can read more about Open Day on NUS News.

UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament 2016

At the invitation of the University of Malaya (UM), His Excellency President Tony Tan Keng Yam, Chancellor of the National University of Singapore (NUS) will be leading the NUS team to Kuala Lumpur for the UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament from 3 to 5 May 2016. His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, the Sultan of the State
of Perak will be leading the UM team. This series of friendly golf games is a tradition that has been held for over 40 years. This annual golf tournament has served as an excellent platform in strengthening ties between our two universities as well as establishing good rapport and maintaining friendships among academics, colleagues and alumni.

Continuing to Enrich and Upgrade Our University Environment

Ridge View Residential College – Annex Block. The construction of a 3-Storey Annex Building for the Ridge View Residential College is underway. The development, located adjacent to the existing student hostel blocks – Ridge View Tower and Ridge View Residential College, will provide a range of new facilities that will promote and enable a living and learning community environment for the residents of the College.

With a gross floor area (GFA) of approximately 3,940m², the Annex building comprises classrooms, office facilities and dining hall with kitchen facilities for both Ridge View Residential College (RVRC) residents and staff.

The architecture of this new development complements that of the existing RVRC. The development is designed with lush green space, complete with bioswale and bio-pond and set against an undulating terrain profile and dense forested area.

New University Sports Centre. The existing Sports & Recreation Centre is being re-developed to provide up-to-date facilities for both recreation and competitive sports activities. The construction of the new University Sports Centre (USC) commenced in April 2015 and is slated to be completed by 3Q 2017. The USC will house an indoor multi-purpose sports hall, a new Olympic-sized sheltered competition pool, outdoor swimming and training pools, four squash courts, fitness and conditioning lab, a multi-purpose studio, rock bouldering wall, café, sports club and an administrative office.
The Frontier and Student Spaces at Medical-Science Precinct. The existing S10, LT23 and canteen in the Faculty of Science have been partially demolished and construction is in progress for a new 2-storey building with canteen facilities, students’ study and interaction spaces. Planned as an integral part of the Academic Green linking to the University Hall, The Frontier has been conceived as a modern Food & Beverage (F&B) facility for the NUS community.

Phase 1 of the project will be completed in 2Q 2016 and boasts a new 400-seat air-conditioned dining facility with four food kiosks at Level 1, and air-conditioned study and students’ activity areas at Level 2. Under Phase 2, the remaining section of the existing Frontier Canteen will be redeveloped into a 700-seat, naturally ventilated dining area with 14 food stalls located at Level 1 and air-conditioned study and student activities and interaction spaces at Level 2. The project will be completed by 3Q 2017.

The Frontier will link seamlessly to surrounding facilities, facilitating pedestrian flow along the building’s main axis. The open spaces created are designed to promote gatherings and interactions, contributing to a more vibrant NUS community.

AS8 Building. This new 7-storey building, which will be completed by the second quarter of 2016, will be home to the Asian Studies departments of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and Asia Research Institute (ARI).

The AS8 building has a contemporary tropical look and feel, with lounges, a cafeteria and a prominently located computer cluster and large open spaces on the first 2 levels, to serve as interaction nodes.
Management Announcements

I am pleased to announce the following changes in our senior management.

Professor Wei Kwok Kee, presently a Chair Professor of Information Systems in the College of Business at the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), has been appointed Dean-Designate of the School of Continuing and Lifelong Education (SCALE), and will be assuming Deanship of SCALE from 1 July 2016.

Professor Wei Kwok Kee is no stranger to NUS, having started his academic career as a Senior Tutor before rising through the ranks to a full Professorship. Formerly the founding Head of the NUS Department of Information Systems, he left NUS in 2002 to Head CityU's Department of Information Systems. Subsequently, he served as Dean of CityU’s College of Business. In both capacities, his leadership has had a big impact.

As an internationally renowned educator and scholar in e-commerce, knowledge management and supply chain management systems, Professor Wei has published extensively and his works are widely cited. He is a Fellow of the Association of Information Systems (AIS), and was the President of AIS in 2003/2004. He has served as Senior Editor of MIS Quarterly and Associate Editor of Information Systems Research, and is currently serving on the Editorial Boards of several international journals. He has also played major roles in the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) and Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS). In December 2015, Professor Wei received the AIS LEO Award for Lifetime Exceptional Achievement in Information Systems, the highest honour given by the AIS to recognise truly outstanding individuals in the information systems community.

The establishment of SCALE reflects NUS’ commitment to be a significant player in continuing education in full support of Singapore's SkillsFuture national initiative. The University welcomes Professor Wei Kwok Kee back to NUS and looks forward to his leadership in establishing SCALE.

Professor Florence Ling from the Department of Building, School of Design and Environment (SDE), has assumed the appointment of Associate Provost (Student Life) since 1 January 2016. Prior to this, she had been Vice-Dean of SDE for over 8 years, overseeing student matters.

An accomplished teacher and scholar, Professor Ling has garnered numerous teaching, research and professional awards, including the Pacific Association of Quantity Surveyors (PAQS) Academic Excellence Award (July 2010), Emerald Literati Network Highly Commended Paper Awards (2006, 2013 and 2014), PAQS Congress Best Paper Award (Academic) (2014) and NUS Teaching Honour Roll (2008). She is an expert in project management and international construction, focusing on performance, social networks and China. Two of her publications are among the most highly cited papers on international construction research. Professor Ling is a Fellow of the Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers (SISV), and a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). She contributes actively to both local and international communities. Professionally, she is Singapore’s representative in the PAQS Research Committee and an Assessor for professional competence for the RICS. Locally, she is a Council Member of the Quantity Surveying Division of the SISV, member of Building and Construction Authority’s Rebranding
Implementation Work Group, assessor for Land Acquisition (Appeals Board), as well as a member of various committees in government agencies.

Ms Shaw Lay Pheng will be appointed as NUS Registrar with effect from 1 April 2016. An NUS alumnus, Lay Pheng graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration. She joined the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Dean's Office, in October 1998, and was transferred to Registrar’s Office (RO) in 2007. Between 2008 and 2009, Lay Pheng was also concurrently seconded to the Integrated Student Information System Project as Deputy Project Director. As Deputy Registrar since 2008, Lay Pheng has been a key player within the Registrar’s Office. She will report to Prof Bernard Tan, Vice Provost (Undergraduate Education) when she becomes Registrar on 1 April 2016.

Associate Professor Ang Siau Gek will assume the appointment of Vice Dean of SCALE from 1 April 2016 and relinquish her appointment as Registrar. I would like to express our deep appreciation to Siau Gek for her leadership and invaluable contributions to the University as Registrar. During her term, the Registrar’s Office (RO) has successfully implemented several major university initiatives including our general education reform, and introduction of the grade-free first semester and honours re-classification. In 2004, Prof Ang was conferred the title of Chevalier in the Order of the Palmes Academiques by the French Ministry of Youth, Education and Research. This is a recognition by the French Republic for her contribution in reinforcing the relations between NUS and the French universities and engineering schools. Prof Ang was also conferred the Public Admin Medal (Bronze) in 2010. Under her dedicated leadership, RO has further strengthened and streamlined its processes and protocols, and enhanced our students’ academic experience.

Mr Lee Jing Rong will be joining NUS as Director-Designate, Office of Resource Planning (ORP), on 30 March 2016. Jing Rong graduated with First Class Honours in Economics from the London School of Economics and Political Sciences on an Overseas Merit Scholarship (Open) awarded by the Public Service Commission (PSC). He brings to NUS a diverse and valuable set of expertise and experience, encompassing public policy, macroeconomic analysis, and financial management.

Jing Rong began his career with postings in Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Defence and Temasek Holdings followed by appointments in Monetary Authority of Singapore, JP Morgan (S.E.A) Limited and Deutsche Bank AG Singapore where he was Vice President, Institutional Foreign Exchange and Rates Sales. Jing Rong will succeed the current Senior Director, Mr Ajith Prasad as Director of Office of Resource Planning on 1 July 2016.

Mr Bernard Toh, currently Director (Projects & Communications) in the President’s Office, will be appointed as Director-Designate, Office of Alumni Relations from 1 April 2016. Bernard joined the University in April 2005 as Director, Office of Corporate Relations until December 2008. In this role, he was actively involved in numerous key projects; the NUS Centennial Celebrations in 2006, the Corporatization of the University and the organization and hosting of the Nobel Prize Centennial Exhibition, “Cultures of Creativity”. He joined the President’s Office as Director (Projects & Communications) in December 2009 and concurrently served as Director of the International Alliance of Research Universities’ Secretariat from 2009 to 2012. Some of the key projects that he was actively involved in and led was the revamp of
the NUS Staff Portal in 2010; the Flame Arrival Ceremony of the inaugural Summer Youth Olympic Games in 2012; the development of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum which was officially opened in April 2015; and the development of AS8 which is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2016.

Prior to joining the University, Bernard served in the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) and the Singapore Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) from 1985 to 2005. Some of the senior leadership positions he held was Brigade Commander, Head of Human Resource of the RSAF and Director, Public Affairs, MINDEF. With more than three decades of working experience, Bernard possesses a wealth of experience in public administration, project management, strategic communications, and relationship building and management. In 2002, he was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Bronze, Military) for his many contributions to the RSAF and MINDEF. In 2012, he was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) by NUS. Bernard has a Bachelor of Arts (Architectural Studies) from the National University of Singapore, a Masters of Business Administration from Cranfield University and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Executive Coaching from Lancaster University. He will take over as Director, Office of Alumni Relations from Associate Professor Victor Savage on 1 July 2016.

On behalf of the University, I would like to place on record our deep appreciation and thanks to:

Mr Ajith Prasad, who has served with dedication and distinction as Senior Director of Office of Resource Planning (ORP). With more than four decades of work experience in public sector resource planning and budgeting - nearly two decades in the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and another two decades with NUS, Ajith has contributed tremendously to building the University’s resource planning capability from scratch. Ajith joined in 1993 as Deputy Bursar in the then Bursar’s Office and was subsequently appointed Bursar when the Office of Finance (OFN) was formed in September 2000. In 2006, Ajith became the inaugural Director when the Office of Resource Planning (ORP) was formed. To bring NUS’ resource planning and budgeting systems and procedures in line with best practices of leading universities, Ajith worked with and tapped the expertise of some of the leading international experts in university budgeting (including Professor Bill Massy, Tim Warner, Andrew Harker and the late Dr Rick Biedenweg of Stanford University and Professor Bob Zemsky of the University of Pennsylvania) and systems consultants. Ajith was also instrumental in implementing the All-Funds Budget and developing SABRE which provides a comprehensive end-to-end resource planning and budgeting system. Under his capable and strategic leadership, ORP has grown to be a highly professional and well-run office with a strong team of officers who have helped secure the funding necessary for the University’s operating expenses as well as building and infrastructural development and ensured that these are put to best use. We are deeply grateful and appreciative of Ajith’s efforts in professionalizing and transforming the university’s Resource Planning function.

Ajith will be appointed Senior Director in the Office of Deputy President (Administration) from 1 July 2016 onwards and continue to contribute in the area of institutional research and related data analytics and analyses.

Associate Professor Victor Savage for his dedication and invaluable contributions both as a faculty member of the Department of Geography for the past thirty-six years, as well as in his many leadership roles including former Head of the Department of Geography, Coordinator of the Southeast Asian Studies Programme, Sub, Vice and Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts
and Social Sciences, Deputy Director of the Centre for the Arts, and his present appointment as Director of the Office of Alumni Relations (OAR) as well as Deputy Director of the Masters of Environment Management Programme (MEM).

As a teacher-scholar for more than three decades, Victor is well-liked by students and he has inspired many students to learn more about research and life skills with his passion in teaching. In recent years, he also made substantial contributions to the pedagogy of the NUS Environmental Studies programme. Victor’s research interests span across a broad band of sub-themes in cultural, environmental and political-economy issues on Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. His research is well-connected to the local and regional research community in Southeast Asia that focused on environmental management, liveable/sustainable cities, and climate change. Many will also remember his recent co-authored book, *Singapore Street Names: A Study of Toponyms* (*3rd Edition, Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2013*), which is a fascinating publication that provides much fresh information and insights into Singapore’s landscape and history. Victor’s unique abilities and talents have enabled him to contribute widely to various communities, including serving the University in different capacities, as well as to both the local and international communities. He was the past President and current Honorary Vice-President of the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau, and has served in a number of advisory boards and committees such as Chairman of the Sembawang Shipyard’s Green Wave Advisory Board, Member of the Management Development Institute of Singapore’s Academic Advisory Board. As an NUS alumnus himself, Victor has also been very active in alumni activities. During his leadership of OAR, he has launched many new initiatives and successfully organised several large scale events such as the Bukit Timah Campus and Kent Ridge Homecoming events which have been very well received and attended.

As he relinquishes Directorship of the Office of Alumni Relations from 1 July 2016, Assoc Prof Victor Savage will remain with OAR until 31 December 2016 prior to his retirement.

With best wishes

Tan Chorh Chuan
President

For your information:
- Speeches of the President are located at [http://president.nus.edu.sg/speech.html](http://president.nus.edu.sg/speech.html)