

**SPEECH BY MR CHANDRA MOHAN K NAIR, NUSS PRESIDENT
ALUMNI COMPLEX GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY
8 MAY 2006, AT KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE**

Dr Tony Tan, Guest-of-Honour

Mr Wong Ngit Liong, Chairman, Board of Trustees of NUS,

Professor Shih Choon Fong, President of NUS

Dr Shaw Vee Meng, Chairman, Shaw Foundation

Mr Lai Kim Seng, Chairperson of Alumni Complex Project Committee
and Committee Members of ACPC

NUS Alumni and NUSS communities

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. On behalf of the NUS Society, I bid you a very warm welcome, and thank you for taking time to attend the Alumni Complex Groundbreaking Ceremony this afternoon. It is my pleasure to be here today as a dream come true has crystallized.

Honouring Dr Tony Tan

2. I would like to begin first and on behalf of NUSS by extending my heartfelt appreciation to Dr Tony Tan, now the Chairman of the National Research Foundation, for gracing this occasion as our Guest-of-Honour.

3. Over the last few decades, Dr Tony Tan has made significant contributions to education, especially tertiary education. He has also been instrumental in steering Singapore's universities into world-class institutions of higher learning and research excellence. We are proud to have such an outstanding member in NUSS.

The NUS-NUSS Relationship

4. As you know, I stand here addressing you today in my capacity as the incumbent President of NUSS. But I am also a graduate of the then University of Singapore (Law Faculty), and a Trustee of the Board of NUS. It triples my joy to witness the beginning of the Alumni Complex and great dreams for the NUS and its community of alumni members.

5. The first objective under the Constitution of NUSS is to "promote the interests and development of NUS". This has been top-of-mind for our Society since its inception more than 50 years ago (in 1954). Throughout the years, we have made a concerted effort to support, and give back to the University, our alma mater. It could be said that the relationship between NUS and NUSS today is excellent, thanks to the keen interest shown by NUS President, Prof Shih and his colleagues. In the 1960s and 1970s I am told the University did not have much regard for the alumni body and the then University of Singapore Society. The latter was more than willing to cooperate. NUS and NUSS have had a very good symbiotic relationship since the 1980s, due mainly to Prof Lim Pin, the then Vice-Chancellor of NUS and for the last six years especially with the foresight of Prof Shih.

6. As an example of the symbiotic relationship between NUS and NUSS, the success of the recent NUS-NUSS Golf Challenge is testament to the heights that we can scale when we join forces and work towards achieving a common goal.

Looking forward: The Alumni Complex

7. The Alumni Complex will comprise a brand-new Alumni House integrated with a refurbished Kent Ridge Guild House. For NUSS, the Complex is symbolic of the union between University and alumni. The physical completion of the Alumni Complex will serve to cement this symbiotic relationship.

8. Providing a “Home on Campus” for graduates to return to has been a lasting aspiration for NUSS. From our old homes at Evans Road to Dalvey Road and now Kent Ridge, our flagship Guild House has always strived to remain close to the University for this very reason.

9. A year or so from now, we will have a sprawling Alumni Complex to serve this purpose. And together, NUS and NUSS will provide the “Home on Campus” that graduates past and present will return to. Our graduate body totals more than 150,000 and that is a large number to tap from to enhance the development of NUS and our young nation.

10. Dr Shaw Vee Meng has been a kind benefactor and we are grateful for Shaw Foundation's contribution of \$10million. NUSS is a humble non-profit making society and our contribution of \$5million comes from the heart and with all the good wishes of our members.

Conclusion

11. Today is a monumental occasion for NUS and NUSS. Mahatma Gandhi once said "Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory." The effort of NUS, NUSS and our alumni bodies in having embarked on the Alumni Complex would be judged by the future generation of graduates. And I hope they would say that we have done our bit for our graduates and, indirectly and in some small way, for Singapore. I hope 20 to 30 years from now the alumni body will be that much closer to NUS and contribute in a positive way to make NUS a top world-ranking university that our citizens can be proud of. Thank you for being here today and sharing in our joy.

Chandra Mohan K Nair
President
NUSS