

**SPEECH BY NUSS PRESIDENT MR DAVID HO
NUSS LO HEI DINNER WITH NUS PRO-CHANCELLORS, NUS BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
NUS PRESIDENT AND NUS SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS
KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE
18 FEBRUARY 2016, THURSDAY**

NUS Pro-Chancellors

Mr Ngiam Tong Dow and Mrs Ngiam

Mr Po'ad Mattar

Mr Chan Sek Keong

Chairman of NUS Board of Trustees and NUSS Honorary Member, Mr Wong Ngit Liong and Mrs Wong

NUS President, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan and Dr Tan

NUSS Advisory Panel Member, Mr Wong Ah Long and Mrs Wong

NUSS Honorary Members, Professor Lim Pin/ Mrs Lim and Professor Wang Gungwu/Mrs Wang

NUS Senior Management

Deans and Hall Masters

NUSS Past Presidents, Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome and Thank You

- Welcome to NUSS Lo Hei Dinner and thank you for joining us in the celebration of the Year of the Monkey. We heard many stories on the Year of the Monkey and I like to share with you this interesting survival tips in the Year of the Monkey:
Be yourself, never Ape others
Be excited, but don't go bananas
Don't settle for peanuts
And have a swinging good time.

Reflections for 2015 and activities that supported NUS

Looking back at the Year of the Sheep (2015), here are some of our key engagements with the NUS community besides fundraising. Some of you may know about it, but I would like to reiterate them again.

- **NUSS-Residential Colleges Mentorship Programme** – Advancing into its fourth year, the programme aims to provide a platform for NUSS members to give back to NUS, where they can share their life experiences and nurture students to become outstanding individuals. The

programme was started and assisted by Professor Tan Tai Yong, with an initial 15 NUSS members mentoring the undergraduates and has since grown to involve 58 experienced NUSS members. The initial number of 34 undergraduates who participated in the mentorship programme has also increased to 78 this year.

- **Venture N.E.T. (Network of Engineering Technopreneurs)** is a collaboration between NUSS and the NUS Institute for Engineering Leadership (IEL). 2015 was the second instalment of the series, with three speakers and four start-ups sharing their start-up experiences. This aims to provide attendees with an opportunity to be part of the growth of potential start-ups in NUS.
- The **NUSS-YSTCM Music Appreciation Series: Beyond the Score** is an initiative between NUSS and the NUS Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music which aims to provide participants an insight to the art of music appreciation and an avenue for intellectual discourse. 2015 was the second instalment in the music appreciation series, which was fully booked.
- NUSS has been reaching out to the **National University of Singapore Student Union (NUSSU)** to establish closer relations with the student community in NUS. Earlier in January, NUSS threw a “Back to School” party for the NUSSU student leaders, and offered complimentary undergraduate membership to the student leaders. NUSS also supported NUSSU Day and Project Cupid in 2015, and is looking at other long term collaborations.
- NUSS has also been organising regular activities at The Chill-Lab by giving a platform to the Residence Hall bands to perform at the **Chillax events**.
- The Society recognises excellence in students from NUS by presenting the **NUSS Medal for Outstanding Achievement** annually to NUS graduands. We have given this award to **68 NUS graduands** since its establishment in 2010, with **13 graduands** receiving the award in 2015.
- NUSS hosted 5 **Professorship Lectures** in 2015. Since its establishment in 1996, NUSS had endowed \$1.5 million to fund visiting professors at NUS. This was started by the Society’s Past President Mr Tan Siang Chik. These lectures are opened to members of the public, as part of the Society’s efforts to engage the wider community and raise the intellectual discourse. We had 5 lectures this year and in a recent meeting with the Provost, we are in discussions to establish a NUSS Professorship Chair to extend this program further.
- On 20th January 2016, NUSS also hosted a Public Lecture by NUS University Professor – Professor Shih Choon Fong. We had the pleasure of hearing Prof Shih speak about how local companies can be turned into global leaders, and we look forward to more NUS Professors making use of the platform at NUSS to speak to an audience.

- Continued efforts to support the **NUS Alumni Bursary Campaign:**

We were privilege to partner the Alumni Advisory Board to promote the NUS Alumni Bursary Fund.

- \$250,000 was presented at the 2015 lo-hei dinner, as an annual pledge to support the University and benefit NUS students in need.
- The NUSS SG50 Charity Golf raised \$523,500 for the NUSS Golf Section Bursary Fund through the good effort of our Golf convenor Mr Joseph Ng.
- NUSS Life Member Mr Kwa Chong Guan and his sister, Ms Kwa Kim Hwa, donated \$2 million to establish the Mabel & Soon Siew Kwa Scholarship Endowed Fund.
- To date, NUSS directly contributed about \$3.7 million to the Alumni Bursary Fund through the good efforts of Mr Johnny Tan and his team. We are proud to continue supporting the fund.

Looking Forward to 2016

The Society is looking forward to 2016 and furthering our connections with the NUS community – particularly to support our alma mater.

Apart from the token annual contribution to the NUS Alumni Bursary Fund, NUSS will continue to look at creative ways to ‘drum up’ support from other NUS Alumni organisations to support our alma mater. We have hosted regular lunches with Deans and Hall Masters to promote the Bursary Fund and it is heartening to see other Alumni Groups, Residence Halls and Faculties organise Charity Golf events and Reunion dinners to support this fund. In a very short period, the fund now stands at over \$7 million. Going forward, broad base Alumni support for our alma mater is going to play a more significant role to support financially challenged students, especially when there are now more local Universities in Singapore, making the competition for philanthropic donations more challenging.

Many established Universities in UK and USA have substantial broad base alumni support. It takes years of cultivation but the harvest is rewarding. Universities like Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other UK Universities are according official representations to alumni organisations at their governing bodies. As I will stand down as President from NUSS later this year, after serving 4 years, it is my parting wish to see the day when NUS has the mandate to institutionalise an official alumni representation on the Board. Just one official representative from the 40 odd alumni organisations

will send a strong signal that NUS will further embrace and encourage the ever growing broad base support from NUS alumni.

Thank you and here's wishing all of you a Happy and Healthy Year of the Monkey.

It is my pleasure to invite NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan to come on stage to receive a token contribution of \$250,000.00 from NUSS to the NUS Alumni Bursary Fund.