

Appreciation Lunch for Ngee Ann Kongsi
12 October 2010, 12noon-2.30pm
At Istana

Mr President, Mr Wong Ngit Liong, Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Mr Lim Kee Ming, Prof Wang Gungwu, Prof John Richardson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

We live in a globalised and highly competitive world. This applies to all sectors of human endeavour, including university education. Although NUS is already recognised as a world class university, we must never be complacent. We have to constantly re-invent ourselves and increase our comparative advantage. The building of the University Town (UT) is one of the new strategic thrusts of NUS. Prof Wang Gungwu and I feel privileged to have been appointed as the Rectors of two of the colleges in UT. We look forward to working closely with Prof John Richardson and Prof Greg Clancey, the Masters of the two colleges.

Let me share with you my personal vision and aspirations for UT. I was privileged to have studied briefly at two of the great universities of the world, Harvard and Cambridge. At Harvard University, every undergraduate belongs to a house. At Cambridge, all students belong to colleges. The Harvard houses and Cambridge colleges are not simply hostels where students live, play and eat together. They also attend classes or tutorials at their houses and colleges. The experience of collegial life is usually so gratifying and memorable that many alumni of Harvard and Cambridge develop a life-long attachment to their houses or colleges, in addition to their loyalty for their faculty and university.

When UT opens its doors in August 2011, student life at NUS will ascend a new peak. The fortunate students who are successful in applying to stay at the colleges at UT will enjoy a quality of student life not available in Singapore before. The colleges will learn from the best practices of other great universities, but we will create a model that is uniquely Singaporean. Each of the colleges will have a carefully designed curriculum which emphasises communication skills,

multi-disciplinary learning and the global perspective. At UT, we will offer our students an exciting and unique living and learning experience. Our ambition is to nurture our students to grow intellectually, socially and emotionally and to empower them to thrive in an increasingly globalised and multicultural world.

We are very grateful to the Ngee Ann Kongsi for its generous gift. The funds will enable us to endow scholarships and to ensure that no gifted and qualified student is deprived of the opportunity to join one of the colleges at UT for financial reasons. The UT will be an equal opportunity community.

Thank you.

Tommy Koh (Prof)
Rector, Tembusu College
University Town