Drawing Synergy from the West and East

When the National University of Singapore and Yale University came together to collaborate on Asia’s first liberal arts college, a unique educational model was birthed.

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CONTINUING A FAMILY LEGACY OF PHILANTHROPY

These founding benefactors of Yale-NUS gave in remembrance of their parents.

The children of the late Khoo Teck Quee fondly remember their father’s oft-repeated advice to them when they were students: “Study hard and pass your exams.”

In the eyes of his children, the elder Khoo was a strict father who recognised the value of education and gave his children the best education he could afford although he also believed in living frugally.

To him, education was the key to success. He donated to educational institutions and charitable organisations.

Born and raised in Singapore, the elder Khoo passed away in 1998 at the age of 80. His wife, Madam Tan Phek Wan, was a homemaker and like her husband, was an active philanthropist. Over the years, she had given generously to support various charities.

Following in their parents’ footsteps, the children of Mr Khoo Teck Quee and Madam Tan Phek Wan have donated to Yale-NUS College to establish the Khoo Teck Quee & Tan Phek Wan Study Award for financially needy students. In appreciation of their support, the family of Khoo Teck Quee and Tan Phek Wan are recognised as Founding Benefactors of Yale-NUS.

The name of the award is derived from Yale-NUS, as they were impressed by the unique opportunities that the College offered.

Giving is not a zero-sum game. Instead of passing on his wealth to his children, Mr Collin Ang created the need-based Decision Science Agency Study Award to benefit the wider community.

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Mr Collin Ang (left) and Prof Tan Tian Yong (right), President of Yale-NUS College.

In living out these beliefs, Mr Ang recently set up the need-based Decision Science Agency Study Award at Yale-NUS College, in support of financial aid.

“Many people think giving is a zero-sum game in reality, it is not. The money you spend on philanthropy will benefit someone, and that someone will become more productive in the economy,” he added.

“I want my children to grow up as capable people. If they are capable, I shouldn’t have to worry about whether they have the money for a house to stay in,” he explained.

“Instead of passing on his wealth to his children, Mr Collin Ang created the need-based Decision Science Agency Study Award to benefit the wider community.”

From Left: Mr Khoo Teck Quee, Mr Khoo White Luan, Mr Khoo Teck Tian, Mr Khoo Hai Tee, Mr Khoo Chee Tsung, Mr Khoo Wei Long, slice. 1/3/08

Mr Collin Ang, Managing Director of digital marketing consulting group Decision Sciences Agency,kick-started a verse from the Tang dynasty poem ‘將進酒’ by famous poet, Li Bai, close to his heart.

“将进酒” (Loosely transcribed, the verse suggests that everyone is naturally endowed with certainty, and even when they lose all their funds, he will eventually be able to recover them by using these talents.

Over the years, this verse has continued to anchor Mr Ang’s convictions about philanthropy. “If you have a talent, you don’t have to be concerned about spending money, because you know how to make your money and you will be able to earn back whatever you spend,” he remarked.

“I want my children to grow up as capable people. If they are capable, I shouldn’t have to worry about whether they have the money for a house to stay in,” he explained.

“In living out these beliefs, Mr Ang recently set up the need-based Decision Science Agency Study Award at Yale-NUS College.”

The family also established the Khoo Teck Quee and Tan Phek Wan Bursary Awards at NUS in 2015.

The College has had two cohorts of graduates. Could you tell us what your alumni have been up to?

Our young alumni were trailblazers throughout their time at Yale-NUS. Many possess a unique pioneering and enterprising spirit and demonstrate dynamic leadership. They pursue a Yale-NUS education and shape our community of learning in its early years. We are heartened to now see that they choose to embark on careers in many different fields, including management consultancy, finance, information and communication technology, education, public administration, and defence, and the arts.

Of those pursuing graduate studies, many have been offered scholarships and accepted into prestigious universities such as Yale University, Harvard University, Tsinghua University, University College London and Oxford University. Others have been awarded fellowships and scholarships such as the Rhodes Scholarship and the Schwarzman Scholarship. We are proud of the successful pathways that they have taken and I believe they will reflect the values they have been taught at Yale-NUS whenever they go.

What are your fundraising priorities and why?

The College’s key fundraising priority is to provide financial aid to ensure that deserving students are not deprived of a Yale-NUS education for financial reasons. Our admissions review is need-blind and our students’ ability to pay for college has no bearing on the final decision regarding their admission.

Aside from this, we also continue to place great emphasis on attracting eminent scholars from around the globe, who are passionate about mentoring and teaching students, to join our community of learning here at Yale-NUS. A third objective is to strengthen our student and academic programmes that help enrich the Yale-NUS experience, such as study abroad, summer sessions, internships, research attachments, leadership activities and service programming. How does the College inculcate a community of giving?

Prior to starting college, some of our students already had a firm ethos of giving back, and that was manifested in the co-curricular or volunteering activities they engaged in outside their academic work.

When they entered Yale-NUS, many of them continued to do so through the College’s service-based student organisations, such as the Yale-NUS Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter, CoMPact (a community impact group), or even independently.

We also encourage these students and the rest of our community to give back to the College. We have slowly built a community of giving over the course of our pioneering years by reiterating the importance of giving to our internal stakeholders - faculty, staff, leadership, students, alumni and parents. Within our internal stakeholders, one of the key messages we advocate is that “it’s not about the amount, but the participation” to encourage everyone to give what they can.

We want to be inclusive in doing this and hope that people can give from their hearts and not worry about whether they have the ability to give or not.

Our inaugural cohort began the tradition of the Senior Class Gift (similar to NUS’ annual Commencement Class Giving campaign) in support of financial aid. We have also been encouraging them to continue this tradition of giving as alumni, and we are glad that some of them have pledged their ongoing support for various funding priorities that resonates with them.

Other members of our community, including faculty, staff and parents, have also come together to give to various College priorities, including financial aid, international opportunities and scholarships for deserving students.

Internships, research and building these efforts with our various internal stakeholders in the coming months and years.
Giving Back — The Heart of Service

Scholarship and study award recipients pay it forward through community service.

Glance at the student event posters plastered across the Residential College elevators at Yale-NUS College and you will find a great many stories of campus life. For some students who have received financial aid through donor-supported scholarships and study awards, giving back lies at the heart of all these initiatives.

Kalla Sy (Class of 2021), a recipient of the Wu Hsioh Kwang Family Scholarship Award at Yale-NUS, is one of many recognisable faces in the vibrant and dynamic community service is an unmistakable fact of campus life. For some students who have received financial aid through donor-supported scholarships and study awards, giving back lies at the heart of all these initiatives. Kalla, who also serves on the Student Government, admits that one person's world for the better.”

She added, “One person cannot actually fix everything that may be wrong or broken in this world, but I've taken comfort in the fact that a small action on my part might be able to change at least one person's world for the better.”

Yet another donor-supported study award recipient, Peh Yi Lin (Class of 2021), who volunteers weekly at Buona Vista Community Centre giving tuition to low-income students, echoed these sentiments and believed that this ethos of giving back has resonated strongly with her peers to cultivate the Yale-NUS spirit of paying it forward and giving back. “Having received so much from my community, I feel that it is only right for me to give back to the same community in order to continue this cycle of support for one another,” she said.

Another student is Daniel Ng (Class of 2018), a recipient of the Saw Swee Hock Study Award at Yale-NUS, who is pursuing the Double Degree Programme in Law and Liberal Arts jointly offered by Yale-NUS and the NUS Faculty of Law. Together with his classmate Cephas Tan, Daniel founded Youth-in-Form, a platform that connects neighbourhood secondary school students with alumni who are able to provide advice on higher education and career options.

Being from neighbourhood secondary schools themselves, Daniel and Cephas noticed that students from these schools tended to face a lack of information on matters such as university or tertiary institute admission or how choices of schools could be made. Seeking to address this information gap, the duo set up Youth-in-Form to connect neighbourhood schools, their students and alumni and provide students with reliable role models, with the goal of facilitating a sustainable system of giving back within these schools.

Currently, alumni can work with Youth-in-Form in two ways. “We invite people to share their stories on our WordPress site and we invite alumni to go down to different neighbourhood schools to share their experiences, stories and be a mentor to graduating students,” Daniel said. He also hopes to empower schools by helping them create ‘alumni toolkits’. “We realise that schools may not have the resources to start an alumni association, so we are thinking of creating this for them,” he added.

It's always been an important part of my personal code of ethics to give back to my community,” Kalla beamed, when asked what motivates her to give back. “My mother raised me with the strength to strength and now offers participants a wide variety of electives, and looking back, Saza believes opportunities to engage in volunteering work, such as these, would not have been possible without the philanthropic support she had received at the College. “Previously, while in junior college, I had to teach tuition to support myself,” she said. “With the Global Leader Scholarship, I no longer need to do that, and it frees up more time and energy for me to pursue my passions in community service and volunteering.”

The People’s Teochew Association and the Lakeside Reading Programme, an English skills programme for children from lower-income families.

Similarly, receiving support through scholarships has helped lift the financial burdens faced by some students, such as Christal Lim (Class of 2021) and Yuki Nakamura (Class of 2020). Christal believes that the philanthropic support she has received has helped to remove barriers she would otherwise have faced when engaging in community service. It has also helped her learning outside the classroom, something that she has actively committed herself to as a volunteer at various schools.

Yuki concurred, having volunteered with Project Homeworks, an initiative to improve the sanitary conditions and safety of the homes of vulnerable elderly and the disabled, as well as with Lakeside Reading Programme, an English skills programme for children from lower-income families.

Other students have gone one step further and pioneered their own initiatives to support others based on ‘gaps’ that they have seen in various areas of life. One such student is Saza Faraulla (Class of 2018), the inaugural recipient of the donor-supported, merit-based Global Leader Scholarship at Yale-NUS. Her experience volunteering with KidsLight, an enrichment programme for lower-income children at Tampines Family Service Centre, made her realise how such programmes could impact and shape a child’s life. Hoping to bring a holistic education focused on experiential learning and self-actualisation to children, she founded KidsAccomplish, a weekly enrichment programme modelled after Yale-NUS’ model of liberal arts and science education, at the College.

Over the past two years, the programme has grown from strength to strength and now offers participants a wide variety of electives, and looking back, Saza believes opportunities to engage in volunteering work, such as these, would not have been possible without the philanthropic support she had received at the College. “Previously, while in junior college, I had to teach tuition to support myself,” she said. “With the Global Leader Scholarship, I no longer need to do that, and it frees up more time and energy for me to pursue my passions in community service and volunteering.”

Inaugural Global Leader Scholarship recipient Saza Faraulla (far right) teaching a KidsAccomplish class.

A Yeoh Tiong Meng Volunteer Advisory Session at Bukit Batok Secondary School.

Youth-in-Form volunteers at Hong Kah Secondary School.
A Benevolent Scholar’s Gift

Dr Alan Chan supports students through innovative programmes and study awards.

When asked why he has chosen to set up a bursary at the Yale-NUS College, Dr Alan Chan hardly needs a moment to consider his answer.

“I like the unconventional approach ‘Yale-NUS has taken towards its pedagogy and curriculum. It’s new and refreshing, combining American liberal arts traditions with the diverse intellectual traditions and cultures of Asia. Students should learn to be open-minded and take in diverse perspectives and opinions.’”

Dr Chan, founder and former chairman of tanker shipping company Petroships, is an advocate of a liberal arts education. He set up his answer.

Eight years after setting up Petroships, Dr Chan also decided to continue his education with Harvard Business School’s Advanced Management Programme. Recently, he was conferred an honorary doctorate degree from Bond University, where he is also a senior fellow with its Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies. Dr Chan was also named an honorary citizen of Shandong Province in recognition of his contributions towards promoting the Chinese culture. In addition, he has authored several books on philosophy and the teachings of Confucius.

Recipients of the Alan Chan Study Award:

Cheo Baoyun (Class of 2017)

A former recipient of the Alan Chan Study Award, Cheo Baoyun believes that her Yale-NUS journey would not have been possible if she had not received philanthropic support.

“I was given a tremendous opportunity and privilege to have had my undergraduate career taken care of and I was able to make the most out of my Yale-NUS journey,” she says. “That is something I will always appreciate and take with me.”

Baoyun had the opportunity to personally thank Dr Chan for his support at her graduation ceremony and shares that “… meeting Dr Chan personally meant that I could finally put a face, a spirit and a voice behind the generous philanthropy. His gift has inspired me and will stay with me as I embark on a journey to pay it forward again and again. As a recipient of the Alan Chan Study Award, I know first-hand how important giving back is, and I hope that we grow a community of care and a culture of paying it forward.”

Baoyun shares about her experience serving on the inaugural Senior Class Gift Committee. “By serving as Campaign Director for the College’s first Senior Class Gift, I was personally involved in building a community who believed in giving back and advocating a class legacy that left a culture of care behind.”

So Kuon (Class of 2021)

Growing up in the rural outskirts of Siem Reap, Cambodia, So Kuon, the seventh child in a family of eight children, saw sheer hard work as the only way out of poverty. She overcame many challenges, including learning English from scratch at nine when no one at home spoke English. Along with her siblings, So Kuon walked great distances from home to school each day. When she was awarded the Alan Chan Study Award, it changed her life.

“I was crying so hard! If not for the study award, I won’t be able to study here,” she shares, recalling the night she opened her acceptance letter.

According to the Mr. Marshall’s children, “It was truly a privilege to be a part of ‘Raffles for Kids’; an initiative that partnered a similar partnership between the Yale-NUS community and World Vision.”

So Kuon’s perseverance, hard work and hunger to learn have stood her in good stead in her first year at Yale-NUS. The study award marks another milestone in So Kuon’s journey towards overcoming hardship. She intends to major in Mathematics, Computational and Statistical Sciences, and has already expressed her desire to better herself and others through the award. “I come from a poor region of Cambodia and I want to give back to my community after studying at Yale-NUS and contribute by developing it,” she said.

Honouring David Marshall’s Legacy

Yale-NUS launches its first scholarship for five-year double degree law students in honour and memory of the late Mr David Marshall (1908-1995).

The Double Degree Programme with Law is designed for those seeking a broad liberal arts education in addition to their professional training in law.

The programme offers an interdisciplinary legal education in a residential, liberal arts setting. Students are awarded a Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) degree from Yale-NUS College and a Bachelor of Laws (with Honours) degree from the NUS Faculty of Law.

About the Scholarship

The David Marshall Scholarship was made possible with gifts from several individuals, corporations and foundations and corporate local firms honouring the legacy of the late lawyer and politician.

As Singapore’s first Chief Minister, head of the Labour Front and founder of the Workers’ Party, his life story was intertwined with Singapore’s history. He was a diplomat, lawyer and politician whose life was characterised by passion, sincerity, courage and integrity.

Following his graduation from the University of London, Mr Marshall was called to the Bar at Middle Temple in 1937 and later returned to Singapore to start his legal career. He eventually became a celebrated criminal and constitutional lawyer.

Mr Marshall’s fiery rhetoric and oratorical skill eventually led him to enter politics under the left-wing Labour Front, winning in Singapore’s first Legislative Assembly elections. He also founded the Workers’ Party in 1951 and won a by-election in Anson four years later.

Mr Marshall subsequently also served as Singapore’s ambassador to France, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. He eventually retired from the diplomatic corps in 1995 and passed away two years later.

According to the Mr. Marshall’s children, their father “believed above all in an independent spirit, a brave, clear voice, and public service”.

“He would have been excited to know that, in his memory, students will be encouraged to develop the courage to speak up and the desire to collaborate to support the rule of law and serve the general good.”

Inaugural Recipient: Christal Lim (Class of 2021)

On why she decided to take up the Double Degree Programme with Law, Christal explained that this allowed her to pursue her diverse academic interests.

“‘Humanities have always been a passion of mine and I’m extremely excited about being able to continue to pursue this, alongside my interest in reading law,’” she said. Christal previously read Geography, Economics and Literature while in Raffles Institution.

“I feel extremely privileged and grateful to be a recipient of this, but also extremely excited and expectant for what this means for me as well as future students of Yale-NUS,” she shared.

“One thing, among many, that I have always admired about David Marshall would be his courage in, and commitment to, turning his beliefs into reality. Instead of simply being a subscriber to what I am placed within, I am excited to similarly engage with society and its institutions.”

Christal has been actively involved in community service, having organised a school-wide fundraising project for World Vision, an international humanitarian group while in junior college.

“It was truly a privilege to be a part of ‘Raffles for Kids’; an initiative that partnered with World Vision, where instead of one personally sponsoring a child, it would be a class effort,” she shared. “It struck me that something so simple could be a part of something so great, both personally as well as for the larger community.”

She was also a regular volunteer with weekly tuition programmes for students in need while juggling her academic commitments. Christal hopes to continue serving the community as the inaugural David Marshall Scholarship recipient and plans to join ComPact, a community service group on campus, where she hopes to establish a similar partnership between the Yale-NUS community and World Vision.

“I am very interested in ComPact’s KidsRead programme, which seems quite similar to the weekly tuition programme I did previously. It’s something I believe impacts the community in more ways than one, where it not only encourages an interest in reading, through which their perspectives may be broadened (even if only subconsciously), but also on a more personal level, through building relationships with the children.”
**A BUDDING COMMUNITY OF GIVING**

How the Senior Class Gift is helping to build a tradition of giving back.

Despite having only graduated its first batch of students in 2017, Yale-NUS College already has a budding culture of giving among its close-knit community. This was largely inspired by a recognition of the benefits of giving among its members, including students, faculty, staff and alumni.

“Giving helps us reach our goals faster and bring in deserving students who do not have the means to pay the school fees on their own,” said Assistant Professor Stanislav Presolski from the Division of Science who also served as a Faculty Giving Ambassador.

Glen Koh (Class of 2018), a graduating senior and Campaign Co-Director for the Senior Class Gift, set up to encourage seniors to make a gift towards the College to mark the occasion of their graduation, agreed. “There is something to be said about the graduating class rallying to show support for the College which has given us so much in the last four years,” he shared. This year’s Senior Class Gift went towards supporting financial aid.

As a Senior Class Gift Committee member and Faculty Giving Ambassador respectively, both Glen and Assistant Professor Presolski have been helping to build the College’s fledgling culture of giving by spreading the message among their classmates and colleagues. This year, they were joined by another group of giving advocates – the Alumni Giving Ambassadors – who spearheaded the College’s inaugural Alumni Giving Campaign. Titled ‘Legacy, the Gift that Keeps Giving’, the campaign aimed to build on the inaugural Senior Class Gift and encouraged the graduating class to reflect on the legacy they would be leaving behind at Yale-NUS through the act of giving back and fostering a strong culture of giving at the College.

For some donors, giving is their way of expressing gratitude for the opportunities that they had received. Rector of Saga College and Associate Professor of Science Khoo Hoon Eng, a faculty donor who has made gifts to Yale-NUS annually for the past few years, shared that she was motivated to pay it forward and support future generations of students. “My tertiary education was completely supported by financial aid made possible by generous donors. That is the reason for my wanting to do my part to support others.”

Graduating senior Tamara Burgos (Class of 2018), who made her Senior Class Gift towards financial aid, echoed these sentiments. “I felt compelled to give back and it was easy for me to do so because I wanted to express my gratitude,” she said. “Most importantly, now that I am about to graduate, I look back at all the most valuable parts of my time here and understand the significance of contributing towards financial aid and the tremendous impact it has in shaping students’ experiences at Yale-NUS.”

Clin Lai (Class of 2018), a recipient of the Tan Ean Kiam Study Award at the College, agreed. “Without financial aid, I would not have been able to attend any college, much less Yale-NUS,” she said. “Keeping that in mind, i have always strived to contribute back to the College.”

With such a desire to give back present among the community, the tradition of giving among the Yale-NUS community is starting to take flight.

Other donors, like alumnus and Alumni Giving Ambassador Anshuman Mohan (Class of 2017), decided to demonstrate their continued support by giving regular monthly gifts to the College. “As the recipient of a generous merit-based award from Yale-NUS, I thought it was only fitting to give to the International Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships that support international students such as I,” he said. “My monthly pledge to Yale-NUS is a grateful acknowledgement of how much it has shaped and honed me as an individual.”

NUS and PDPA

In Singapore, the Personal Data Protection Act 2012 (“PDPA”) establishes a data protection law that governs the collection, use and disclosure of your personal data. In line with this, the University has updated the Standard Terms & Conditions for Gifts to comply with the PDPA. You can find the latest version of the document on our website: www.giving.nus.edu.sg.

Should you have any questions about giving to NUS, please email askdvo@nus.edu.sg or call us at 1-800-DEVELOP (1-800-338-3567).