

NUS Career Fair 2017

Speech by Prof Tan Eng Chye,
Dy President and Provost

7 Feb 2017, 9.15 am
Multipurpose Sports Hall 4,
Sports and Recreation Centre

Distinguished Guests, Employers, Colleagues, Students and Friends

A very good morning to everyone and on behalf of NUS, I would like to welcome you to our campus this morning, to join in this lively occasion of the opening of NUS Career Fair 2017, organized by the NUS Centre for Future-ready Graduates, or CFG as it is known among staff and students.

CFG has successfully evolved from the NUS career centre to become a first-of-its kind centre developing programmes that contribute to holistic education to equip students for successful future careers and enabling them to lead happy and meaningful lives, contributing to community and society.

CFG has grown from a team of seven to almost 50 strong today, and it has many unique qualities that distinguish it as a dynamic, ambitious and trailblazing unit. Aside from organising and connecting students with employers, CFG also produces research on future-readiness and develops proprietary programmes that empower students to cultivate personal leadership, promote societal contribution and connect them to their future beyond NUS.

Singapore is a country that always looks to the future, as the NUS is a forward-looking entity. The CFG in turn is wholeheartedly committed to the service of preparing our students for the future, stimulating in them a Growth Mindset of curiosity, lifelong learning and resilience. These are the very necessary qualities that will lend our graduates in good stead to thrive and forge ahead in this rapidly changing, volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world, the VUCA world.

At NUS, we believe in a holistic approach to education that nurtures well-rounded graduates who not only are technically knowledgeable and competent in their core disciplinary areas, but are also global citizens with an open mind to learn and explore, bearers of a resourceful and enterprising spirit, and able communicators who are able to articulate and defend ideas effectively. To this end, NUS has put in place a comprehensive suite of academic options and educational pathways, spanning amongst others, global study opportunities, residential living and learning experiences, immersion in entrepreneurial hubs, industry internships, communication programmes and so on, for our students to enjoy a rich educational experience, and to develop themselves fully into individuals ready for the 21st century.

In 2016, NUS piloted Roots & Wings - a signature foundational life skills programme that complements the University's rigorous suite of academic programmes.

Roots & Wings was conceptualised to help students thrive and empower them in this volatile and rapidly changing world. This module is an essential part for the NUS education and aims to cultivate personal effectiveness skills that enable students to focus and handle complex situations, develop the self-awareness to understand their unique value, and grow their interpersonal effectiveness skills to enable them to contribute and connect to the wider world. As part of the Roots & Wings journey, students also develop a clear personal vision that will allow them to maximise their potential.

The findings that emerged from this pilot run are inspiring; for example, over 70% of students reported that they developed the ability to train the brain to focus better and to develop awareness of their surroundings and others, and pilot findings suggest that students' social emotional intelligence increased by 7-11% after taking the module. Thousands of our students used the module to reflect on how to make a meaningful difference to the world and what work resonates with their values.

I am happy to share that you can learn more about the lessons that emerged from the Roots & Wings pilot from the inaugural edition of our new NUS Future-ready Report, which we are launching today. With a structural shift in technological trends and workforce demographics, CFG's seminal NUS Future-ready Report is designed to delve deep into issues such as what companies in Asia look for in graduate hires, and in turn, what millennials seek and expect in

a career and employer.

With much ado now about the fast-changing jobs landscape and the hypercompetitive working environment, this report will yield relevant strategic insights for all stakeholders – governments, employers, students and parents alike, and enable students to bring more value to the interview table and to the employer, and thrive in their jobs, as it will shed light on how employers can attract and retain HR.

What is future-readiness? Later this morning, the Director of CFG, Crystal Lim, will make a short presentation on our new CFG Future-ready Index, that culminates from a rigorous research process comprising nine domains of soft-skills that employers found essential.

The Future-ready Index enables us to clearly define the metrics that matter to the industry and track the progress of our students. It serves as a benchmark for any organisation looking to assess and enhance the soft-skills competencies of their employees. Our psychometrics assessment tool will soon be available on CFG's website, and we invite you to try it out yourselves.

As Singapore's flagship public university, NUS is cognizant of our role in developing graduates that meet the needs of our industry. I am pleased to share that NUS is now exploring collaborative opportunities with industry partners to co-develop a co-operative education programme. The co-operative programme is an educational model that formally integrates academic studies with relevant work experience, where students complete multiple industrial attachment stints alternating with regular academic semesters over their candidature. We are looking to start with degrees, such as Information Security, Business Analytics, and Data Science and Analytics, where there is demand from the industry for talent. Please do approach us if your organisation is keen to partner us in co-designing this new educational programme.

Additionally, NUS has developed meaningful international engagements with many peer institutions and fostered interactions and collaborations in education, research and technology that benefit our students, staff and stakeholders. These Global Internship opportunities entrench employability, skills and global perspectives of our Future-ready Graduates. Moving forward, NUS plans to increase the industry internship participation

rates through semester-long programmes with industry partners.

Last but not least, our improved job portal – NUS TalentConnect, offers you, our industry partners, a free avenue to increase the visibility of your company among the NUS student population. The newly upgraded portal will allow companies to create a holistic profile populated with customised information on products and services, culture and values and so on.

This information will be made available to all NUS students who will be alerted to new opportunities at your companies as soon as they are posted on NUS TalentConnect. My colleagues at CFG will be happy to share how you can come onboard the improved portal to create greater awareness of your company among the NUS student population, and to give you access to the talent you are looking for. Please feel free to approach them at their booth any time today or on Friday.

In closing, I would like to thank all employers here today for your support, and for the guidance and opportunities you have given to our students all these years. We welcome your feedback, and we value our partnership with you.

I would once again like to assure everyone here that NUS is committed to a holistic education for students that will allow them to unlock their fullest potential, preparing them for a successful transition to the workforce. I trust that you will continue to look to NUS as your preferred partner to meet your hiring needs.

I wish everyone a fulfilling time at the NUS Career Fair 2017. Thank you.