

# ACE and NUS team up to deepen know-how on entrepreneurship

**By Jacquelyn Cheok**  
jaccheok@sph.com.sg  
@JacCheokBT

## Singapore

THE cause of building the spirit of enterprise just got a fillip.

The Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) is partnering the National University of Singapore (NUS) Business School to launch research on issues facing startups, to drive apprenticeship opportunities for students and to host master classes

es to develop entrepreneurial talent.

The two year-partnership, announced on Thursday and slated to kick off this year, is the first collaboration between Singapore's flagship entrepreneurship agency and a local university, *The Business Times* has learnt.

ACE chairman Steven Fang said: "It's an exciting and unique development, the first-of-its-kind globally between an academic institution – one supportive of entrepreneurship – and an industry practitioner with connections

to real startups." Among the initiatives are studies into the challenges (of talent development, for example) and the opportunities (presented by crowdfunding, for example) in Singapore's innovation and enterprise ecosystem, which will give policymakers and the business community fresh strategic insights.

Dr Fang said: "Such information on our ecosystem is very much missing here, compared to what's available in other countries. We need to understand

hurdles faced by startups and help bridge the gaps."

Under the collaboration, NUS business school students will have more opportunities to take part in field-service projects, practicums and internships with startups, enabling them to broaden their perspectives; the aspiring business founders among them will shorten learning curve.

Sarah Cheah, associate professor at the NUS Business School, said: "We're seeing more startups come on

board our range of programmes to offer our students – in both the BBA and MBA programmes – the chance to work on consultancy projects or help validate new business models."

ACE and NUS will also jointly host a range of master classes and conferences featuring industry leaders and the academia to spur the exchange of ideas, as well as strengthen ties between the stakeholders in the ecosystem – the students, market experts, technology futurists, innovators and

successful entrepreneurs. Dr Fang said: "The ACE-NUS Business School collaboration reflects the three main thrusts of ACE – to be the voice for entrepreneurs, to build a better startup ecosystem, and to promote youth entrepreneurship in Singapore."

Last September, ACE became a private-led entity run by entrepreneurs and investors. It is now housed in what is widely known as Singapore's startup hub, the JTC LaunchPad @ one-north.