

Yale-NUS pioneer grads in demand

Nearly half have found jobs, indicating employers believe in 'value of liberal arts education'

YUEN SIN, THE STRAITS TIMES

Ahead of their graduation, almost half of the pioneer batch from Singapore's first liberal arts college have secured jobs.

Another one-fifth have received offers to pursue graduate studies.

This, say observers, indicates that employers here believe in the value of a liberal arts education, though it is still viewed by many as a "minority option".

An autonomous college of the National University of Singapore, Yale-NUS was established in 2011 and admitted its first batch of students in 2013.

At its first graduation cer-

emony yesterday, it announced that 63 per cent of its 119 graduates had already obtained job or graduate school offers.

This is in line with that of newer institutions such as the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). More than two-thirds of SUTD's pioneer batch in 2015 had offers from employers and graduate schools before graduation.

A fuller picture of the graduates' employment statistics will emerge later.

Yale-NUS College will be participating in the Ministry of Education's graduate employment survey, typically conduct-

ed in November.

Among the Yale-NUS graduates who have already found work, one quarter will be in government as public servants. Another quarter will go into consulting.

Other popular options include becoming teachers, engineers or working in sectors such as communications and technology.

Those going on to further studies have been accepted into institutions such as Cornell University and China's Tsinghua University.

At the ceremony, Education Minister (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung said the col-

lege has come a long way from 2008, when plans for its establishment were first mooted.

He added that the liberal arts, as the "purest form of multidisciplinary education", occupies a special place in Singapore's higher education landscape.

"Within our higher education landscape, we need to maintain a plurality of options to suit different interests, aptitudes, styles of learning."

President Tony Tan Keng Yam, who is NUS chancellor, and Yale University's president emeritus Richard Levin were also present at the ceremony.

National Institute of Education don Jason Tan said it is ad-

mirable that 63 per cent of the Yale-NUS' pioneer cohort have secured job or academic offers at this stage.

"It serves as testament to the value of such a liberal arts programme, which is still viewed as a minority option in Singapore and many parts of the world.

"It is quite a pity as the skills that (a liberal arts education) inculcates are broad, generic skills that every student needs to cope with the rapidity of change in today's world."

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