



Second-year student Bryan Tan (left in photo) and fourth-year student Yip Jie Ying at Yale-NUS College. Mr Tan hopes to enrol in the joint computing programme at the National University of Singapore, while Ms Yip is doing a concurrent master's degree programme at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

Yale-NUS students get chance to go beyond liberal arts degree

Law, medicine, computing among degrees offered in tie-ups with other institutions

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

They may be liberal arts students at Yale-NUS College, but their interests extend to unexpected fields like computing and medicine.

In the last three years, about 10 per cent of each cohort in the college has enrolled in hybrid programmes which allow the students to earn a master's degree or double degrees in a shorter time.

Based on the liberal arts college's first two cohorts of graduates, about 15 per cent of its senior class went directly to graduate school in prestigious institutions like Harvard University and Oxford University.

Its first batch graduated in 2017. Yale-NUS College has over the years been offering more of such programmes, starting with a double-degree programme in law and liberal arts in 2013.

Today, it has seven such tie-ups with other institutions, such as a

five-year, concurrent degree programme with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and a programme with Duke-NUS Medical School to study medicine.

Its latest addition is its concurrent degree programme with the computing school at the National University of Singapore (NUS), which will start in August next year.

Students will study for an arts or science degree at Yale-NUS while earning a master's degree in computing in the later part of the five-year programme.

Professor Joanne Roberts, Yale-NUS College's executive vice-president of academic affairs, said it started the joint programmes to offer students more avenues for postgraduate specialisation. The programmes are highly selective.

Each concurrent degree programme takes in about three to five students every year, while there are about 60 students enrolled in the double-degree programme in liberal arts and law, which is offered to-

gether with the NUS law faculty.

Six students have been selected for the programme with Duke-NUS Medical School, which started last year.

Said Prof Roberts: "These are good opportunities for our students to enhance their learning and also enable us to connect the study of science, social sciences and humanities, with training in the professional fields."

She said the college is constantly on the lookout for new initiatives that are in line with industry trends. For instance, it noticed an increasing interest from students to pursue computing-related subjects and postgraduate medical studies.

Prof Roberts said that in studying liberal arts, students are exposed to a broad range of knowledge and techniques, which helps them navigate their chosen fields of specialisation later on.

The hope is that graduates who go on to study medicine, for example, will be trained to think and reason in a way that leads to an exchange of ideas and new solutions in healthcare.

Fourth-year student Yip Jie Ying joined a concurrent degree programme with Yale-NUS and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

as she hopes to join the public service or forge a career in international relations.

"The liberal arts are intended to be broad; if you have an idea of what you want to pursue, the concurrent degree programmes help to accelerate that interest," she said. "You can graduate earlier with a degree in another field."

The five-year programme allows her to graduate with a bachelor's degree in liberal arts and a master's in public policy. It would typically take six years for students to complete both degrees separately.

Ms Yip, 22, chose to study public policy as it complements her Yale-NUS major in philosophy, politics and economics.

"The difference is that the master's programme is more grounded in public policy in real life," she said, adding that the profile of students is also vastly different.

"At Yale-NUS, everyone is an undergraduate but at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, most are already public servants or working professionals, so they have different goals," she said.

Second-year student Bryan Tan, 22, who hopes to enrol in the joint computing programme, said: "I always knew I was going to major in mathematics and computing although I was also interested in subjects like literature and history.

"A lot of what we learn at Yale-NUS is broad and there's a lot of freedom to explore our interests."

Studying the liberal arts helps him see the intersections between the humanities and computing, said Mr Tan.

At the same time the specialised degrees are a good alternative if students have a specific goal or pathway in mind, he added.

FOLLOWING INDUSTRY TRENDS

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INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS

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MS YIP JIE YING, a fourth-year student who joined a concurrent degree programme with Yale-NUS and Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. She hopes to join the public service or forge a career in international relations.

ateng@sph.com.sg