

**Speech by NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan  
at the BTC Alumni Reunion  
Oei Tiong Ham Building Lobby, Bukit Timah Campus, 8 July 2009**

Fellow alumni, colleagues and friends,

I am delighted that so many of you are able to join us this afternoon for the Bukit Timah Campus Reunion. Today's event is triply auspicious.

First, this year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Science, and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Education in arts and science began here at BTC with the establishment of Raffles College, while the Department of Dentistry was also started in 1929 – at the then King Edward VII College of Medicine at Sepoy Lines. Over the past 80 years, generations of students from these Faculties have gone on to serve with distinction in a myriad of important positions and ways, in Singapore and beyond.

Second, this year as Singapore celebrates 50 years of independence, NUS also celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Class of 1959. Several members of the Class of 1959 are here this afternoon - thank you for sharing this occasion with us.

Third, the BTC Alumni Reunion is very special because of the prominent place this Campus holds in our 100-year heritage. Few places evoke such strong memories and attachment among our alumni. Raffles College, our predecessor institution, was established on this campus in 1929. BTC's return to NUS in 2007 has enabled us to re-connect with our University's roots and history. Many alumni speak fondly of their university days at Bukit Timah, and their memories of studying and making firm friendships amid its charming buildings, spacious quadrangles and arched corridors. It is therefore especially heartening to see so many of our alumni from BTC returning to catch up with each other and to re-connect with our alma mater.

## **Making a Leap to be a Leading Global University**

The good news is that, with your support, our alma mater is doing well. Today, NUS shines as a widely respected University of global standing. We compete for the best minds and talent from across the world. We have 66 joint-and double-degree programmes with prestigious universities globally, and numerous research and institutional collaborations.

NUS is now at a most exciting phase of development, as we pursue our aspirations to be a leading global university centred in Asia.

What will this take and how will we do it? Let me share briefly 3 developments which will create new and distinctive value for our students and for Singapore.

First, the new NUS University Town. University Town will truly transform NUS education. The undergraduates staying in its 5 Residential Colleges will study together in small groups in their college, exploring issues which are important globally, and with Asian perspectives. They will have many opportunities to interact with postgraduate students living in the Graduate Residence, as well as with top researchers from NUS, MIT and other renown universities working in the National Research Foundation's CREATE Campus in University Town.

Second, the NUS Global-Asia Institute (GAI), to be launched later this year, will carry out research that will provide a more holistic understanding of the complex interconnections between areas of importance to Asia, such as demographics, financial security and urban design. The GAI will draw on expertise across NUS, to augment NUS' strengths and reputation in Asia-related studies.

Third, NUS competed successfully for awards to set up three Research Centres of Excellence (RCEs), each funded at a level of \$150 million or more. These awards will enable NUS to build peaks of excellence in quantum technologies, cancer research, and mechanobiology.

Alumni and friends, your belief and support for our shared aspirations will help our University push towards greater excellence. It is often said that the worth of a great university is measured by its alumni. Judging from the impressive breadth and depth of talent and leadership assembled here today, NUS is well on its path towards becoming a great university.

### **Closing**

On this happy note, let me once again thank you for returning today to enrich and renew our community. I hope this Reunion at BTC will rekindle pleasant memories of your campus days and create wonderful new ones. I wish you all an enjoyable afternoon.

Thank you.