



NEWS RELEASE

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NTU Singapore kicks off 30th anniversary celebrations at NTU Convocation 2021

- *Launch of digital time capsule marks start of NTU's 30th anniversary celebrations*
- *Honorary doctorate conferred on former NTU Chairman Koh Boon Hwee, Chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers Eddie Teo, and philanthropist Chew Gek Khim*

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) is having a double celebration at this year's Convocation – honouring the achievements of the Class of 2021 and kickstarting the University's 30th anniversary celebrations.

Over 9,200 graduands will receive their degrees at the **NTU Convocation 2021** in 44 in-person ceremonies held from 17 September to 2 October.

The Convocation is a highlight on NTU Singapore's calendar of annual events. Marking the occasion this year is the launch of a digital time capsule to kickstart celebrations as **NTU turns 30** years old this year.

Inaugurated in its current form in 1991, NTU has a rich legacy that goes back to 1955. NTU stands on the grounds of the former Nanyang University, or Nantah in short, which was the campus for Nanyang Technological Institute when it was set up in 1981. In 1991, NTI merged with the National Institute of Education to form NTU.

NTU President Professor Subra Suresh said that the pioneering spirit of the Nantah alumni and the transformation of NTU into its current status and stature as one of the leading global research universities in Asia and the world speak to the rich legacy of NTU's predecessors and alumni.

The digital time capsule, which is intended to hold the NTU community's most impactful memories of their time at the University, will be opened 20 years from now. The first item deposited into the time capsule is a video letter from **Minister for Education, Mr Chan Chun Sing**.

Addressed to the “students of the future”, Mr Chan said: “Regardless of where you may be headed, I am confident that you will be a sure-footed and outstanding representative of the foundational abilities and shared values that you have **acquired** in Singapore.”

In a pre-recorded message commending the graduating Class of 2021 for “rising above the challenges and uncertainty” stemming from the COVID-19 situation, the Education Minister congratulated NTU for “30 memorable and successful years”.

He said: “Over the years, NTU has evolved far beyond its original charter, expanding the learning experience for students across disciplines and continuing to push the boundaries of innovation in teaching and learning. NTU has been conducting cutting-edge and impactful research that benefits not only Singapore but the rest of the world... I look forward to NTU’s continued evolution in the coming years.”

The NTU community is invited to share their unique memory, achievement, or innovation that they feel is a significant part of NTU’s legacy at www.ntu.edu.sg/30anniversarytimecapsule. Thirty entries will be chosen for preservation in the digital time capsule.

Over 9,000 graduates in the Class of 2021

The first convocation ceremony held today at the Nanyang Auditorium was attended by **Her Excellency, President Halimah Yacob**, who witnessed NTU welcoming its first batch of Biological Sciences and Psychology (BSPY) graduates.

The double major degree programme is one of NTU’s many interdisciplinary programmes aimed at educating and training the next generation of thinkers, innovators, leaders and lifelong learners – a core pillar of the University’s **2025 strategic plan**.

One such graduate who has benefitted from the interdisciplinary education is **Stella Ferdinand**, a BSPY graduate. Stella, who is now a management associate at Woodlands Health Campus, said: “I feel that being biology-trained enables me to understand clinical terms better and build rapport with clinicians, whereas psychology enables me to constantly consider patients’ and clinicians’ personas, allowing me to design more effective solutions to the complexities presented in healthcare.”

In a congratulatory message, **NTU Board Chair Ms Goh Swee Chen** told the Class of 2021: “Years from now, you will be sharing stories about the extraordinary experiences that you have had the past two years. You may have missed the opportunity to spend a semester abroad or an overseas internship stint.

“I hope your stories will include how, after graduation, you persisted in your development as a global citizen, and how your curiosity to learn took you to many parts of the world. And that you grew your tenacity and wisdom because your desire to understand never stopped.”

Prof Subra Suresh told the graduating cohort: “Class of 2021, you have been extraordinarily impressive in not just what you have achieved but how you have earned your degree. You attended more online lessons than in the classroom last year. Your life became challenging, and at times, it was frustrating for you, and seemed very unfair, and even absurd. Your unshakable resolve and concern for one another during the COVID-19 pandemic have been remarkable to watch.”

He added: “I am sure that the resilience that has characterised your journey through NTU until now will continue to serve well in the future.”

Exemplary figures conferred NTU honorary degrees

At the first convocation ceremony, NTU also conferred honorary doctorates on three individuals to recognise their vast contributions to NTU and the education scene.

Former NTU Chairman Mr Koh Boon Hwee, an eminent corporate leader and entrepreneur, has been a champion for education. Having served as NTU Chairman for 28 years, Mr Koh steered NTU from its early days as a teaching university where it predominantly focused on training engineers to meet Singapore’s manpower needs, to a world-class university ranked amongst top universities globally.

Under Mr Koh’s stewardship, NTU grew from six schools in 1993 to 15 schools in five academic colleges, more than 50 research centres, five autonomous institutes, and three campuses in Jurong, Novena and One-North. The University, home to architectural icons such as The Hive, The Wave, and The Arc, is now frequently named among the world’s most beautiful campuses. The buildings, carefully designed to blend in with the natural landscape of the campus, also support NTU’s ambitions in pushing the frontiers of innovation in learning and sustainable building design.

In 2010, Mr Koh made a personal gift of S\$2.5 million towards the University Scholars Award. Renamed the Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Award, it not only recognises outstanding graduating students, but also honours the teachers and faculty mentors who have made an impact in the educational journey of the awardees.

For his enormous contributions that transformed NTU and the lives of many of its students, Mr Koh was conferred an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.

NTU also conferred on **Mr Eddie Teo, Chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA)**, an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters to honour his decades of leadership and contributions to the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) and NTU, to the Public Service, and to Singapore.

Prior to his appointment to the CPA in 2018, Mr Teo chaired the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony (2017 to 2019), and the Presidential Elections Committee in 2011 and 2017.

A veteran civil servant with an illustrious career of 35 years in the Singapore Public Service, Mr Teo has contributed immeasurably to the work in many ministries, including the Defence and Home Affairs ministries. As former Chairman of the Public Service Commission (2008 to 2018), Mr Teo oversaw the appointment and promotion of senior public servants and assessed candidates for prestigious Singapore government scholarships, including the President's Scholarship.

The former chairman of RSIS' Board of Governors from 2009 to 2018 has also been instrumental in providing strategic direction and leadership for RSIS, steering it to become one of the top think tanks in Asia and a globally recognised school of international affairs.

Also receiving an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters is **Ms Chew Gek Khim, Deputy Chairman of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation**, who has shown passionate support towards education and social causes.

As the Deputy Chairman of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, Ms Chew has been a great champion for social good and lifelong learning. Under her leadership, the Foundation constantly strives to support causes and projects that are viable, sustainable, and well-managed with definable social outcomes. The Foundation has generously contributed to NTU since 1997, helping to establish various professorships, scholarships, fellowships, and bursaries that have aided the growth and rise of NTU.

The impact that Ms Chew made to society is recognised nationally and overseas. For her contributions to Singapore, her philanthropic work at Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, as well as her efforts in facilitating closer relationship between France and Singapore, Ms Chew was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite in 2010 by the French government. The Executive Chairman and CEO of Tecity Group, and Executive Chairman of Straits Trading Company Limited, was also awarded the Singapore Businessman of the Year 2014 and the Meritorious Service Medal at the National Day Awards in 2016.

Celebrating top graduands

Also recognised at the first ceremony of NTU Convocation 2021 were **Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medal** recipients, awarded to students who have demonstrated academic excellence; and **Koh Boon Hwee Scholars Awards**, which allows exemplary students to honour both an NTU faculty member and a teacher from their previous schools or institutions.

One Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medallist is **Gerald Sim**, a computer science graduate. Gerald was born with a hereditary medical condition that affects his ability to run and write but did not let it stop him from making the most out of his undergraduate experience.

“I chose NTU because of the research opportunities available. One of the highlights of my university experience was definitely doing an exchange programme at the University of Waterloo in Canada, where I spent the winter pursuing some rather niche computer science courses with some of my closest friends. It was a very enriching experience,” said Gerald, who is now in the cybersecurity field.

Largest class gift in five years

Despite the pandemic, this year saw the Class of 2021 donating \$124,055.14 under NTU’s Graduation Giving programme, making it the largest class gift in the past five years.

With local traditional Chinese medicine charity clinic **Sian Chay Medical Institution** pledging dollar-for-dollar matching of donations made by graduands for a period of 10 years, the 2021 Class Gift stands at \$224,055.14.

This partnership between Sian Chay and NTU not only assists students in dire financial situations, but also foster in students a spirit of giving back.

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NTU Convocation 2021 by the numbers:

- 9,296 graduates
- 6,213 Bachelor’s Degree graduates and 3,083 Higher Degree graduates
- 240 Bachelor’s graduates receiving double degrees
- 3,002 graduates receiving Master’s degrees
- 469 graduates receiving Doctorate degrees

Note to Editors:

The following documents are attached in the Annex:

1. NTU Convocation 2021 speech by NTU President Prof Subra Suresh
2. Message and Letter to NTU Class of 2041 by Minister for Education Mr Chan Chun Sing
3. Message by NTU Board Chair Ms Goh Swee Chen
4. Citations for NTU honorary doctorates:
 - Mr Koh Boon Hwee,
 - Mr Eddie Teo, and
 - Ms Chew Gek Khim

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About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. It also has a medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, established jointly with Imperial College London.

NTU is also home to world-class autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Ranked amongst the world's top universities by QS, NTU has also been named the world's top young university for the past seven years. The University's main campus is frequently listed among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) buildings, of which 95% are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a campus in Novena, Singapore's healthcare district.

Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg.