

## **Imperatives in Alumni Cultivation**

**A/P Teo Choo Soo, Director, Office of Alumni Relations, National University of Singapore**

Does your alumni feel jaded about their alma mater? What plans do you have to engage your alumni? Do you face challenges in budgeting for your alumni programmes? How can your alumni be more engaged?

All these issues and more will be addressed in this session on “Imperatives In Alumni Cultivation” by Assoc Prof Teo Choo Soo, Director, National University of Singapore (NUS) Alumni Office.

With a 100-year heritage of excellence, the National University of Singapore is ranked as one of the top research universities in the world. Participants at this session will be apprised of NUS’ experience in engaging its 186,000 alumni in Singapore and across the globe.

Underlining the approach of the NUS Alumni Office’s engagement with alumni is its 5Cs Framework of alumni cultivation. These are Connection, Contribution, communication, Collaboration and Cultivation.

Resourcing is key to successful outcomes and here one can learn how Space (e.g. Asia Pacific’s first custom-built alumni house), Finance (e.g. Dollar Subsidy per Alumnus) and People (creating a corp of Advancement professionals) are fully harnessed to engage alumni and to align them with NUS’ aspirations.

The core business of the NUS Alumni Office is vividly expressed in its slogan Building Bonds, Bridging The Future – strengthening the bonds of kinship between alumni and alma mater and bridging the future by aligning the aspirations of alumni with that of NUS.

Ultimately, the desired outcome of alumni cultivation is to have Connected Alumni. Whether as an individual alumnus or as part of alumni groups, they have a shared destiny with NUS and thus contribute their Time, Talent and Treasure to help their alma mater aspire to global greatness.

**A/P Teo Choo Soo**, BDS (Singapore),MSc (London),DDPHRCS (England),Cert. Imm (London) ,FAMS, Fellow of the International College of Dentists (1986),Fellow of the Academy of Dentistry (1988), Fellow of the Pierre Fauchard Academy (1988),Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (1988)

A holder of the Commonwealth Scholarship in 1977, Prof Teo commenced his career as a Dental Officer (1973) followed by Reservist Captain (1975), Singapore Armed Forces Lecturer (1975-80); Senior Lecturer (1980-83); Assoc Prof, Dept of Operative Dentistry (1983-90); Assoc Professor, Dept of Preventive Dentistry (1990-present) and National University of Singapore Director, Office of Alumni Relations (2002 - present)

His past administrative positions included being the Vice-Dean, Faculty of Dentistry (1986-88); Head, Dept of Operative Dentistry (1983-90); Head, Dept of Preventive Dentistry (1983-00) and Chief of Dept & Senior Consultant, National University Hospital (1986 – 00.)

As Director, Office of Alumni Relations at the National University of Singapore, he chaired the NUS Centennial Celebrations 2005-06 and Bukit Timah Campus Opening Celebrations Committee. He is also the Executive Secretary, Alumni Advisory Board, and a member of NUS Alumni Awards Committee; China Strategy Committee; NUS Alumni House Steering Committee; Alumni House Physical Development Task Force; Student Life Task Force; National Education Committee. He is the NUS Golf Captain.

### **His local key accomplishments included**

- 1. Enhancing NUS' Global Standing** – 9 new NUS Overseas Alumni Chapters have been established since 2002. This brings to 14, the number of overseas chapters that are strategically located across the globe. OAR has successfully reached out to our global alumni which comprise 10% of our 177,000 alumni.
- 2. Home On Campus For Alumni** – Spearhead the building of the new Shaw Foundation Alumni House which will be completed in early 2008. This signature facility is a tangible sign of NUS' commitment to alumni and will serve as a beacon for alumni across space and time to return to NUS. It will be their Home on Campus for connectivity, networking, bonding and partnerships. This active and positive engagement by NUS will galvanise and inspire alumni to contribute their Time, Talent and Treasure to their alma mater.
- 3. NUS Centennial Celebrations** – Spearheaded the year-long Centennial Celebrations which included the organization of some 100 events, 20 commemorative memorabilia and 7 publications that showcased NUS' global standing, academic excellence, cultural richness, sporting achievements and illustrious heritage.
- 4. Bukit Timah Campus (BTC) Official Opening** – Spearheaded the organisation of the successful BTC Homecoming and official opening on 8 July 2007. OAR collaborated with the BTC faculties and research institutes as well as key NUS administrative and professional departments for this key event.
- 5. Leveraging On IT** – OAR has effectively leveraged on IT to engage NUS' global alumni.
  - AlumMAIL – NUS' complimentary email service was provided to every 2007 graduands through a seamless transfer from their student email accounts. Currently, there are over 30,000 subscribers.

- AlumNET – With a virtual outreach of over 77,000 on the AlumNET (alumni website), monthly e-newsletters and 200 e-groups, NUS is able to connect with its 177,000 alumni in Singapore and across the globe.
  - Integrated Alumni Database – A strategic IT initiative that straddles across faculties and administrative departments in harnessing alumni information to strengthen connections between NUS and alumni. As NUS' repository for all alumni data, the Integrated Alumni Database will advance the collection, updating and analysis of alumni data across the University.
- 6. NUS Alumni Recognition Programme** – Implemented a university level Alumni Recognition Programme. President S R Nathan was the sole recipient of the 2007 Eminent Alumni Award and with 10 recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Service Awards. This year saw the introduction of the Outstanding Young Alumni Awards for which 10 young alumni were awarded. Through these awards, NUS expresses its pride and appreciation for these individuals and their services.
- 7. UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku-Chancellor Golf Tournament** – Organized this tournament as NUS Golf Captain. A tradition for the past 38 years, this series of friendly golf games is significant as it helps to strengthen relations between the 2 premier Universities of Singapore and Malaysia. A team of 70 golfers led by NUS Chancellor, President S R Nathan was in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 22 August for this year's tournament hosted by the UM Chancellor, HRH Sultan Azlan Shah.

**On the international front, he contributions are as follows:**

**1. Advancement Professional Activities**

- Member, Commission on Alumni Relations, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).
- Judge, 2007 H S Warwick Awards (a CASE recognition programme for outstanding dissertations in Advancement)

**2. Professional/Consulting Activities**

- Chairman, Local Organising Committee, World Dental Congress 2009
- President, International Federation for Dental Education Associations (2000-02)
- President, Southeast Asia Association for Dental Education (1998-01)
- President, International Association for Dental Research, SEA Division (1989-91)
- Chairman, Academy of Medicine, Dental Chapter (1984-85)

- Regent/International Councilman ICD (1995-04)
- Member, Board of International Association for Dental Research (1999-01)
- Vice-President, World Dental Education Society, Singapore (1996-00)
- FDI World Dental Federation, Education Committee, Consultant (1995-present)