

A compilation of selected online articles published in 2020 presented for members' easy download

Preparing our graduates for life after graduation

The NUSS-NUS Mentorship Programme has helped many graduates in their holistic development since its launch in Academic Year (AY) 2012/2013. We take a look at what the mentorship journey is like and what makes it so rewarding.

The NUSS-NUS Mentorship Programme was founded to provide graduates with a platform where they can contribute and learn from experienced mentors, gain professional and industry guidance, and have networking opportunities between students and graduate communities. One of the reasons why it is so successful is because it helps graduates cope with the transition into the working world.

Political Science undergraduate, Bryan Chang, 23, explained his reasons for joining the AY2019/2020 Mentorship programme. He recalled, "As a Year Two student with no prior internship experience, I was concerned that my lack of exposure and unfamiliarity to the working world would make it harder for me to secure a career in future. I was also torn between working in different industries and needed some guidance on this."

The programme has become more than just a platform for career advice and guidance but for overall character development as well. Bryan hoped to become a more confident person, get advice on how to improve and prepare himself for an internship and career, and gain the skills needed to cope with work-related challenges both in school and at work.

At the same time, he was looking for a mentor who would be able to understand and relate to the challenges that many young people are facing, and someone experienced in the industry fields that he was interested in. He achieved all these under the guidance of his mentor Ms Tay Hwee Ling.

She gave him valuable inputs, especially when he had to choose between two internship offers. "She advised me not to get too obsessed over the 'prestige' of companies or agencies in the hope of getting a 'successful' career. With that in mind, I



Mr Edwin Koh (second from right) and his AY2017/2018 mentees (from left) Zhang Quyi, Jesmine Woon, and Tan Qing Lin, enjoying dinner and hearty conversation at The Bistro, Suntec City Guild House.

"I feel it is important to give our new generation the encouragement and support to help them make the most of their potential"

MR EDWIN KOH, A MENTOR FOR THE FIFTH YEAR

opted for the second agency which offered more learning opportunities for me to develop my skills," said Bryan.

Ms Tay was also able to guide another mentee, Guo Jia, 23, an economics undergraduate, who experienced many ups

and downs during his job hunt and struggled through his first few weeks at work. "She provided me with an avenue to share and benchmark my experiences. She also helped me to feel validated, while giving me solid advice on how I could change my mindset to improve my situation," he added.

A rewarding mentorship journey

Every year, the programme has been an enriching experience not just for mentees but for the mentors as well.

Mr Edwin Koh, Chief Operating Officer at Dick Lee Asia, is a mentor who has dedicated his time to the programme for the fifth year.

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To date, he has taken 18 mentees under his wing across two mentorship programmes with NUS and NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

"During my time as an undergraduate, we didn't have a mentorship programme like this. I was only fortunate to meet some of the best mentors during my corporate life who guided me well. I feel it is important to give our new generation the encouragement and support to help them make the most of their potential," Mr Koh highlighted.

According to Mr Koh, each batch of mentees is unique - the students come with diverse backgrounds and different expectations. "As a mentor, I would help them reflect rather than just provide an answer or advice," he shared.

"As a mentor, I get a sense of fulfillment and gain new perspectives as I provide guidance and insights, while the mentees gain experienced advice. It has kept my mind young and fresh - even taking me back to how I started as a young graduate," he added.

Imparting valuable advice

Like Ms Tay, Mr Koh's approach to mentorship is to guide undergraduates through their own self-discovery and personal improvement. He explained, "They need to clearly define their own goals and act on them." He believes that having the drive and putting in the effort is just as important in order to succeed. He also places great value in the willingness to continue learning and he sees every experience as an opportunity to learn and grow.

"Lastly, they need to have the patience



Mr Edwin Koh with former mentees Annie Zhang (AY 2015/2016, left) and Jesmine Woon (AY2017/2018).

IMAGE TAKEN PRIOR TO COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING RESTRICTIONS

and discipline, especially when things are not going as planned. Patience means continuing to work hard to secure new opportunities. By being disciplined and staying focused on their journey, they will be able to tap on their full potential and go further in life."

Forging meaningful connections

The relationships formed during the year go beyond the programme. Both Bryan and Guo Jia are still in touch with their mentor Ms Tay and meet up with her occasionally. "I always look forward to chatting and having coffee with her. I aspire towards having her abilities in empathy, communication and open-mindedness," shared Guo Jia.

Mr Koh is still in contact with some of his former mentees as well, as he treasures the

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GUO JIA

connections he has made over the years. He said, "I value their self-initiative and willingness to invest the time and effort for the mentorship. Their self-disclosure and eagerness to learn and share, have taught me to respect and learn from them at the same time. I have learnt the joy of mentoring from them and it has been a worthwhile journey." 

Resources Fresh Graduates, Mid-career Job Seekers and Members Can Benefit From

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a challenging employment landscape, especially for fresh graduates and mid-career job seekers. A series of webinars on 11 and 12 August 2020 featuring speakers from Workforce Singapore, NUS Provost Office and NUS faculty, gave insights to opportunities available for fresh graduates and mid-career employees as well as for members to be part of.

The webinar series shed some light on the initiatives that NUS and the government have in place to help fresh graduates and mid-career employees affected by the job hiring freeze brought about by the pandemic. Here are the highlights from the insightful sessions.

The NUS Resilience and Growth (R&G) Initiative 2020

Dr Sintia Teddy-Ang, Director for Strategic and Synergetic Programmes at the Office of the Senior Deputy President and Provost, was present for both webinars to give more information on the NUS R&G Initiative 2020.



The initiative comprises four pillars: lifelong learning, job and traineeships, the Students Solidarity Fund, and the R&G Innovation Challenge.

The NUS R&G Innovation Challenge

The webinar "Creating and seizing opportunities in times of uncertainties" provided a great introduction to the recently-launched NUS R&G Innovation Challenge. The challenge, which is accepting submissions from 1 June to 31 December 2020, aims to encourage graduates,

including NUS members, to come up with innovative solutions to make our people, our society and the world better.

As explained by Dr Teddy-Ang, the NUS R&G Innovation Challenge will grant selected projects up to \$50,000 per team for six months. Teams of three to five people can submit their proposals, and each team member who are graduates from the classes of 2020, 2019 and 2018 will also be allowed a stipend of up to \$1,200 per month for the duration of the project. The initiative aims to fund 115 innovative projects - a homage to the University's 115 years of history.

Under the challenge, the applicants can submit their proposals under one of three themes: "Make Our People Better", "Make Our Society Better", and "Make The World Better", which will be evaluated by a panel comprising experts from NUS, and public and private sectors. 

 Read full story [here](#) or watch the [webinar](#)

NUSS' Virtual Annual General Meeting 2020

Our members experienced a very different Annual General Meeting (AGM) this year – about 140 members tuned in virtually in the evening of 28 September 2020 to observe the online proceedings.

With the exception of NUSS President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, who were present at Kent Ridge Guild House's Cluny function room, the remaining 13 Management Committee members attended the session virtually due to the health and safety reasons derived from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Members were required to pre-register to attend this live webcast. A member is deemed to be present at the meeting if the member has appointed the Chairman of the meeting (former NUSS President, Mr Eddie Lee) as the proxy to attend, speak and vote at the meeting. Questions pertaining to the resolutions in the Notice of AGM and Annual Report were submitted via email to NUSS prior to the AGM. One question was submitted, and members were able to view NUSS' response uploaded onto the website.

The agenda included confirmation of the minutes of the last AGM (held on 26 April 2019) and the appointment of an auditor for the ensuing year. The other

key agenda highlights were to receive the Financial Statements for the year ended on 31 December 2019 and election of eight members to the Management Committee (MC).

Honorary Treasurer Mr Jeffrey Khoo presented the Financial Statements for the year ending in 31 December 2019.

A total of 10 nominations for election into the MC was received by the closing date of 18 September 2020. Prior to the AGM, voting stations were opened at all three Guild Houses over the weekend for members to cast their votes for NUSS' Management Committee for 2020/2021. Mr Lee congratulated and warmly welcomed the following eight elected members:

- ✦ Mohan Balagopal
- ✦ Daniel Chia Han Yong
- ✦ Ng Teck Wee
- ✦ Jeremy Seah Meng Hwee
- ✦ Sean Kuan Thye
- ✦ Soh Yi Da
- ✦ Edward Stanley Tay Wey Kok
- ✦ Tong Hsien-Hui

Mr Lee ended off the night by thanking all candidates who stood for election and extended his appreciation towards departing MC member, Mr Archie Ong Liang-Gay, for his contributions to the Society over the years.

Though the road ahead may be challenging during this unprecedented time, but with the dedication and wisdom of the MC, we are assured that NUSS will definitely navigate through the storm. Till then, we long for the day to be able to reconvene and bond over our annual AGM tradition – *Teochew Mui* supper. 🍲



The Awakening of the Younger Generation

Political education in schools, quality of life, and COVID-19 were among the hot topics discussed at the NUSS Pre-General Election Forum 2020.

The long-standing NUSS tradition of hosting a pre-General Election (GE) Forum went off without a hitch despite the current social distancing protocols. This year's forum was held on the evening of Friday, 3 July — one week prior to the GE — at the Kent Ridge Guild House and webcast live via the Society's YouTube channel and streamed on Mothership.sg. It peaked at over 1,630 viewers during the live stream and remained available on the NUSS channel after the event. With over 150,000 views at the time of writing, the forum proved to be a hit with members and the public eager to hear GE debates. One viewer described it as "one of the more intelligent, mature GE debates based on issues and meaningful, respectful dialogue".

While all 13 registered political parties were officially invited for the forum, not all were able to participate due to various reasons. The evening dialogue was attended by representatives from six political parties and



was moderated by NUSS member and former Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP) Mr Viswa Sadasivan. Mr Sadasivan, is also the host of the socio-political programme, Inconvenient Questions. NUSS members who registered prior to the webcast also had a chance to have their questions answered during the forum.

Fruitful forum

In the panel was newest opposition party Red Dot United (RDU), founded only in May this

year. In her maiden opening statement, Ms Michelle Lee, Chairman of RDU, reiterated their party's goal of making politics more accessible and less traditional to "bring about a safer environment for people to examine policies and look at where Singapore is going."

The topic of making politics more accessible to people ruled the evening's discussions. Prof Paul Tambyah, Chairman of the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) highlighted the need to have political education in schools.

Mr Harminder Pal Singh, Chief Media Officer of the Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA) picked up from this point urging people to take a look at the country's education system and the need for the next generation to be "a creative thinking population and be a more independent thinking population, especially in the post-COVID-19 world that we are moving into." 🗣️

📖 Read full story [here](#) or watch the [webinar](#)

Ready for Today and Tomorrow

The Inconvenient Questions (IQ) Special Panel Discussion that took place on December 3, 2020 witnessed the experts discussing the new education trends.

A good university degree was all you needed in the past, but that's not the case now. Many universities are moving into interdisciplinarity, with the emphasis on experiential learning and an all-rounded education. Interdisciplinarity or interdisciplinary studies involve the combination of two or more academic disciplines into one activity, and draws knowledge from several fields, thus encouraging thinking across boundaries.

The IQ Special Panel Discussion, a Strategic Moves production in collaboration with NUS and NUS, began with these thoughts and then the 360 participants, who had tuned in online, witnessed the experts bringing to light the new education trends.

Interdisciplinarity in the real world

Hiring companies no longer look at candidates' grades, but on whether they have a learner's mindset. Based on her experience, Ms Aw explained that companies look at how the person could add value to the company's culture and for an instinct for learning as this would ultimately bring success to both the individual as well as the company.

Mr Ye Gang advocated lifelong learning, especially in interdisciplinarity. With an engineering background, he shared how despite



IQ panel members: Mr Viswa Sadasivan, Chief Editor of IQ and former Nominated Member of Parliament; Prof Tan Eng Chye, President of National University of Singapore (NUS); Ms Aw Kah Peng, Chairman of Shell Companies in Singapore; Mr Ye Gang, Group Chief Operating Officer of Sea Group, and Mr Han Fook Kwang, Editor-at-large of *The Straits Times*.

obtaining poor grades in psychology and economics, the experiences he went through transformed him as he joined the workforce. He said, "grades mean nothing once you leave school, but experiences stay with you for life. Dare to try, don't be afraid to fail. Study subjects that can widen your scope of knowledge."

Additionally, with the job landscape changing, and technology advancing, some jobs may no longer be relevant. "Therefore,

universities have to find a way to instil in students - character building, critical thinking skills, deductive reasoning, the ability to innovate, problem-solving and knowing how to deal with changes. Students must know how to join the dots and reach a conclusion that is reasonably sound even without all the knowledge," concurred Prof Tan. **B**

[Read full story here](#) or watch the [webinar](#)

National Day Awards 2020

Congratulations to our NUS members who were conferred the National Day Awards 2020. We would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to these NUS members who have been honoured with the following NDA titles and salute them for the contributions made towards a better Singapore:

THE PUBLIC SERVICE STAR (BAR)
Chia Chor Leong
Wee Chow Hou

THE PUBLIC SERVICE STAR
Lily Kong Lee Lee
Lim Joo Boon
Lock Kai Sang

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (GOLD)
Lim Yen Ching

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (SILVER)
Ang Mui Kim
Seet Tiat Hee
Tan Eng Kim
Wu Siew Mei

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (BRONZE)
Boo Hian Kok
Toh Hong Chuan
Wong Hee Kit

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (BRONZE) (MILITARY)
Chng Kim Chuan

THE COMMENDATION MEDAL
Tan Shao May

THE COMMENDATION MEDAL (MILITARY)
Chew Heng Wee
Tan Soo Yong
Toh Tee Yang

THE PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL
Chow Ying Hoong
Hum Sin Hoon
Narayanan Ganapathy
Leonard Narayan s/o Thangavelu
Ng Siew Hoong
Ong Wee Heng
Tan Ken Hwee
Tan Tai Yong
Tan Yew Oo
Wee Wei Ling

THE EFFICIENCY MEDAL
Ho Kwok Hoong Justin

THE LONG SERVICE MEDAL
Chai Woon Yin Charine
Chan Heng Huat
Cheong Gay Teck
Chew Ming Tak
Choh Sok Kuang Clarinda
Choo Ling Ling Dora Maria
Goh Thiam Lai
Lekha Gopalakrishnan Nair

Lim Thim Veng
Narayanan Ganapathy
Ong Tiong Puay Noel
See Kwan Hui Josephine
Tan Aik Ling
Tan Chyi Ming Clement Nicholas
Yee Boon Cheow
Zhou Yingxin

THE LONG SERVICE MEDAL (MILITARY)
Teo Chiak Siew Steven



Scenic Singapore Offshore Islands You Can Explore Now

International travel may not open up soon so if you're itching for some new adventures, why not turn your sights to your own backyard? Here are our top offshore island picks you can visit for a quick getaway.

Did you know that Singapore's main island is surrounded by around 64 offshore islands? Aside from the world-famous Sentosa Island, there are other islands you may not have explored yet. With the help of Simon Chin, a professional licensed tourist guide, we pick seven of these islands and give you the lowdown on each.

Coney Island



Coney Island

Go there for: Birdwatching, hiking, cycling

Coney Island is a 133-hectare island located at the northeastern part of Singapore, about 20 minutes away from Punggol Settlement by foot. The island has a rich history – in the 1930s and 40s, it was called Haw Par Island under ownership of the founders of Tiger Balm and was even a leisure resort in the 1950s. Today, the majority of the island is part of the 81-hectare Coney Island Park. Simon suggests immersing yourself in the island's undisturbed flora and fauna and rustic charm either by hiking or cycling through the various paths.

Kusu Island

Go there for: Beaches, rich history

This 8.5-hectare southern island is a 20-minute ferry ride from Marina South Pier and has various lagoons and

pristine beaches that are popular for day-trippers looking for some fun in the sun away from the crowded beaches in the mainland. But take note that there are no food and beverage outlets on the island and overnight stays or camps are not permitted.

Lazarus Island & St John's Island

Go there for: Tranquil setting, beaches, fishing

Just beside Kusu Island are these two islands connected by a paved bridge. In the late 19th century, Lazarus Island was used as a prison confinement while St John's Island was a quarantine station for cholera cases. All that has changed and both islands are now popular getaway spots famous for their relaxing and peaceful settings. Both boast clean, white and sandy beaches with clear waters perfect for scuba diving and snorkelling. Can't get enough? St John's Island has accommodation if you plan to stay the night.



St John's Island

Pulau Ubin

Go there for: Off-road cycling, camping, hiking, fishing, nature and exploration

Pulau Ubin is a 1,020-hectare island located in the northeast of Singapore. It's a 15-minute bumboat ride from Changi Point Ferry Terminal and is one of Singapore's most popular islands attracting both tourists and locals. It's accessible, has a lot of activities, and its *kampong*



Pulau Ubin

(traditional village) and tranquil vibes offer a quick getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city. "Ubin also has a number of shrines and temples but the German Girl Shrine is particularly interesting because of how it came to be so look out for it when you're there!"

Sisters' Islands

Go there for: Snorkeling, hiking

On the island, you can visit Sisters' Islands Marine Park, Singapore's first marine park which spans about 40 hectares around the islands, where you can find a wide variety of habitats including coral reefs, sandy shores and seagrass areas. You'll also find Singapore's first turtle hatchery there. "Sisters' Islands are best known for water activities like snorkelling thanks to its diverse marine life. Also keep a look out for the monkeys as they can get quite aggressive."



Sisters' Islands

Whether you decide to wander off on your own, with a few friends, or join a local tour, remember to practice social responsibility, keep your masks on at all times and bring spare ones. Be respectful of nature, leave the islands as they are and do not litter. **E**

[Read full story here](#)

“Dementia can be prevented,” says Prof Kua Ee Heok

According to research, 10 to 20 per cent of new cases of dementia reported every year in Singapore could have been prevented and the remaining cases delayed. How is this possible and what steps can be taken?

In an interview with The Graduate, Professor Kua Ee Heok, Tan Geok Yin Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and Senior Consultant Psychiatrist at the National University of Singapore (NUS), shares some fascinating insights.

“Keeping a positive mindset and staying active can lead to delaying the onset of dementia in the elderly and improve their quality of life,” shares Prof Kua. “Social, mental and physical health are of paramount importance for dementia patients. It’s a high-risk situation if depression co-occurs with dementia. We turn to music, art, brain-stimulating activities, mindfulness therapy, gardening and ‘meridian flapping’ exercises (where participants use special tools to hit different acupuncture points on their bodies to improve blood circulation) to enhance engagement and prevent dementia from striking those above 60 years suddenly,” he adds.

As a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) research team for the Global Study of Dementia, Prof Kua has researched extensively on the syndrome. Having gained many international awards and accolades, Prof Kua also had the privilege of being invited to speak at the United Nations World Forum on depression in 1999. Looking back, he describes his UN talk as “one of the best moments” of his life.

Today, he is recognised as a pioneer in Singapore’s mental health landscape, initiating the Dementia Prevention Programme and establishing the nation’s first memory clinic in 1990. Prof Kua is also a strong advocate for non-pharmacological methods to slow the progression of dementia.

Spot early symptoms

Most dementia patients develop a sense of forgetfulness. They might be able to remember



incidents as old as World War I, but short-term memory goes off. “They’ll forget the name of an object or people around them. The onset of dementia is slow and gradual but sometimes a sudden stroke can cause a drop in mental functioning. These are the signs that alert us about the approaching illness,” shares Prof Kua.

Prevention and delay

Prof Kua, who has authored no fewer than 25 books on topics such as psychiatry, dementia, depression and stress, believes that controlling hypertension and diabetes can help prevent dementia. “Exercising (such as walking or yoga), mindfulness meditation, diet control, and undertaking any activity that the elderly enjoy, can be useful in keeping minds active. We recommend they learn playing guitar, piano, dancing, sitar, join a choir, paint or enjoy soulful music,” explains Prof Kua.

Advice during the pandemic

Caregivers should make sure the seniors sleep well at night and that their sleep patterns are not disturbed. “Sometimes elder abuse is common when caregivers become stressed. So, the family needs to step in at that time to give a break to caregivers. Spending time with the patients, making them involved in activities, bringing along old photos or playing games can help keep them calm during a pandemic situation,” advises Prof Kua. He recommends that patients should preferably stay in their own homes with family rather than at the hospital. “We want them to age at their own home. Research is currently ongoing about ageing at home and voluntarism.

Economic benefits

Prevention of dementia could also lead to huge economic savings, given the high costs of medical care in Singapore. With average life expectancy in Singapore rising to 82 years, people are still working beyond 65 years of age. “This is a good economic shift and the seniors are able to save money for healthcare. They need to remain active and independent,” says Prof Kua. [G](#)

[Read full story here](#)

FACT CHECK

ONE IN 10 PEOPLE

age 60 and above may have dementia

Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WISE) study led by the Institute of Mental Health, 2015



Singapore witnesses **2,500** new cases of dementia every year. An estimated **82,000** people are living with dementia, and this number is expected to go beyond **100,000 by 2030**.