

Closing Remarks by NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan
Inaugural NUS Excellence Day 2009/10
11 March 2010, 10.00 am, University Cultural Centre Hall

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good afternoon

In my last State of the University Address, I spoke about the need to be nimble in response to the rapid and profound changes to the world's economy. To become a leading global University, NUS' administrative system must be world-class, and support and drive our academic enterprise. I am really pleased to see how our Faculties, departments and halls have stepped up to this challenge, and making quantum improvements in their systems, processes and environment towards administrative excellence.

Today's inaugural NUS Excellence Day recognises and celebrates these efforts and achievements. I am happy to see many deserving teams and individuals receive awards for administrative and service excellence. My warmest congratulations to all our award winners!

Let me cite a few examples on how our departments are responding to our collective quest for excellence.

First, the Lean Six Sigma programme launched by the Office of Quality Management (OQM) in 2008 has helped our University reduce its operating costs by improving productivity and cutting down on waste. Through greater efficiency and streamlining of processes, the University saved about \$6 million, enabling the savings to be channelled to priority areas such as increasing financial aid for students, and providing quality

education and research. Overall, our departments also improved their turnaround times, raised service standards and reduced errors.

Second, I was heartened to see the NUS community pulling together and working well when we had to deal with the H1N1 pandemic outbreak last year. Led by the Office of Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE), safety measures and health systems were rapidly disseminated and implemented, coupled with an effective crisis response plan when the pandemic first broke. I know that the measures introduced caused significant inconvenience and disruption to the routine of the university. I would like to thank the university community for your patience, cooperation and kind understanding of the need for preventative actions.

I am also pleased to note that a great deal has been accomplished to promote good practices in work safety and health, and departments have chalked up high participation rates in various promotional schemes such as ASHPA, safetymation and fire safety awards. Some departments have even made the leap into the next tier of safety awards. In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Department of Epidemiology & Public Health (EPH) for achieving the Gold Award for ASHPA – the first academic department in NUS to achieve the OHSAS¹ 18001:2007 certification.

Third, through the Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES), NUS is leading the way in making our campus more environmentally sustainable. We are establishing a number of international partnerships, for example with the declaration of the Greenhouse Emission Targets by the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU). NUS has also signed the Sustainable Campus Charter with 24 other university signatories including Johns Hopkins and MIT to pledge our commitment to campus-wide principles and measurable goals for sustainable development, construction, and operations. More specifically, NUS is measuring our carbon footprints and developing and implementing strategies for carbon reduction. We aim to achieve a 23% carbon emission offset by 2020 contributed by energy, air miles and fleet emissions.

¹ Occupational Health & Safety Advisory Services

With our campus community's support, OES and the Office of Estate and Development have also implemented a spectrum of environmentally-friendly activities and initiatives such as recycling, reducing the use of energy in our University buildings and creating awareness for the environmental cause. NUS also aims to elevate more of our buildings' status to a national-level "Green Mark-certified" building. In this regard, I am delighted to announce that we are expecting more Green Buildings in the Kent Ridge campus in the coming months, following the success of our University Town project which was awarded the second highest rating of "Goldplus", in the "Green Mark District" rating established by the Building and Construction Agency last October.

Closing

Like you, I am very heartened with the excellent progress that has been made to achieve all-round excellence in our administrative systems and operations. But, we must do even more! The journey towards a world-class administrative system is a long and arduous one, and we must push even harder to make large step-change enhancements on a broad base of continual incremental improvements. And, by so doing, help make NUS a leading global university centred in Asia.

On this note, let me once again congratulate all our award winners today and also express my heartfelt appreciation to Prof Tan Kay Chuan, Dr Peck Thian Guan, Ms Lina Goh and their teams for putting together this lively and entertaining NUS Excellence Day celebration.

Thank you.