

FAS Senate

AN ELECTED BODY OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
YALEUNIVERSITY

**Visit by Shiri Goren and Charles Schmuttenmaer to Yale-NUS, March 2016
Presented at the May 19, 2016 FAS Senate Meeting**

Overview:

We visited the campus of Yale-NUS in Singapore during the first week of Spring Break. Pericles Lewis, President of Yale-NUS, extended an invitation via Beverly Gage, Chair of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Senate (see Appendices 1 and 2). The trip was funded by Yale-NUS (see Appendix 3). Katie Trumpener had volunteered to go as well, but had to cancel at the last minute due to extenuating circumstances.

It was an intensive, three-day visit. We met with faculty, students, and administrators. Generally, meetings with faculty members and with students were held without administrative presence. In addition, we had a few meetings that we initiated prior to our visit, both at the campus and outside of it.

Although it was a short visit, we both felt that we obtained a good sense of how things are over there. What follows are answers to many of the questions that we asked, and several observations that we made.

We feel, along with some fellow Senators, that there is room for a more elaborated discussion about the college, its mission and what are currently fairly vague ties to Yale. Such conversations should include representatives from Yale-NUS as well as members of the Yale faculty, and not just from within the Senate – some of whom hold strong opinions against the very existence of Yale-NUS.

In other words, our visit and our account of it does not aim to judge the morality of the idea of establishing that institution, but rather, since it already exists, to reflect upon the practices and daily operation of this international college in Singapore that contains the name Yale: Our name.

Student Body:

Student body capacity is roughly 1000 - Total students currently enrolled: 514

Class of 2017: 152

Class of 2018: 172

Class of 2019: 190

Planned size for Class of 2020: 210

Females: 57%

Males: 43%

Students come from 43 nations: about 63% Singaporeans (320) 8% Americans (41). There are 23 students from India, and 15 from China and Malaysia each. Their goal is 51% Singaporeans once they are at steady-state with 1000 students.

Faculty:

The breakdown of faculty by nationality is approximately:

- 48% US
- 18% Singaporean (which includes immigrants from Australia, India, and Malaysia)
- 15% other Asian
- 13% European
- 4% Australian
- 3% Canadian
- They do not keep official statistics on everybody's ethnicity, but it would be approximately a little over one-third Asian or Asian-American (or Asian and another country), with the remainder coming from nearly every continent. It is a very international group.

Total no. of faculty	116
Gender breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 36% female- 64% male	
No. of faculty on tenure- track	91 (58 tenurable and 33 tenured)
No. of faculty on non-tenure track	13
No. visiting faculty (including Yale seconded faculty)	12
No. of incoming faculty	18 (including 2 senior faculty joining in AY2017-2018)
No. of faculty to be hired for AY2016	10

Observations:

Independence – Yale-NUS is completely independent academically. They do not grant NUS degrees. They do not grant Yale degrees. They grant Yale-NUS College degrees.

Liberal arts in Asia – Faculty at Yale-NUS stress the idea of import vs. export, that is, they view Yale-NUS as an Singaporean import rather than a U.S. export. Singapore desired a true liberal arts college

and chose to import a number of aspects of Yale, as opposed to Yale simply exporting a satellite campus to Singapore. Its core curriculum is fundamentally different than the Yale experience. It has an aim to educate the future generation of leaders of the region. To that end, it is a gated community but a community with open gates, literally and metaphorically. Students and faculty show active awareness of their role within the greater community of Singapore in particular and Asia in general.

Vibrant community – Genuine excitement of creating something new. This comes across mostly from faculty but we heard it from students and administrators too.

Students – Student body is vibrant, creative, and interactive.

Teaching – core curriculum, very involved with teaching, pedagogy, and technology-enhanced learning (Shiri visited a class).

Academic freedom – They are aware of the issues of academic freedom in Singapore and that they live in a gated community. However, on campus there is no censorship. They can purchase any books or films that they choose. They inform the MDA (Media Development Authority) rather than ask permission. They invite members of opposition parties to give lectures and seminars.

Personal freedom – On campus, not a problem. For example, their LGBT student group is the only one in the country that is officially registered as a student organization and therefore receives institutional (government) funding. One example is that they recently published a safe practices brochure (including free condoms) and distributed it in all of the residential colleges. These are not customary practices in Singapore.

Library and journals – Library holdings are admittedly minimal, but they are working with faculty to obtain not only the books specified, but similar works as well. It is very “spikey” at the moment, but they hope it will fill out as time goes on. They currently have about 12,500 volumes, but would like to increase their collection to 40,000 volumes in the next few years, and continue expanding from there.

Electronic journal access is perfectly fine. They have access to everything NUS has access to, so they have 10,000 to 15,000 or more titles at their fingertips. They have access to JSTOR and Project Muse and other such electronic resources (we had been told that they did not).

Pay – Faculty salaries are not lower than at NUS. We had been told that they were. In fact, faculty at NUS complain that the pay at Yale-NUS is higher than NUS.

Benefits for faculty – Generous on most fronts:

- Housing benefits for incoming faculty (up to 9 years from joining).
- Non-Singaporean faculty (or Singaporean coming from abroad) on contracts of three years or more, receive an education allowance for children ages 5-18 for private schooling. This benefits is for up to three children and it’s up to a sum that translates to \$12,050 USD per child per year.
- Parental leave policy is fine for women and lacking for men. They are still working on policies regarding complications in pregnancy/deliveries. Since it is a new institution, they are still in responsive mode rather than proactive in both areas. One new faculty dad indicated that he received 5 days of parental leave before he had to go back teaching. We understand that policies and practices

for parental leaves rather than maternal leaves are not very common in Asia, and this is an area in which Yale-NUS can easily become a leader in the region.

- They operate a high quality and subsidized child care center [at Kent Vale] that serves both faculty and staff. It is open seven days a week from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. This does not mean that children are left there for 12 hours a day, but it means that both faculty and staff can easily attend meetings and events that go beyond the conventional 8-5 schedule.

Cost to Yale – It is not costing Yale any money in a direct sense, but indeed there are opportunity costs. And there are potential financial implications with respect to covering faculty leaves when a Yale faculty member spends a semester there.

Role of Yale – They would like to establish stronger intellectual ties with Yale. For example, a higher degree of student and faculty exchanges.

Areas of concern:

Sciences – The best American liberal arts colleges have very strong science programs. Science and humanities are not mutually exclusive. There appear to have been some planning errors with respect to laboratory space on the Yale-NUS campus itself. They are in the process of renovating a couple of floors of a building owned by the National Research Foundation which is situated on the NUS campus about 2 blocks from the Yale-NUS College campus.

Tenure process – They have not gone through a tenure procedure from beginning to end yet (the first cohort of junior faculty is coming up for tenure very soon) – there is a lot of anxiety and uncertainty, and just like at Yale, conflicting information and advice that is being given to nervous candidates. They are working on making the process more standardized and transparent.

Inclusion of non-ladder faculty – Unless they are already administrators, is still a work in progress. They can do much more with the talent and energy of their non-ladder faculty.

No language requirement – but they find that they are in need of more language classes as there is student demand. NUS language teaching is much more traditional than what Yale-NUS desires so having students take language courses at NUS is not a good solution. Currently there are some ad-hoc solutions involving Yale instructors (Russian and Italian).

Things that they are doing that Yale should consider:

- Compensation for service that goes beyond the standard amount. They receive bonuses of 0.5 to 2.5 months salary. Not less important, they receive teaching credits for service (especially junior faculty). It was not clear if this is something that has been institutionalized for all, or rather just a consideration given to faculty who worked (and are working) harder than peers in similar institutions in order to get the college going, establish teaching practices, etc.

- They disseminate the average grades given by each department/program at the end of every semester. Could be broken down by type of course, etc, as well.

- Little or no alcohol abuse on campus. A single minor incident occurred in the last 3 years. Drinking age is 18, but alcohol is very expensive, and it is not an alcohol culture in general. While NUS a “dry campus,” Yale-NUS allows for alcohol to be served at functions under supervision and with special training. Also, students are allowed to have alcohol in their rooms.
- Subsidized child care facility open from 7 AM to 7 PM.
- Education allowance for children ages 5-18.

Appendix 1

Resent-From: <beverly.gage@yale.edu>
From: "Lewis, Pericles" <pericles.lewis@yale.edu>
Date: October 16, 2015 at 5:24:29 AM EDT
To: "Gage, Beverly" <beverly.gage@yale.edu>
Cc: "Eckerle, Megan" <megan.eckerle@yale.edu>
Subject: Yale-NUS

Dear Beverly,

I hope you're well. I'm going to be back in New Haven November 3-5 and am hoping we can get together to discuss briefing the FAS Senate about Yale-NUS.

I have two ideas about this:

1) I'd be happy to make a presentation to the FAS senate the next time I come back (mid-February). I'm also there in late December but the timing isn't so good.

2) I'm hoping several senate members might come out to Singapore over the March break, when we will also have visitors from the Faculty Advisory Committee on Yale-NUS.

I realize that some members of the senate may be skeptical about the college, and I am hoping that first-hand acquaintance with it will help people to see what we are trying to accomplish. I'd leave it up to you and your colleagues to determine how to select the representatives to visit.

Do let Megan and me know if a meeting on Nov 3, 4, or 5 might work. Happy to meet Bill Nordhaus at the same time if you prefer. I don't think I have time to prepare for a meeting with the whole senate on this trip but hope February will work.

All best,
Pericles

Pericles Lewis, President, Yale-NUS College

Appendix 2

From: **Beverly Gage** <beverlyfgage@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 16, 2015 at 6:15 PM
Subject: [FAS.Senate] Senate business
To: Fas.senate@mailman.yale.edu

Dear all--

Since we have plenty to do at our meeting on Thursday, here are a few bits of Senate business we can hopefully dispatch by email:

1) Yale-NUS President Pericles Lewis would like to extend an invitation to Senate members to visit the Singapore campus March 13-18, 2016, during spring break. The Yale faculty committee advising on Singapore will also be visiting during that time, and Pericles hopes to engender a fruitful discussion as well as to bring the Senate up to date about happenings in Singapore. If you are interested in participating, do let me know. The invitation is open to all Senate members.

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[Unrelated information has been deleted]

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Thanks for your time and energy. I look forward to seeing you all on Thursday!

Bev

Appendix 3

Person	Airfare	Hotel (est.)	Transport to/from JFK
Shiri Goren	\$4,997	\$585	\$374
Charles Schmuttenmaer	\$4,997	\$975	\$374