

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Record student intake for NUS Nursing as interest in healthcare career spikes

***Undergraduate intake includes mother-daughter student pair, as well as University's pioneer batch of second career students who will be trained for careers in nursing, fostering culture of lifelong learning on campus***

Singapore, 13 August 2018 – The NUS Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies today announced its largest intake to date for its Bachelor of Science (Nursing) degree programmes. The 313 students comprise 279 school-leavers and 34 mid-career professionals.

This is an increase of 33% over the number of students admitted last year, and represents a more-than-sixfold increase since it took in its first batch of Nursing students in 2006.

The record intake caters to strong demand from school-leavers choosing to study Nursing at NUS. In the AY2018 admissions exercise that ended recently, the number of A-level holders and polytechnic graduates who listed Nursing among their top two choices increased by 8% to 1,012 applicants.

It is also fuelled by strong interest from mid-career applicants looking to embark on a second career in nursing. The inaugural two-year Bachelor of Science (Nursing) programme offered by NUS Nursing was oversubscribed by more than 11 times, receiving 230 applications for 20 places.

This programme is offered in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Workforce Singapore under the agencies' Healthcare Professional Conversion Programme. The accelerated pathway offers a quick route to registered nursing licensure for Singaporeans and permanent residents who have completed an undergraduate degree in another discipline. The two-year full-time programme is accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board. Upon completion, graduates earn a Bachelor of Science (Nursing) degree and can apply to the Board for registration as Registered Nurses.

Professor Emily Ang, Head of NUS Nursing, said, "We are happy that more school-leavers are pursuing an NUS Nursing degree. It is clear that students and their parents recognise the value that the programme brings, through provision of evidence-based education, inter-professional training, and its emphasis on innovative pedagogy, quality research, patient advocacy and community service, all of which aim to equip our graduates to be competent, confident healthcare professionals."

She added, "We are also heartened to see more people making a career change to nursing and welcome more mature-entry students here at NUS. The two-year course is an alternative pathway of learning that will build a stronger local core in nursing and nurture greater expertise in nursing practice, while fostering a culture of lifelong learning at NUS."

"Second-career nursing students bring work experience and insights, and they enrich our student population. We believe these role models for lifelong learning will also be nursing

professionals who will help to make a qualitative difference to healthcare practice and delivery in time to come.”

Ms Goh Beng Sim, 49, is one of the 34 students enrolled in NUS’ two-year BSc (Nursing) programme. The former Mindef officer who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from NUS is going back to school after 27 years.

“I chose nursing as a second career as I wanted to spend the second half of my life giving back to society. Providing nursing care to the elderly is the most direct way for me to do so, as Singapore’s population is ageing rapidly and more elderly patients will be living with chronic conditions,” said Ms Goh, who has a job in community care lined up after she graduates.

Ms Goh added that her daughter, Ms Trina Lim, 20, a Nursing Diploma holder who will also start her BSc (Nursing) studies (three-year programme) at NUS this week, was another factor motivating her career switch. “Hearing about Trina’s experiences during her clinical attachments and watching her pursue her ambition to be a registered nurse inspired me and affirmed my decision,” she said.

Ms Goh and Ms Lim are the first mother-and-daughter duo in the programme’s history to pursue the same course at the same time.

Ms Lim, who started her nursing journey before her mother, said she encouraged and supported her mother’s career change. “This course will require a great deal of academic preparation and rigour, so I will be helping my mom with her nursing skills to spur her on,” she said.

Ms Goh believes her bond with her daughter will be strengthened as they work towards a common ambition. They plan to share study tips, exchange notes, discuss nursing concepts, and practise their skills together. “With a shared passion for nursing, we can motivate each other. We will have much more in common and can connect both personally and professionally,” she said.

The most senior student in the class is Mr Patrick Zhan, 54, who is heading back to university at a time when many of his peers are thinking of retirement. Mr Zhan is a big advocate of lifelong learning: he jumpstarted a second career in the eldercare sector when he retired from finance six years ago.

“My stint as manager of a nursing home and an eldercare centre exposed me to the importance of nurses and nursing skills in geriatric care. Because of their fragile health and multiple conditions, the elderly needs special care,” he explained. The launch of NUS Nursing’s accelerated degree programme thus provided the perfect segue for him to acquire the skills he needs to launch a second career in geriatric nursing.

The youngest student in the class is Ms Fatimah Ili, 25, who is proof that one’s learning does not have to stop at graduation. Three years after receiving her first degree, Bachelor of Science (Life Sciences) from NUS, she is back in her alma mater to get her second degree.

The former research assistant in geriatric medicine at Tan Tock Seng Hospital said she was inspired to take up nursing by the geriatric nurses whom she worked closely with at the Hospital. “They showed me what it was like to serve the elderly and lift them up in times of need. I gained a newfound respect for the profession and yearned every day to acquire the skills and aptitude required to be a member of the nursing profession.

“I have been drawn to healthcare since I was young as serving others gave me joy, satisfaction and fulfilment. While I found meaning in and enjoyed clinical research, it didn’t entirely answer this calling. I look forward to pursuing my nursing passion together with my new classmates at NUS,” she said.

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### **About NUS Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies**

Established in 2005, the NUS Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies is the only institution in Singapore to offer an undergraduate nursing programme for A-level holders and polytechnic graduates. It offers a range of academic nursing degree programmes from baccalaureate to doctoral levels.

The NUS Nursing programme is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> globally in the QS World University Ranking by Subject for 2018. It is leading in Asia for three consecutive years.

NUS Nursing's principal mission is to nurture the next generation of transformational nurse leaders for clinical practice, education and research, to meet the dynamic challenges of the healthcare system. It will achieve this by providing quality evidence-based education within a student-centred learning environment, and through inter-professional education.

NUS Nursing is part of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

For more information about NUS Nursing, please visit <http://medicine.nus.edu.sg/nursing/>.

### **About NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine**

Established in 1905, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first institution of higher learning in Singapore and the genesis of the National University of Singapore.

The School offers one of the finest undergraduate medical programmes in the Asia Pacific region and enjoys international recognition and respect. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2018 by subject and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2017 list NUS Medicine as a leading medical school in Asia.

It admits 300 students to the MBBS degree programme annually and its principal missions are to educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals, and foster research that will help to advance the practice of medicine.

The 18 NUS Medicine departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Centre for Medical Education, the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, the Centre for Healthcare Simulation as well as the restructured public hospitals to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore's healthcare needs. The School is a founding institutional member of the National University Health System.

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <http://nusmedicine.nus.edu.sg>