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2011 Business China Enterprise Award Recipient

Nanyang Technological University (Mayor's Class)

Background

With strong support from both China and Singapore governments, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has been offering tailor-made programmes to China's public servants since 1992. Following the overwhelming responses from participants over the years, these courses eventually expanded and developed as the first overseas master's programme tailored for the Chinese officials in 1998. Today, NTU has introduced two master's programme for the Chinese officials, namely the Master of Science in Managerial Economics (MME) and Master of Public Administration (MPA). Both programmes are dubbed the 'Mayor's Class'.

Building on NTU's academic heritage and Singapore's cosmopolitan presence in the world, MME was officially launched in 1998 to meet the specific needs of Chinese officials in the political-economic area of studies. Currently in its 13th year, the programme provides training for Chinese leaders in economics, policy management and business strategies in East Asia, as well as exploring the best practices within the region. Its popularity gave birth to a Master of Public Administration (MPA) in 2005, with an inaugural batch of 55 students, who were senior government officials groomed to be the leaders of next generation.

Due to the popularity of these programmes, NTU set up the Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA) in December 2009 under the College of Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences. The Centre provides executive training to

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Chinese officials and public administrators and spearheads China-related research on public administration and economic management.

Over a period of almost 20 years of consistent hard works and perseverance, the Central Organisation Department and the various municipal party committees in China have acknowledged the outstanding results and the success of the Mayors' Class, and have named NTU as the best overseas institution for training of Chinese government officials. In 2011, NTU is certified by The People's Republic of China's State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) as an overseas expert organisation and overseas training institution. With this certification, NTU is authorised to conduct personnel exchange programmes for Chinese officials. NTU is the only institution of higher learning in Singapore to receive the authorisation for training of Chinese officials through its Mayors' Class programmes and the short term executive training programmes conducted by NCPA.

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Achievements

To date, more than 1,000 local and international government leaders from China have graduated from both master's programmes. Many of these graduates have been promoted from mayor to governor or from deputy heads to heads of their organisations.

Some alumni of the Mayors' Class include the Deputy Governor of Shandong, Cai Li Ming; Hubei Provincial Committee and Party Secretary of Xiangyang City, Fan Ruiping; Party Secretary of Hulunbeier City, Luo Zhihu and the Party Secretary of Hechi City, Lan Tianli. They form an influential group of decision-makers, gate-keepers and key officials in China.





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In September 2010, a team of graduates from NTU Mayors' Class had completed a water project that treats sewage into re-usable water for irrigation and fish farming in Yuanshan village, Sichuan. The wastewater recycling project had earlier won the S\$500,000 grand prize in the inaugural Lien Challenge, an initiative that encourages innovative environmental solutions for China. The Challenge was integrated into the Mayors' Class programmes, as part of their capstone paper curriculum, students are invited to submit proposals to address water and sanitation challenges faced in their home country and help improve the lives of people in China. The best proposal will win cash prize that will then be funded into the implementation of the project.

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In March 2011, NTU received a record number of 39 high-level Chinese officials from the Central Organisation Government who formed the new intake for its MME and MPA programmes this year. This resulted in the cohort with the most number of senior officials the university has admitted since the programmes' inception. This surge in the number of senior officials highly reflected the confidence of the China government in Singapore's efficiency in public administration and policy. It was also testimony to the quality and effectiveness of NTU programmes in these areas.

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Contribution to Singapore-China relationship

Through these regionally acclaimed programmes, participants also take away with the opportunities to network with Chinese government officials and business leaders in Singapore, enhancing the China-Singapore business relationship.

Following the immense popularity of MME and MPA programmes, NTU opened its China Programme Office to run its offerings specifically for the officials in 2007. In 2009, NTU



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celebrated its largest intake of 142 Chinese government officials for its Mayors' Class programmes. Promoting deeper and broader ties between the two countries; NTU's Mayors' Class has been an excellent platform to showcase Singapore's public excellence and economic management to China. Forging better understanding between China and Singapore, Chinese officials enrolled in this programme have often commended Singapore's economic foresight and adaptability to the fast-changing global economy that have contributed to its remarkable economic growth since independence in 1965.

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Applauded by Mr Li Yuanchao, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Minister of the Organisation Department of the CPC Central Committee, and Mr Wang Yang, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC and Secretary of the Guangdong Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Mayors' Class programme has provided Chinese officials an opportunity to cultivate an open-minded disposition and an ability to solve problems from different perspectives. Singapore's clean and green environment and corruption-free government have also been emphasised by Mayors' Class participants as examples worth emulating in China. Indeed, it was the MME programme in 2003 that has inspired Hebei top Chinese officials to adopt economic policies and urban development similar to Singapore's model. Heralded as Singapore's "jewels" by former Foreign Minister George Yeo, plans for training in urban development and environmental protection in Mayors' Class have been drawn up in 2009 following popular demand from senior Chinese officials.

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As the bridging link between Singapore and China business development, NCPA organised its first Mayors' Class forum themed "China after the Financial Crisis" at Suntec City in 2009. The forum brought together Chinese officials from NTU's



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reputable Mayors' Class programmes, as well as renowned economists and scholars to share their perspectives of the status and future of China's economic development in the post-financial crisis era. The event had effectively fostering deeper commercial and political ties between China and Singapore.

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Recognising the contribution to China-Singapore relationship, the Mayors' Class has garnered strong industry support in the form of scholarships and medals for its participants. Sponsors have included the Lianhe Zaobao, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Nantah Alumni Association, Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, celebrated writer Li Lien Fung and renowned entrepreneur Ng Ghit Cheong.

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In addition, the Mayors' Class also receives support from private enterprises by offering scholarships to its participants every year. These enterprises include Capitaland, leader of Southeast Asia property industry, Wilmar International, ST Engineering, and Jiangsu Huailong Material Company Limited, a joint venture between Jiangsu Huaigang Tegang Company and EnGro Corporation. These scholarships reflected a clear recognition of the calibre of Mayors' Class and the role it played in bringing together a deeper relationship between the commercial sectors of both countries.



Particularly, in January 2011, NTU and Renhuai City signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop Maotai village in Renhuai City, China as a model for sustainable urban development. Under the agreement, professors from NCPA will go to Renhuai and train the local officials. Groups of Renhuai officials will also come to Singapore for training and site inspections. The collaboration would strengthen NTU's position as a knowledge hub between the East and the West, and further boost the bilateral exchanges between Singapore and China.



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In addition, Madam Tan Siew Khim, who was then a planning officer from Ministry of Education, was the first Singaporean to enrol into the Mayors' Class in April 2010 to pursue her one-year MPA degree. This provided great opportunity for her to interact and learn from the Chinese officials' experiences. Such interaction can thus effectively strength the working relationships between the officers from both countries.

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