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# Singapore, China universities strengthen ties

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To mark the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and the People's Republic of China (PRC), three universities from each country signed three Memoranda of Understanding with each other today, building on existing strong collaborations between the universities in student and faculty exchanges, and joint research and development.

The universities and their respective partners are National University of Singapore (NUS) and Tsinghua University, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Peking University, as well as Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and Zhejiang University.

The collaborations between the Singapore and Chinese universities will be funded through a donation of RMB 150 million (S$33 million) from the family of Mr Ng Teng Fong, with each pair of universities receiving RMB 50 million (S$11 million).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NUS and Tsinghua University was signed by deputy president (Academic Affairs) and provost of NUS, professor Tan Eng Chye, and vice president and provost of Tsinghua University, professor Yang Bin. The MOU between NTU and Peking University was signed by deputy president and provost of NTU, professor Freddy Boey, and executive vice president of Peking University, professor Wu Zhipan. The MOU between SUTD and Zhejiang University was signed by provost of SUTD, professor Chong Tow Chong and executive vice president of Zhejiang University, Professor Song Yonghua.

The signing was witnessed by Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) Mr Ong Ye Kung.

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Details of the partnerships between the universities are as follows:

NUS and Tsinghua University

NUS and Tsinghua University will be focusing on joint research and development in a number of areas of mutual interest and complementary expertise, such as data science and data analytics. The two universities will also identify opportunities for the commercialisation of technology.

In addition, NUS and Tsinghua University will collaborate on student exchanges and entrepreneurship education and research, such as enhancing new and existing student exchange programmes to include technology entrepreneurship, for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. They will also organize and participate in joint academic, research and scientific activities such as seminars and conferences on various topics and issues, particularly innovation and enterprise.

NTU and Peking University

NTU and Peking University (PKU) will establish a Joint NTU-PKU Research Institute whose research areas include multi-modal big data analytics technologies for smart cities and human-centred technologies for healthy living and lifelong learning. The joint research institute will support Singapore's Smart Nation vision that harnesses technology and data to improve living standards, strengthen communities, and create more business opportunities.

It will work closely with NTU's Rapid-Rich Object Search (ROSE) Lab, which is also an NTU-PKU collaboration that aims to pioneer next-generation visual and object search technologies, and the Research Centre of Excellence in Active Living for the Elderly (LILY), which develops digital solutions for the elderly. The new partnership will also involve joint research, student, faculty and research staff exchanges, and the organisation of conferences and workshops.

SUTD and Zhejiang University

SUTD and Zhejiang University will establish a SUTD-ZJU Innovation, Design and Entrepreneurship Alliance (IDEA), focusing on design innovation in China and Singapore in the initial areas of manufacturing, urbanization and sustainability. IDEA will enable SUTD and ZJU to harness their strengths in Design and Engineering to jointly pursue scholarly activities in areas that are relevant to both China and Singapore, and eventually translate them into viable commercial outcomes in the market.

SUTD-ZJU IDEA will be implemented through the establishment of a Joint Centre covering areas of mutual interest. The Joint Centre will have a presence in the campuses of both SUTD and ZJU to promote the exchange and flow of ideas, research and talent between both institutions to jointly advance the vision of IDEA. The Joint Centre will also work closely with relevant entities in both SUTD and ZJU to identify and seed commercially viable ideas and outcomes into entrepreneurial opportunities that can be jointly taken up by SUTD and ZJU personnel and/or students to bring them to market.

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