$5 million gift from Prima and well-wishers boosts Singapore universities' capacities and student programs

EurekAlert

Singapore's four public universities will today receive gifts totalling $5 million from the Prima Limited and its well-wishers. Prima Founder and Honorary Life President, Mr Cheng Tsang Man will present the cheques this evening at Prima's Golden 50th anniversary held at the Prima Tower Revolving Restaurant.

Accepting the cheques on behalf of their universities are Nanyang Technological University (NTU) President Dr Su Guaning, National University of Singapore (NUS) Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost Prof Tan Eng Chye, Singapore Management University (SMU) President Prof Arnoud De Meyer, and Mr Sam Goi, a member of the Singapore University of Technology and Design's (SUTD) Board of Trustees.

Prima Limited had injected $4 million to the Prima Golden Anniversary Education Fund specially set up for its 50th anniversary. The sum will be distributed equally to the universities. The SUTD will receive an additional $1 million arising from the contributions of Prima's well-wishers and the Cheng Family. Prima is allocating the supplementary amount to SUTD since it is a new university which may be in need of greater support. Thus, SUTD will receive $2 million in total.

Mr Primus Cheng, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Prima Ltd says, "Prima has chosen to support the cause of education because we firmly believe that education is the foremost fundamental enabler. It is only with education and training that people can become self-reliant and utilize their skills and knowledge for the good of mankind. As we want the commemoration to be more meaningful, in place of lavish celebrations, we are channelling the resources into the Prima Golden Anniversary Education Fund to support the endowment funds of the four state-funded universities."

For Nanyang Technological University, the gift will go towards the setting up of the Cheng Tsang Man Chair Professorship in Energy. This new Chair Professorship has its origins in 1999, when Prima made a $1.5 million gift to NTU to set up the Cheng Tsang Man Professorship in Engineering. With matching contributions from the Singapore government, the total endowed fund for the new Chair Professorship now amounts to $5 million.

Over the past decade, the Cheng Tsang Man Professorship in Engineering had brought in some 15 renowned thought leaders who shared valuable research insights at NTU in diverse disciplines, such as wireless communications, computer graphics, nanoscience and molecular electronics. The new permanent Chair Professorship in Energy will host a world authority who will advance research efforts

in nanomaterials for sustainable energy, while offering intellectual leadership and mentoring to younger scientists.

NTU President Dr Su Guaning says, "NTU is grateful to Prima for their continued support and generosity. Energy research is a high priority area at NTU, and indeed, "Sustainable Earth" is the most significant of our Five Peaks of Excellence in our 2015 strategic plan. The Cheng Tsang Man Chair Professorship in Energy will boost our efforts in energy research and education — a field that is so vital to our collective future. This gift also firmly underscores the Prima Group's status as an exemplary corporate citizen that exercises strategic corporate social responsibility in an area of such vital interest to humanity."

Since the 1990s, Prima has been a supporter of various student and research programmes at the National University of Singapore (NUS), including a Public Policy Programme and Food Technology research. This latest gift is NUS' biggest from Prima to date. NUS Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost Prof Tan Eng Chye, says, "This gift will help students gain access to the growing number of exciting and innovative educational opportunities which are unique to NUS. These include the NUS University Town, which represents a new approach to residential living and learning that will be distinctively NUS, as well as the Yale-NUS College, which will feature a new curriculum and integrated residential education model that draws on the finest intellectual traditions of East and West. We believe that Prima's generous gesture will go a long way in ensuring that our students will have access to the quality education they deserve and inspire them to give back to society when they have the means to do so."

Prima was also one of the early supporters of SMU. In March 2000, just two months after SMU's establishment, Mr Primus Cheng, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Prima Ltd, made an endowed gift of $1.5 million to SMU to establish the Cheng Tsang Man Professorship in Accountancy in honour of his father, the Honorary Life President and Founder of Prima Ltd. To date, five internationally renowned accounting experts have held Visiting Professorships under this gift, conducting among them, joint research with SMU faculty and public lectures.

"In the early days of SMU founding, Prima was one of the first industry players who believed in our vision of becoming a premier university internationally recognised for its excellence in research and teaching. Sharing in our mission, Prima's gift established the Cheng Tsang Man Professorship in Accountancy in March 2000," says SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer. "We are truly grateful that 11 years on, Prima is once again extending its largesse to SMU. In this short span of time, we have built a highly focused and successful university that delivers excellence in research and education aligned with business needs. Hence, we intend to use the $1 million endowed gift to create an annual research symposium where the School of Accountancy faculty can interact with upcoming researchers from top schools around the world through presentations of research papers and the sharing of research ideas," explained Prof De Meyer.

Through this annual research symposium, SMU hopes to profile School of Accountancy Research or SOAR, and SMU internationally, and to build School of

Accountancy (SOA) into an internationally renowned research school. This will complement Prima's gift in 2000 which established an annual eminent research scholar programme in SOA.

This is the first time Prima is supporting the SUTD, which will use the funds for student scholarships. The gift comes at an opportune time as SUTD welcomes its first cohort of students in April 2012. Professor Chong Tow Chong, Provost of SUTD says, "We would like to thank Prima for their generous support for education. This gift is much welcomed as SUTD works towards getting the University ready for our first cohort of students in April 2012. SUTD is set up to nurture tomorrow's technically-grounded leaders and innovators to serve societal needs. We believe that all talented and promising students should not be denied this unique curriculum focused on technology and design. We aim to make SUTD accessible and affordable for all students. As such, the funds will be used to fund scholarships for students in our first intake."

Founded in 1961, Prima's flourmill in Singapore was the first to be established in South East Asia. Today, the Prima Group is one of the world's largest flourmillers with extensive international operations encompassing flour milling, feed milling, agri-business, food manufacturing, FMCG food products, foodservice, franchising, baking and culinary education, bakery equipment agency and information technology.

SOURCE [1]

Source URL (retrieved on *05/23/2013 - 1:44pm*):
http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2011/05/5-million-gift-prima-and-well-wishers-boosts-singapore-universities-capacities-and-student-programs

Links:
[1] http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-05/ntu-gf050311.php