



WHAT'S UP, DOC?



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Fueling the Fight for Better Health Care

By Dr Nicodemus Oey, MD/PhD 2015 and Dr Eugenia Ong, PhD 2015

Spurred by their desire to improve medical delivery and patient care, newly-minted PhD alums Nicodemus and Eugenia have spent the best part of the past four to five years working on their research as part of their PhD programmes. To celebrate and welcome the inaugural batch of PhD graduates, Eugenia and Nico share their stories below.

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Duke-NUS PhD Alumni Committee

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The inaugural Duke-NUS PhD Alumni Committee (DNPA) was recently set up. Dr Nicodemus Oey, as President of the newly formed committee, shares his plans on building and strengthening ties between the PhD alumni and the school.

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Counting Our Blessings

By Dr Chen Kaina, MD 2015 and Dr Eric Liu, MD 2014

As doctors, we are constantly being challenged – at work, in our personal lives, even in medical school. In spite of this, we were blessed to have met each other during our undergraduate days at Nanyang Technological University, supported each other while studying at Duke-NUS and now, we look forward with great excitement to being residents... and as parents to our new baby.

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ALUMNI RELATIONS



Special discounts by Waffle Slayer and Strangers' Reunion!

F & B outlets Waffle Slayer and Strangers' Reunion are offering 10% discounts to all Duke-NUS alumni!

Please present your Duke-NUS alumni card before making payment to enjoy this offer. Offer is valid till 31 December 2015.



Update your particulars

Stay connected with Duke-NUS and be kept informed of the latest happenings!

If you have recently changed your email address, contact number or any of your other particulars, email your latest information to alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg and receive a special Duke-NUS travel adaptor gift.

ALUMNI COMMUNITY



Do you want to make a difference?

Do you want to connect with your peers within the same Residency programme?

Do you want to start new groups e.g. General Surgery Alumni Group, Anaesthesia Alumni Group, Family Medicine Alumni Group, Orthopaedics Alumni Group, Ophthalmology Alumni Group, Emergency Medicine Alumni Group, Obstetrics & Gynaecology Alumni Group, Overseas Alumni Group or any other alumni group?

* Setting up of new medical alumni groups are subject to approval from the Duke-NUS Medical Alumni (DNMA) society and the group members can come from various residency clusters (SingHealth, NHG, NUHS).

Contact us at alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg if you want to be involved in these alumni groups.

EVENTS



PAST

- Class of 2013 Reunion Dinner
- Inaugural PhD Alumni Networking Dinner
- First Alumni Movie Matinee
- Appreciation event for alumni/student leaders
- Farewell Dinner for Dean Ranga
- Paediatrics Alumni Group's First Annual Dinner
- Internal Medicine Alumni Group's First Annual Dinner
- Journeying with Our Deans
- Graduation Dinner 2015
- Graduation & Hooding Ceremony 2015
- Duke-NUS' 10th Anniversary Dinner

UPCOMING

- Radiology Alumni Group's First Annual Dinner
- White Coat Ceremony 2015
- Duke-NUS Medical Alumni (DNMA) 3rd Annual General Meeting and Alumni Reunion

NEWS BITES



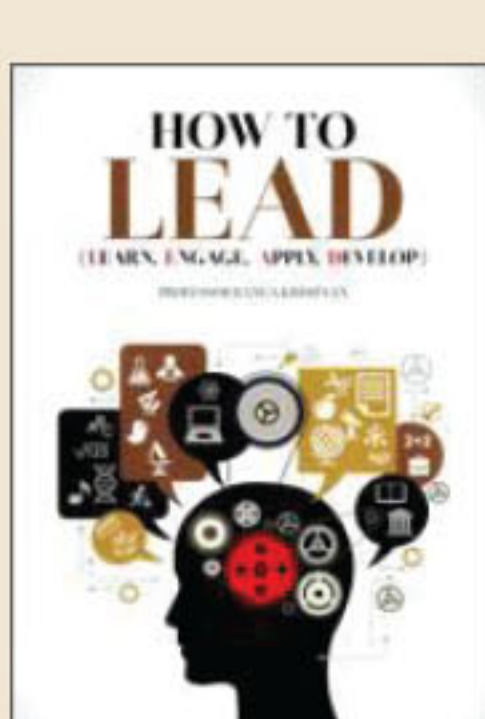
- Congratulations to our 2015 MD, MD/PhD and PhD graduates!
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- Well done! Congratulations to our Duke-NUS alumni!

10TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

Dear Valued Duke-NUS Alumni,

"How to LEAD" – Previously published in Today newspaper since April 2013, this compendium of Dean Ranga's 38 commentaries on approaches to learning has been printed as a special book to mark Duke-NUS' 10th Anniversary.

We are offering this book as the School's 10th Anniversary gift to you for your support. Contact the Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office at alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg today to reserve your copy! Hurry, whilst stocks last.





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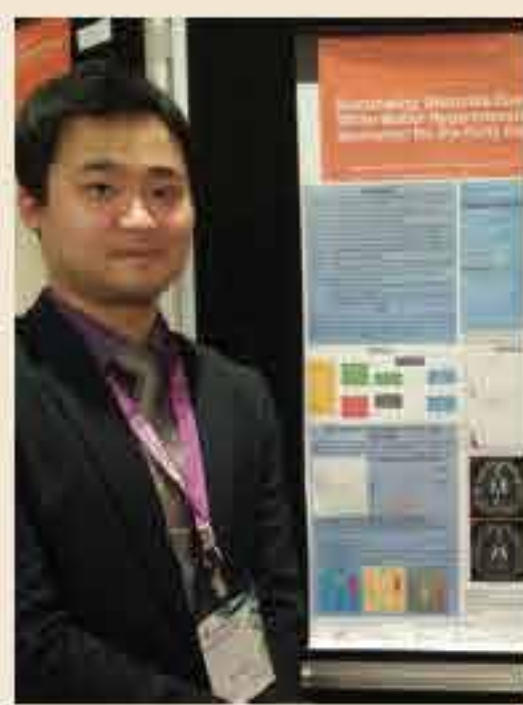
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WHAT'S UP, DOC?

Fueling the Fight for Better Health Care



Spurred by their desire to improve medical delivery and patient care, newly-minted PhD alums Nicodemus and Eugenia have spent the best part of the past four to five years working on their research as part of their PhD programmes. To celebrate and welcome the inaugural batch of PhD graduates, Eugenia and Nico share their stories below.



*By Dr Nicodemus Oey, MD/PhD 2015
President of the Duke-NUS PhD Alumni Committee*

Since high school, I knew I wanted to be a clinician-scientist when I was selected to be part of the "Be a Gene Researcher for a Week" programme sponsored by the Government of Canada. I wanted to make a difference in the way medicine is delivered to patients in an effort to improve patient care.

My research for the past few years have centred on the question "Why do we not have effective treatments for Alzheimer's dementia?", and this inquiry has taken me on an exciting journey through the physiology, pathophysiology, cellular biology, molecular underpinnings of neuroscience and memory formation. In short, I have been studying how we human beings form long-term memory, which is lost in dementia, and how we can intervene as doctors to overcome this debilitating disease.

My time at Duke-NUS was highly fulfilling, but it was difficult as well. As a PhD researcher, every day was an adventure: experiments and equipment can fail and need troubleshooting, and at times, it was just heartbreaking. Looking back, the whole journey has been surreal, from learning about cutting-edge cell biology techniques such as single-molecule super-resolution microscopy to dissecting animals and collecting clinical data from patients, the spectrum of molecules to medicine was covered in the span of a few years, with much hardship and an equal amount of satisfaction.

The best part of it all was perhaps the publication of our group's findings of a molecular machinery or switch governing long-term memory formation – which is the impetus of grant applications looking into developing novel Alzheimer's Disease therapeutics, as well as the completion of a neurorehabilitation project that aims to improve the way stroke patients can recover from.

Now that I am a House Officer at SingHealth, I aim to do as much as I can for my patients, my fellow healthcare practitioners and the healthcare system in general.



*By Dr Eugenia Ong, PhD 2015
Vice-President of the Duke-NUS PhD Alumni Committee*

In my last semester as an undergraduate at the Nanyang Technological University, I was fortunate enough to start working on my Final Year Project (FYP) in Assoc Prof Ooi Eng Eong's lab in the Emerging Infectious Diseases Programme. Working on my FYP made me realise the numerous scientific questions still left unanswered and how a better understanding of the complex relationship between viruses and their human hosts could be able to provide solutions for, and advance human health.

The topic was intriguing enough for me to apply for the inaugural PhD programme at Duke-NUS. Chief among my motivations of pursuing a PhD was the opportunity to take ownership of my own project. I was free to explore questions that would eventually shape my project and challenged to come up with creative solutions to solve problems that came up during my research.

I started my PhD in Assoc Prof Ooi's lab and over the next four and a half years, my research focused on elucidating how the dengue virus is able to elude the human immune response by binding and activating leukocyte immunoglobulin-like receptor B1 (LILRB1), an inhibitory receptor on immune cells, whose normal function is to dampen excessive stimulation of immune responses. In this way, the virus is able to enter the cell using antibodies from a previous infection, but escape antiviral responses that would otherwise kill the virus.

Over the course of the programme, I was constantly challenged. While there were some results that came easy, others required a great deal of perseverance and tenacity. It would have been easy to give up, but I was spurred on by the encouragement of the people around me and partly by my own stubborn persistence. ☺

The thesis writing process seemed daunting at first, I wrote fairly slowly as I was also running experiments at the same time – I thought I would not be able to graduate! But I powered through in the last few months before my thesis defence. The thesis is really like the encore section of a concert, you highlight a continuous string of hits that defined the "A-ha" moments of your PhD journey. It was immensely satisfying when I obtained the physical form of my thesis.

My PhD journey would not have been possible without the support and help of my lab members. Most days, I spent more time with my lab members than my own family. It's a blessing that we are as close-knit as we are, like a family away from home. I also have to thank my thesis mentor, Assoc Prof Ooi Eng Eong, for his advice and unwavering support. I learnt a great deal from him, about the importance of dreaming up big ideas and staying scientifically curious.

In April 2015, I started as a research fellow at the Experimental Therapeutics Centre at A*STAR. Although dengue infects nearly 400 million people annually, there is currently no licensed antiviral or vaccine for dengue. My current project focuses on characterisation and evaluation of a therapeutic antibody that is poised for upcoming clinical trials in humans. We aim to assess its usefulness in reducing virus burden after dengue virus infection.

Duke-NUS PhD Alumni Committee



The inaugural Duke-NUS PhD Alumni Committee (DNPA) was recently set up. Dr Nicodemus Oey, as President of the newly formed committee, shares his plans on building and strengthening ties between the PhD alumni and the school.

With the establishment of the Duke-NUS Medical Alumni (DNMA) Society in 2013, which oversees MD-related alumni issues, and the inaugural convocation of eight PhD graduates and one MD/PhD graduate in May 2015, it was very fitting to materialise our very own PhD-specific Alumni Committee. PhD graduates have a number of unique issues pertaining to the alumni and

the workforce that differ significantly from the MD graduates. We are very thankful for the foundation of this Alumni Committee and owe a great deal of our founding to Ms Joan Ku from Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office, who was instrumental in helping us form the initial nucleus of the Committee.



- My goals as President of the inaugural PhD Alumni Committee are three-fold:
- Foster alumni bonds as we move forward with our respective careers
 - Raise awareness of PhD-specific issues in the relationship between prospective, current and graduating students
 - Maintain close ties with potential employers and collaborators from Singapore and beyond. To this end, one of my primary endpoints would be to strengthen ties with key stakeholders e.g. SingHealth.

All PhD alumni are automatically recruited as voting members. They are expected to participate and contribute through regular gatherings and meetings. One of the first few activities we participated in was the recent farewell for Dean Ranga Krishnan. We plan to reach out to the annual DUNES symposium and weekly PhD student seminars and eventually formalise the committee and register it as a society with the Singapore Registry of Societies.



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Counting Our Blessings

By Dr. Chen Kaina, MD 2015 and Dr. Eric Liu, MD 2014

As doctors, we are constantly being challenged – at work, in our personal lives, even in medical school. In spite of this, we were blessed to have met each other during our undergraduate days at Nanyang Technological University, supported each other while studying at Duke-NUS and now, we look forward with great excitement to being residents... and as parents to our new baby.

At Duke-NUS, Eric was a year ahead of me and it was a blessing to have his guidance and advice as we worked towards becoming doctors. It was hard to get away from the books so we spent time studying together. We got married in March 2013 and it has been an exciting ride since then.

During my final year, I was due to fly to the United States for my electives at the Duke Medical Centre. As if that was not exciting enough, I found out I was pregnant a few days before that! Thankfully, my first trimester was quite smooth – I only had mild nausea and vomiting, which did not affect my rotations too much. My fellow Duke-NUS classmates also took great care of me, especially with the cooking and chores. Even when I was doing my surgery sub-internship, I was fortunate to be assigned to the less physically demanding teams.

The only challenging period was the CPX4 preparation, when I was transiting into my final trimester and started to have a bit of pregnancy-related "psychomotor retardation". We needed to find cases in the hospital which was physically demanding and stressful. Luckily my friends were very supportive and gave me a helping hand during that period.

Although it will be a huge challenge for me since I will be a first-time mother and a first-time doctor/resident when I go back to work after giving birth, I am constantly reminded by what a mentor once told me: there will be challenges in different stages of our medical career, there really isn't a best time to plan for a family. Just be prepared for the challenges and remind ourselves that we have made the right decisions.

I am looking forward to joining the internal medicine department once I return to work. I chose internal medicine as I am less of a hands-on person compared to Eric. I prefer to sit down and think about a problem logically. Moreover, I really enjoyed myself during the internal medicine rotation and sub-internship programme, so it was quite clear to me when I had to decide on my specialty.

Dr. Chen Kaina

While Kaina is currently preparing for the birth of our baby girl (Yes, both of us wanted a girl!), I have just completed my first year as a House Officer (HO) in the Orthopaedic department at Singapore General Hospital (SGH). It has been pleasant so far and I really enjoy working with the people and the nature of work at SGH. I wanted a specialty with hands-on opportunity but I was not sure which one to choose initially. It is totally different now that as a doctor, I am responsible for the safety and well-being of my patients, my family and myself as compared to being responsible only for myself when I was a student. Now that I have completed my first year, I am striving to be a Medical Officer next!

I am also obviously looking forward to my impending fatherhood. I am really glad that only a few departments have long hours and thanks to the new residency programme at SGH, it is definitely possible for us to have a balanced life even during HO year – for the majority of the time.

For now though, both of us are just really looking forward to meeting our bundle of joy soon and cheesy as it may be, we know that however daunting and challenging life may be for us, we will always have each other's support and understanding. We foresee plenty of late nights and loss of sleep but it will be worth it as long as our little girl is blessed and contributes to the society in future – as a doctor or otherwise.

Dr. Eric Liu



When we were first year students at Duke-NUS.



We got married! Can you recognise the background in the photo? It's the Duke-NUS Library!



Yeah!! We're going to have a baby girl!



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NEWS BITES

Congratulations to our 2015 MD, MD/PhD and PhD graduates!



Fresh grad 'took detour' to become a doctor



Dr Choo Min (left) and Dr Tan Wen Qi

Duke-NUS grads driven by desire to help others



*Dr Nicodemus Oey (left) and Dr Olivia Tan Xian-li.
Photo Today: Tristan Loh*

Congratulations to recipients of the SingHealth Graduation Award 2015!



Dr Huang Junjie (3rd from left) received the SingHealth's Top Student Gold Medal award and SingHealth Prize in Family Medicine.

Other recipients include:

L-R: Dr Olivia Tan (SingHealth Prize in Neurology), Dr Andrew Chou (SingHealth Seah Cheng Siang Gold Medal in Medicine), Dr Choo Min (3rd from right, SingHealth Prize in Pediatrics), Dr He Song (SingHealth Prize in Obstetrics & Gynaecology) and Dr Tan Wen Qi (SingHealth David Sabiston Gold Medal in Surgery).

Dr Ku Chee Wai speaks at the SingHealth OBGYN ACP Townhall



On 9 July 2015, Dr Ku Chee Wai was invited as a speaker at the SingHealth OBGYN ACP Townhall held at the KKH Auditorium.

Well done! Congratulations to our Duke-NUS alumni!

Congratulations to our Duke-NUS alumni who have passed their specialty examinations!

They received their Master's degrees from the National University of Singapore on 12 July 2015.



L-R: Dr Chia Ghim Song, Dr Kaavya Narasimhalu and Dr Andrew Green at the NUS Commencement on 12 July 2015.



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PAST EVENTS

26 March 2015 - Class of 2013 Reunion Dinner



Two years after graduation, 19 alumni from the MD class of 2013 gathered at Beirut Grill on 26 March 2015 in a rare reunion of old classmates. Such reunions are few and far between as doctors often have hectic and busy schedules. Dr Padmastuti Akella, who was the main organiser for the reunion, is determined to continue to organise such gatherings every month. "The point of it is to start a class tradition. They all know that it's going to be a casual dinner, even if there are just four people it still counts as a gathering."

Keeping up with old classmates is especially important as busy schedules often leave little to no time for them to catch up with one another. As such, the Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office supports and provides sponsorship for such gatherings.

If you are keen on seeking sponsorship for a class reunion, please contact the Alumni Relations Office at alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg.

27 March 2015 - Inaugural PhD Alumni Networking Dinner



The Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office organised an inaugural PhD alumni networking dinner on 27 March 2015 to build stronger connections among our alumni and students.

With a total of 14 PhD, MD, MD/PhD alumni and students gathered at d'Good Café, it was certainly a hearty gathering. Interacting and bonding over dinner, they also had the added bonus of learning more about how the professional networking site LinkedIn can help them in their career paths. Two guest speakers from LinkedIn presented and shared invaluable tips and insights with the participants.

If you would like to be informed of other upcoming alumni activities, please update your contact information with us at alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg and receive a free gift!

28 March 2015 - First Alumni Movie Matinee



On 28 March 2015, more than 50 alumni and students came together at Golden Village VivoCity to watch The Divergent Series: Insurgent (2015).

It turned out that the action-packed movie was a crowd pleaser! When asked if they would come for more movie matinees, all of them voted 'yes' enthusiastically! This first Movie Matinee was initiated by the Duke-NUS Medical Alumni (DNMA) society and organised by the Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office.

If you have suggestions of activities/programmes, please share with us at alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg.

11 April 2015 - Appreciation event for alumni/student leaders



To show appreciation to our alumni and student leaders, the Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office treated them to the movie premiere of "Unlucky Plaza" at the Shaw Theatres Lido on 11 April 2015. They also had the opportunity to participate in the post-screening dialogue with writer-director Ken Kwek and lead actor Epy Quizon! This movie was presented as the opening film of the 25th Singapore International Film Festival and received nominations for the Toronto International Film Festival and Warsaw International Film Festival.

3 June 2015 - Farewell Dinner for Dean Ranga



With support from the Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office, the Duke-NUS Medical Alumni (DNMA) society and former Duke-NUS chairman Mr Tony Chew jointly hosted a farewell dinner for Dean Ranga on 3 June 2015. It was an evening of nostalgia as Duke-NUS senior management, SingHealth leaders, Duke-NUS alumni and student leaders turned up to show their appreciation and bid a fond farewell to Dean Ranga who is stepping down after seven years of illustrious leadership at Duke-NUS. After the thank you speeches and presentation of farewell gifts to Dean Ranga, they enjoyed the scrumptious buffet dinner and exquisite wines specially offered by Mr Chew.

22 June 2015 - Paediatrics Alumni Group's First Annual Dinner



Check out this cute e-invite by Dr Karen Nadua, organizer of this dinner.



On 22 June 2015, 11 Duke-NUS paediatric residents enjoyed camaraderie and connections at their first annual dinner that was fully sponsored by the Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office. They introduced, chatted and welcomed the new paediatric residents who will be starting work on 1 July 2015. At times, the junior alumni listened intently as the senior alumni shared their experiences and useful information on the Paediatric Residency Programme.

If you would like to start a new Alumni Group for a specific Residency Programme, please contact the Alumni Relations Office at alumni@duke-nus.edu.sg.

29 June 2015 - Internal Medicine Alumni Group's First Annual Dinner



New friendships and bonds were forged as the SingHealth's Chief IM Resident and 15 Duke-NUS internal medicine residents gathered to meet over dinner for the first time on 29 June 2015.

The group leader, Dr Ignasius Jappara, plans to have such gatherings on a more regular basis (twice a year or so). In addition, buddy groups comprising alumni from different years will be formed to allow small group mentoring. The dinner also included the residency briefing for the incoming House Officers.

The Duke-NUS Alumni Relations Office will be working with the group to do a similar briefing/dinner event next year, but at an earlier time for the incoming IM residents.

Check out the photos of the following Duke-NUS events!

7 April 2015 - [Journeying with Our Deans](#)

29 May 2015 - [Graduation Dinner 2015](#)

30 May 2015 - [Graduation & Hooding Ceremony 2015](#)

30 May 2015 - [Duke-NUS' 10th Anniversary Dinner](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check your email for regular updates and invitations to these events!

Radiology Alumni Group's First Annual Dinner

Date : 31 July 2015 (Friday)
Time : 7pm
Venue : To be confirmed

White Coat Ceremony 2015

Date : 14 August 2015 (Friday)
Time : 6.30pm
Venue : Academia Auditorium, Level 1

Duke-NUS Medical Alumni (DNMA) 3rd Annual General Meeting and Alumni Reunion

Date : 21 August 2015 (Friday)
Time : 7pm
Venue : Duke-NUS Training Room 5C, Level 5