

ECHOES

MBA NEWSLETTER | FROM MBA NEWSLETTER TEAM

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Editor: Han Hoang

Layout and Design: Julia Lu, Amy Tran



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By Han Hoang

Dear fellow classmates,

We are delighted to bring to you the April Issue of ECHOES Newsletter.

As Semester 2 nears its end, we find ourselves reflecting on a journey filled with intense learning, challenges, and rewarding experiences. These past weeks have tested our resilience and dedication, pushing us towards growth and unity. As we prepare for the final stretch, let's look back at the milestones achieved and the lessons learned along the way.

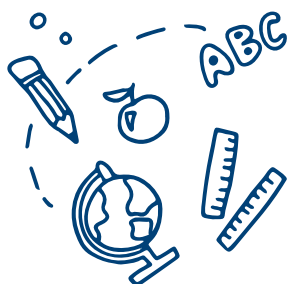
In this edition, we celebrate our triumphs and share our stories. From the NUS MBA team's strategic win at VCIC Asia to the impactful narratives from the International Women's Day panel, each piece reflects our collective spirit of perseverance. The insights from the Energy Club's event and the diverse experiences of our exchange students and part-time cohorts remind us of the adaptability and ambition that define our community. As you dive into these stories, let them inspire and motivate you for the challenges that lie ahead.

Together, we've navigated this semester's highs and lows, emerging stronger and more connected. Let's carry this spirit forward, as we approach the final hurdles and continue our journey beyond.

We'd also like to send huge thanks to Amanda Phan and Ankit Rajadhyaksha, whose dedication and talent were instrumental to our success this semester. As they move on from the team, we wish them all the very best with their academic pursuits & future endeavors 😊

Warmest regards,

Han Hoang
Editor of the MBA Newsletter Team



Behind the Ink - New Members of the MBA Newsletter Team



Joy Tran, a high-energy runner with entrepreneurial dreams, thrives on discussing real estate trends and welcomes anyone who shares her passion.



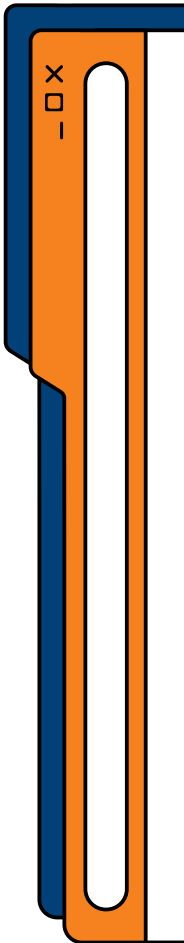
Prior to her MBA, **Grace Nguyen** built a successful career in marketing, driven by her passion for both the art and science aspects of the field. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, singing, and cherishing quality time with loved ones, often over a cup of coffee (or tea).



Meet **Amy Tran**, a yoga-loving bookworm and business developer in the fashion industry. With a love for travel, she seeks out local markets wherever she goes.



An ardent foodie, cricket enthusiast, with a penchant for talking about Geo-politics and economics, **Ankit Verma** is a seasoned technology risk consulting professional and enjoys reading and travelling in his spare time.



NUS MBA Soars to VCIC Asia Victory: Global Showdown Next!



By Soumyadeep Sen

The much-anticipated VCIC regional finals took place on the 2nd of March at NTU. NUS was represented by **Amanda Phan, Liyu Fu, Saravanan Alagappan, Theresa Hoffmann and Zamir Habib**. The team members were drawn to the competition because of their interest in the startup and venture capital (VC) ecosystem and decided to use the competition to accelerate their understanding of the ecosystem.

The stakes were high. NUS faced off against teams from NTU, SMU (Singapore), CEIBS (China), Chulalongkorn, and Sasin (Thailand) – a formidable regional line-up. After two years of the regional title eluding NUS, expectations were strong.

But those expectations were shattered in the best way possible. Five months of intense preparation was rewarded by a first-place finish! And now, the team will go to the global finals at UNC Chapel Hill in the US, proudly representing NUS on the world stage.

In this article, let's go behind the scenes and understand how the team geared up for the finals!



Our team began preparing early in October 2023. The first step in the team's preparation was building technical knowledge of VC, covering topics such as fund strategy, valuation, and term sheets. Two books, "Venture deals" and "How to think like a venture capitalist" by Professor Patrick Vernon, a judge at the global round of VCIC, helped form their knowledge base. This was supplemented by lessons conducted by NUS Professor Weiyi Ng and VC Investor Nikhil Kapur. Nikhil, an NUS MBA alumnus, now runs his own VC firm, Greyscale Ventures. In addition, the team also practiced building the three main criteria that VCIC judges its contestants: diligence, questioning, and thesis defense by working on numerous case studies.

To further strengthen their ability to question start-ups and ask pertinent questions in a short time frame, they began setting up interviews with startups. Over a 3-month period, the team interviewed 15 start-ups from across Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Some of the notable startups that the team interviewed were Ailytics, Solv8, and Livo. These companies were all founded by NUS MBA graduates, and the team was impressed by their willingness to help when contacted. Inspired by their interview with Bruno-Mickael Da Silva, co-founder of the PropTech startup Livo, the team felt even more motivated. This surge of enthusiasm led them to redouble their efforts and truly hit the ground running in the month before the finals.

Lastly, cheered by the entire MBA cohort, they did not disappoint and were declared the **regional champions** on March 2nd!

With the regional trophy now resting in the MBA lounge at NUS, the team is getting ready for the global finals on the 12th and 13th of April. To prepare for the global finals, they are focusing on their efficiency, aiming to bring down the time to evaluate a startup thoroughly from 10 hours to 2-3 hours. Along with their regular training, the team receives valuable guidance from Don Boyle. Boyle, who founded the American venture capital firm Bluegrass Capital Ventures, generously volunteers his time to coach the team. His expertise and mentorship have been a significant asset to their journey. Finally, anticipating the challenge of evaluating US startups, the team is actively deepening their understanding of the American market landscape.

Prepped, primed, and ready to make history! Best of luck to the team as they chase a global win for Asia!





Celebrating International Women's Day with Inspiring Panel Discussion

By Amy Tran

Celebrating International Women's Day, led by Aine Tahara (2023, FT) and Siddesh Acharya (2023, FT), the NUS MBA Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Club in collaboration with the NUS Women in Business Club joined forces for a powerful panel discussion. The theme – "Furthering Women Empowerment" brought together three amazing and inspiring female leaders: April Serrano, Kanchana Gupta, and Yuko Nakamura.

April Serrano captivated the audience with her deep understanding of the banking industry and her personal journey to success. She emphasized the importance of resilience and determination in overcoming challenges and encouraged students to pursue their ambitions fearlessly. April's presence was truly inspiring, giving students a glimpse into the vast opportunities that lie ahead in the corporate world.



Kanchana Gupta, the visionary founder of vLookUp.ai, shared her entrepreneurial journey and the lessons she learned along the way. Her passion for leveraging technology to empower women in business was contagious, igniting a sense of possibility among the audience. Kanchana's story resonated deeply with students, motivating them to explore their own entrepreneurial aspirations and reminding us that we have the power to shape our own futures.

Yuko Nakamura, a leader at P&G Singapore Innovation Center (SgIC), left a lasting impact with her multifaceted leadership style. She shared her experiences of balancing various roles, including her passion for yoga instruction, while excelling in her career. Yuko's message of embracing diversity and harnessing the strengths residing within resonated strongly with students, encouraging us to embrace our unique qualities and pursue our goals with authenticity.

The panel discussion was expertly moderated by Min Zhou (an alumnus of NUS Chinese EMBA), who skillfully guided the conversation, allowing each speaker to share their perspectives and insights. Min's engaging approach created a welcoming environment for open dialogue and meaningful discussions, ensuring that the audience gained valuable takeaways from the event.

The success of this panel discussion would not have been possible without the dedication and efforts of leaders of the D&I Club. The enthusiastic participation of the MBA students added immense value to the event, making it a truly memorable and impactful experience.

As we reflect on the inspiring moments from this panel discussion, let us remember the key takeaways: the importance of resilience in the face of challenges, the transformative power of entrepreneurship, and the immense value of embracing diversity. Together, let us continue to champion gender equality and strive towards creating a more inclusive world for all.



Energized 2024: Insights and Connections from the Energy Club's Flagship Event

By Tuhina Mehrotra

The NUS Business School Energy Club recently hosted its flagship event, Energized 2024, a dynamic afternoon that offered valuable perspectives on the evolving energy sector. The event featured a captivating speaker lineup that included Nathanael, Regional Director at EarthStream, Ashwinideep Godhara, Senior M&A Associate at Shell, and NUS MBA Alum Somnath Kansabanik, Principal at Rystad Energy. Professor Bandi from the Analytics & Operations department skilfully moderated the discussion.

Somnath kicked off the session with an insightful overview of the current energy landscape and its future trajectory, addressing questions about the longevity of oil and the shift towards renewable energy sources. Nathanael then shared his expertise on hiring trends in the energy sector, highlighting sub-industries, key geographies, and in-demand skillsets. He emphasized that recruitment opportunities extend well beyond Singapore, with significant prospects in the Asia Pacific, Europe, and North America, particularly in the development of wind and solar energy farms.



Both Nathanael and Ashwinideep underscored the importance of technical skills, such as an engineering background, as well as commercial acumen, including expertise in finance, M&A, debt financing, and consulting. Somnath also delved into the long-term outlook of the energy sector, predicting transformations over the next 20, 50, and even 100 years. He emphasized that the current "energy transition" is not unprecedented and that significant investment is crucial for a successful shift towards greener sources.

Ashwinideep underscored the importance of problem-solving and analytical skills within this capital-intensive industry, where financial decisions carry far-reaching consequences. The Q&A session sparked engaging discussions on topics such as offshore wind power, its potential, and the challenges in widespread adoption, as well as the ever-growing presence of the electric vehicle industry



Following the speaker session, students and industry experts engaged in a dynamic networking session over refreshments. This provided a valuable opportunity for our MBA cohort to connect, build relationships, and explore potential career paths within the exciting and evolving energy sector.

We extend our gratitude to our esteemed speakers and Professor Bandi for their contributions to this successful and insightful event!



Global Network Week

By Agatha Koh & Vanessa Lee

The Global Network Week (GNW) brought an exciting flurry of activity to the NUS MBA community as we warmly welcomed 36 students from the Global Network for Advanced Management (GNAM) partners, and Duke University, one of our exchange partners.



To kickstart the week-long programme, we gathered for a vibrant networking session at Chimichanga, where they engaged in lively conversations over drinks. This informal gathering provided an excellent opportunity for those from the GNAM network to forge new connections and establish camaraderie before diving into a week of collaborative learning.



The students embarked on an enriching exploration of Singapore and Asia's dynamic business landscapes through the Asia Business Environments course, skilfully led by Prof. Pasha Mahmood. This immersive programme seamlessly blended engaging lectures and comprehensive case studies, revealing the economic, political, and cultural influences shaping businesses across the region.



Alongside the course, a specially curated networking event provided students with a vibrant platform to connect with our NUS MBAs, fostering cultural exchange, and exchange of business insights from their respective home countries. This integrated academic and social experience not only expanded the students' professional networks but also left them with cherished memories of their time at NUS.

Wrapping up their week on a delightful note, a visit to the NUS Co-op allowed students to select memorabilia as mementoes of their enriching journey at NUS. In essence, the Global Network Week at NUS was a dynamic blend of learning, networking, and cultural exchange, leaving lasting impressions on all who participated.



Lily's NUS Exchange: A Singaporean Experience



by Joy Tran

Lily, a Yale student, recently completed a semester abroad at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Driven by a desire to return to Asia after working in Hong Kong and a specific interest in Singapore's government support for new businesses and the social sector, NUS seemed like the perfect fit.

Learning from the Best

Lily particularly enjoyed the lively discussions and professors at NUS. She found the courses in Entrepreneurial Management to be "badass but well-run," with professors who were clearly passionate and prepared. The diverse international student body, with classmates from Singapore, Australia, and elsewhere, exposed her to a wider range of Asian cultures.

Challenges & Unexpected Benefits

However, integrating into the NUS community proved difficult, especially since Lily didn't live on campus. Coordinating group work added another layer of complexity.

Lily found that her openness to learning from part-time students enriched her experience. She mentions how two part-time students even approached her to join their project group, highlighting the welcoming nature of NUS students.



Beyond the Classroom

Lily wasn't all about academics. When she wasn't exploring Singapore's diverse neighborhoods on foot and by bus, she volunteered with "TeachSG," a program that connects tutors with primary school students. This experience solidified her desire to return to Asia after graduation, potentially to work or volunteer while spending time with her family.

A Semester Well Spent

Lily's semester at NUS was a journey of academic exploration, cultural immersion, and personal growth. While there were challenges, her openness to new experiences and willingness to learn from everyone she met made it a rewarding adventure.



Schroeder's Singapore Symphony:



An MBA Exchange Adventure

by Joy Tran

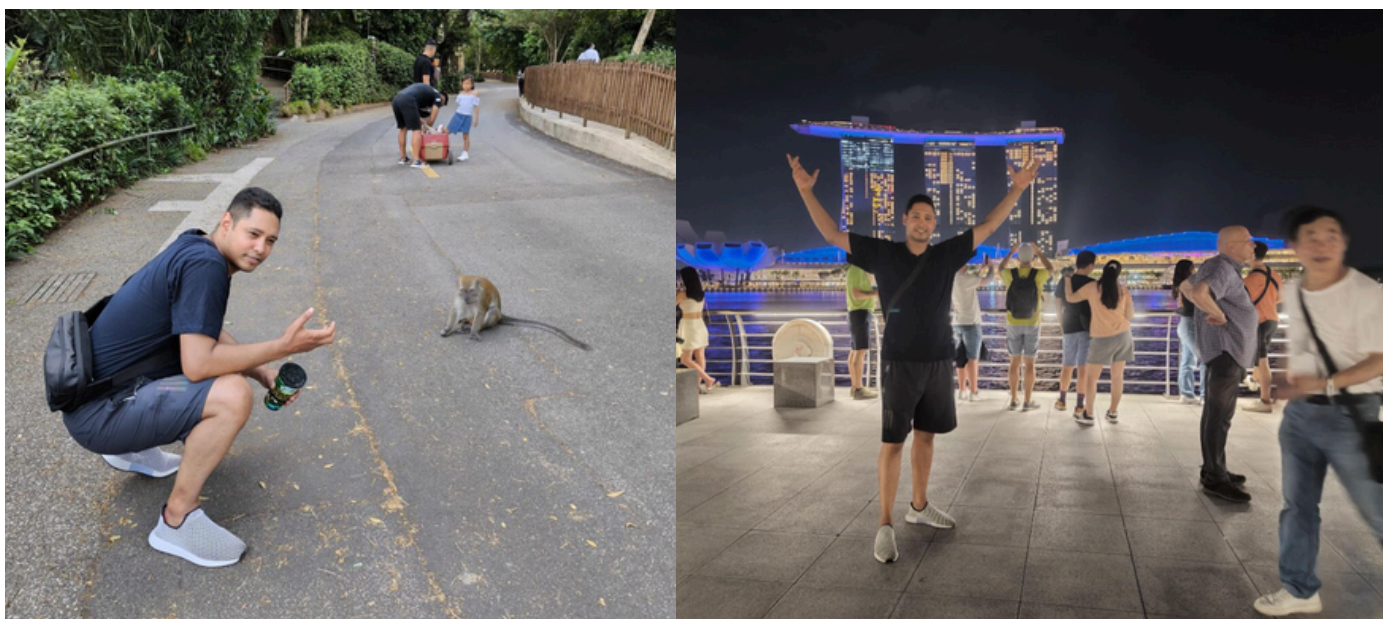
Schroeder, an MBA exchange student from University of Otago, New Zealand, recently completed a whirlwind semester at the National University of Singapore (NUS). With prior experiences in Thailand and Tokyo, NUS offered the perfect balance of Western and Asian influence, allowing him to deepen his understanding of Asian culture and business practices.

Learning Through Collaboration

Schroeder particularly enjoyed the emphasis on group work in his courses, especially those focused on entrepreneurship. Working in large groups honed his skills in prioritizing tasks and collaborating effectively. While he didn't mention many downsides, attending evening classes did require some schedule adjustments.

Conversations that Inspire

Beyond the classroom, Schroeder thrived on the social aspects of NUS. He describes himself as a "social butterfly" who relished conversations with his fellow students. He found their diverse backgrounds and motivations for pursuing an MBA highly inspiring.



Exploring the Lion City

Schroeder didn't shy away from exploring Singapore's vibrant offerings. He visited iconic landmarks like the zoo, Gardens by the Bay, and Marina Bay, appreciating the city's blend of cutting-edge development and historical charm. He also ventured beyond the tourist trail, exploring the construction sites, railways, and everyday life that make Singapore unique.



A Bittersweet Symphony

While leaving his home in New Zealand was tough, Schroeder found himself wanting to stay in Singapore. He saw it as a city at the forefront of the world, brimming with opportunity. With a newfound appreciation for Singapore and the NUS community, Schroeder is eager to introduce his experiences to others back in New Zealand.

Manek's Semester in Singapore: A Balancing Act of Academics and Exploration

by Joy Tran

Manek, a student at HEC Paris, recently completed a three-month exchange semester at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Choosing NUS was a strategic decision - its location in Southeast Asia, a burgeoning region, offered the chance to experience a new culture, explore travel opportunities, and potentially work there in the future. Additionally, a prior visit by his college to NUS solidified his choice.

A Well-Structured Experience

Manek was impressed by NUS's organized approach to exchange students. He found the onboarding process easy, with clear communication and a wide range of courses to choose from. His in-class experience was positive, with professors he described as "nice, funny, and informative." The diverse student body added another layer of enrichment.



Academic Focus with Room for Improvement

Courses like investment management, sustainability reporting, and corporate entrepreneurship aligned well with Manek's financial background. However, integrating with the student body proved challenging, especially since he lived off-campus and his exchange program was shorter (three months typically lead to less bonding compared to a full semester). Additionally, part-time students having classes from 6:30 to 9:30 pm made scheduling group work difficult.

Singapore: A City of Contradictions

Manek thoroughly enjoyed exploring Singapore's iconic landmarks, including Marina Bay, Gardens by the Bay, hawker centers, and Sentosa Island. He found the city to be well-organized and easy to navigate, with a high level of livability due to its proximity to other Southeast Asian countries. However, the high cost of living and the fast-paced nature, with many places closing at midnight, were drawbacks.

Overall, Manek's NUS experience was a valuable one. While there were challenges with integration and scheduling, the academics, cultural immersion, and travel opportunities made it a semester to remember.



Getting To Know Your Cohort: Keh Chee Tat (PT-MBA 2023 intake)

by Winn Mar Saw

In recent editions of our MBA Newsletter, we have had the pleasure of introducing some of our Full-Time MBA peers to our readership. However, for this month's instalment, we shift our focus to highlight the accomplishments and experiences of our Part-Time MBA colleagues.

In this and the next edition (look out for our issue in May!), it is my pleasure to introduce two friendly and intellectual individuals from our Part-Time MBA cohorts – Chee Tat & Srini.

Winn: Hey Chee Tat, good afternoon! Thank you for sharing me your weekend personal time. Could you please introduce about yourself and your professional experiences to our MBA Newsletter readers?

Chee Tat: I spent the majority of my career in a local bank for more than 10 years. I have gone through various roles within the Group Finance sphere, such as bankwide upgrade of our Finance System, hubbing / opening of new overseas branches, adoption of IFRS9, IFRS16 etc. I was the Finance Business Partner for Group Occupancy Cost and Income, and I am now the Finance Business Partner for our Group Transaction Banking.



Winn: Yeah, I've always been very glad to meet another classmate from the same industry (banking)! Would you mind sharing with us why you chose NUS MBA and how's your experience been so far?

Chee Tat: The NUS-MBA so far has been an eye-opening experience, especially coming back to formal studies after more than 10 years. It has been heartwarming to meet peers who will support each other through the course, and the late night discussions on assignments. Being part time students we do not really have the luxury of time, but the candid exchanges between our peers definitely help to enhance our understanding of the lessons.

Winn: Well-said, CT. What will be your career aspirations after completing NUS-MBA next year?

Chee Tat: Being in the finance industry for more than 10 years, I am keen to move out of the finance world, and make full use of my finance expertise in an industry which I have yet to explore. There is just so much more to see out there.

Winn: That's true! Although I still plan to continue to be in Banking industry, I'm kinda excited to move on to a Finance role in banking. Now, let's talk about your self and personal hobbies. What's your favourite pastime? How do you spend your weekends and long holidays?



Chee Tat: My hobby is gaming, but unfortunately there is little time left to enjoy this hobby. I am keen to start on a new RPG game during the short break before special term start. I bought a PS5 recently, but have yet to buy a new game for it. If anybody has recommendations for games please let me know. Other than gaming I also enjoy travelling as a means to breakaway from school and work. I am trying to pick up snowboarding, even though I am still at the stage of rolling down the slope. I have been to Hokkaido, Japan twice for snowboarding, once in Tomamu, another time in Sahoro. My preference is definitely Sahoro because it is so much less crowded, and you hardly have to queue for the ski lift. I am really excited when Trifecta Singapore open, and I look forward to going to the snowboarding lessons there.

Winn: Great! I'm looking forward to hearing your experience as well as viewing some photos/videos too! Thanks again Chee Tat for sharing your personal and professional experiences with us!



Baby Romper Giveaway



In case you didn't know, there is a **MBA baby romper giveaway**! Perfect for our littlest MBA enthusiast aged 6 to 12 months! Redeem a baby romper for your little one via this link [here](#)

Already redeemed your romper? Submit photograph of your little one(s) in the baby romper by emailing the MBA Programmes Office (mba_programmes@nus.edu.sg), and be featured in the ECHOES Newsletter!

This giveaway is open to all MBAs and MBA Alumni.





Birthday Shoutouts!

April MBAers



Happy Birthday To



ALBERT TIEN-JUNG CHUNG
 HANSEN KWOK
 HENG THIA SIANG REGINALD
 INDRAVEER SINGH RAJAWAT
 KONARK GOEL
 KYOHEI OHASHI
 LI MUHAN
 LI YUNBO
 MIN THAW HTUT
 MOHAMMAD FAISAL RIZKI SUPARDI
 MOHAMMED RIYAS
 ALIKKAPEEDIKAYIL MOHAMMEDALI
 YAVUTTY
 SHANAZ MATTHEW SAJEED
 SOE PYAE
 SUN MAO HENG
 SURABHI GUPTA
 TUHINA MEHROTRA
 VENKATA SAHITH MUDDANGULA
 XIAO XIAO
 XU MANLU
 YUTA WAKABAYASHI
 ZHAO YIGE

NICOL NILAR HOONG @NILAR AYE
 ABHISHEK SERJAM
 JAE WON LEE
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 DONG XIN
 DUDIA ASHWIN
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 DAN YUET CHING
 NG YONG QUAN ALVYN
 ZHAO CHENKEN
 MOHIT KUMAR
 XU LIANG
 XIE SIQIONG