

NUS beats top US varsities to rank No.18

Global survey of 200 best universities cites its research activities and professor-student ratio

BY SANDRA DAVIE
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THE National University of Singapore (NUS) has beaten several reputable institutions, including Cornell and Columbia in the United States, to emerge No. 18 in a Times of London ranking of the world's 200 best universities.

In the survey attempted for the first time and out last Thursday, American institutions took seven of the top 10 positions, with 368-year-old Harvard University at No.1.

But three Asian universities — Tokyo University, Beijing University and NUS — made the top 20.

NUS not only beat well-known institutions in the United States, but also top research institutions such as McGill University in Canada, Melbourne University in Australia and the French Ecole Polytechnique.

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) came in at No. 50, ahead of Britain's Warwick and Bristol universities, and Australia's RMIT University, Macquarie and Curtin, all popular with Singapore students heading overseas.

The four-year-old Singapore Management University which specialises in business was not included, as single-subject institutions were left out.

For the survey, the Times asked about 1,300 academics in 88 countries to name the best institutions in fields they were knowledgeable about.

The ranking then took into account the amount of cited research produced by faculty members as an indicator of intellectual vitality, the ratio of professors to students and a university's success in attracting foreign students and internationally renowned academics.

Various reputable publications give information on research done by staff of a university.

Mr John O'Leary, editor of the Times Higher Education Supplement, was quoted as saying that leading uni-

versities increasingly define themselves in terms of international competition.

Echoing that, NUS president Shih Choon Fong said he was delighted.

He said higher education had become a global industry and NUS had to compete globally with the best for academic talent and students.

"We welcome these international comparisons, because we are confident of the quality of our education at NUS, and we can only raise our profile further if we make it to such lists," he said.

He was pleased to find NUS in good company.

"We are just behind Beijing, which draws the best students from over a billion people," said Professor Shih who chairs the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, a group of 36 research universities in 16 economies.

He also noted that the Times ranking took into account the number of foreign students and top academics.

A fifth of the 22,000 undergraduates and half the 9,000 postgraduates at NUS are foreigners.

Half of its 2,000 academics were from overseas and many were top names in their field, he said.

They include Professor Chris Earley of the London Business School, who is now dean-designate of the NUS Business School, the biochemistry department's Professor Barry Halliwell from King's College London, and assistant professors Markus Wenk from Yale University and Liou Yih Cherng from Harvard Medical School.

Prof Shih also noted that the Times survey tied in well with a Straits Times survey released two weeks ago which found that NUS was the top choice of most junior college students polled.

NTU's deputy president, Professor Er Meng Hwa, said Singaporeans could be proud of the standing of their two public universities.

He said the 20-something NTU was much younger than the 100-year-old NUS and only recently made the move to become a more comprehensive university.

"We expect the rankings to change as we develop our new schools fully," he said.

» THE TOP 50 UNIVERSITIES

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|--|---|
| 1 Harvard University | 27 Ecole Polytechnique (France) |
| 2 University of California, Berkeley | 28 Pennsylvania University |
| 3 Massachusetts Institute of Technology | 29 Kyoto University |
| 4 California Institute of Technology | 30 Ecole Normale Supérieure (France) |
| 5 Oxford University | 31 Michigan University |
| 6 Cambridge University | 32 Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland) |
| 7 Stanford University | 33 Monash University |
| 8 Yale University | 34 University College London |
| 9 Princeton University | 35 Illinois University |
| 10 ETH Zurich (Switzerland) | 36 New South Wales University |
| 11 London School of Economics | 37 Toronto University |
| 12 Tokyo University | 38 Carnegie Mellon University |
| 13 University of Chicago | 39 Hong Kong University |
| 14 Imperial College London | 40 Sydney University |
| 15 University of Texas at Austin | 41 Indian Institute of Technology |
| 16 Australian National University | 42 Hong Kong University of Science and Technology |
| 17 Beijing University | 43 Manchester University |
| 18 National University of Singapore | 44 School of Oriental and African Studies (London) |
| 19 Columbia University | 45 Massachusetts University |
| 20 University of California, San Francisco | 46 University of British Columbia |
| 21 McGill University (Canada) | 47 Heidelberg University (Germany) |
| 22 Melbourne University | 48 Edinburgh University |
| 23 Cornell University | 49 Queensland University (Australia) |
| 24 University of California, San Diego | 50 Nanyang Technological University |
| 25 Johns Hopkins University | |
| 26 University of California, Los Angeles | |

SOURCE: THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT



DIVERSITY COUNTS: NUS' success in attracting foreign students was a factor. A fifth of its 22,000 undergraduates and half of its 9,000 postgraduates are foreigners.