

gonna start

okay all right with that said uh darshan do you want to give an overview of what we are trying to do and after that i think each of us give a quick introduction to shooting about ourselves and then we can delve right into this yeah well first of all uh how much you know about me probably nothing right i read the bio sent to me but nothing more than that okay okay yeah well anyway i grew up i i grew up in singapore and i left singapore for higher education in the u.s and and all the way through a phd in physics and and eventually i became a faculty member and also vice president for research at the university of texas then in about 2008

i was recruited by the president of taiwan's ten gong to become a senior executive vp where i was there for three years three and a half years and then also followed by another three and a half years with taiwan's qinghua university um both of which i think at least in those days uh sort of the top taiwanese universities together with uh zhaota and uh and taita um and during those 10 years in asia i of course renewed my great interest with my friends and colleagues in singapore and what i observed in the 10 years well even before that when i became the vice president for research at university of texas at dallas um i noticed that there was a uh president of of nus whose name is trent he he gave enormous number of really intriguing lectures or speeches

and so i followed the what's happening in nus how they went from a more or less just a teaching school in the beginning of the 21st century into what is today one of the top teaching and research institutions not just in singapore but in the world if you believe in ranking you know which sometimes i don't but if you do believe in ranking you can see that singapore's nus is ratcheting up its ranking year by year until today it stands almost shoulder to shoulder to some of the top us universities including yale so um so you know then the three presidents uh starting from student phone by the way system phone and i are very different in character because uh uh unlike you who would go on to pre-u or a-level and then into singapore he and i both decided after our sec four that we he is by the way five days older than me and so we're definitely the same generation that we decided that we really didn't want to go to university so we both of us went to uh we didn't know each other by the way um went to singapore polytechnic in those days and he studied mechanical engineering and i study civil engineering but after a few years we just felt that that's not what we want and somehow we found our way to the u.s and eventually became professors and and so on he is actually a very well-known a mechanical engineer and i became a theoretical physicist so um so i think that as i was watching the growth of nus we so i i said to max that you know we should we should write something about this growth and we should do it seriously not just a few words but actually do some real research and try to understand what makes nus tick well anyway we interviewed all three of them sushrin phong dan cho tran and or and also uh talent chai who we all know very well in fact especially in chai and uh you know every very close friend so we had long interviews with them and then we realized that in order to really understand nu as well we have to understand the feelings of the products which means you um yeah you know the products why why is nus great is not just because they have good presidents or they have good professors but they must have intellectually wide bandwidth of students um and so i think that's that's the that's why we are

here uh max you want to add whatever i missed no i think the the overall idea is as duchenne is that uh basically we want to help the world to understand the rise of the of asian higher education with the us as sort of the the current role and uh one thing or just to want to make sure that you we're not just here to say like all the good i mean of course we're here to talk about its strength but also i think the ability for a u.s to deal with tremendous amount of challenge future challenges his current challenges will be part of the conversation too we'd like to hear about your perspective on that and because you know what makes a university great is its ability to navigate challenging situations as well so just want to really hear a different diverse perspective from you and frankly we have a we're also going to interview a few other students and alumni from different generations to understand how the scene has evolved over the few decades okay so i think maybe we can start by you just you know telling me telling us why you picked what you picked uh at nus and what was your motivation what drove you to it and and so on you know we just love to hear whatever you have to say okay um i think for me since jc until now like secondary school until now like i would not i do not know whether i was better or like i had more interest in science or arts so like because i took i always took a science comedy that i took the combination of um i did triple science in secondary school history then i did physics cmf history in jc so it's like the in-between kind of combination so i think i didn't know where my interest lies and what i wanted to study like further if i had to pick between like primarily chemistry and history at that point in time so i was i guess i was pretty determined to either find a middle ground or like find a way to pursue both and for me to do that there was i think about there was only like two options in singapore i guess to go into uh the new um fest and fos merged college or i go into ntu to take chemistry then join the usp because there are usps humanities centered so like there was two ways to do it i guess and then i also considered going overseas but i realized that there was it was quite challenging to do contrasting like subjects overseas especially because like i applied to the uk and i realized that a lot of like applications at least for that all five schools have to be of the same kind like if i wanted to apply political science i need to do the same for all five and i couldn't really like do a mixture but which is why i end up with yeah where i'm sorry keep going okay uh yeah so i i guess i ended up in chs uh and then i inquired about doing possibly doing a double degree because it sounds pretty like i don't i don't think it's a very popular or very like there's no like straightforward way to do it so i guess the double degree was what i considered and i think upon talking to the professors they re like they gave me like the information that it was actually doable with the new structure of chs which is why i eventually chose nus yeah so you chose nus specifically because they allow you to do this kind of rare mixture of of different areas in your case chemistry and political science yeah so eventually i decided to do chemistry and political science uh yeah would you i think ntu didn't allow that's really enormous combination so you inquired both into you and nus and you got the confirmation from ius that yes you can do it uh i actually for ndu i went to read up on their second major or like double major requirements and they are they restricted everything except minors which i didn't want to do a minor i wanted to do at least to a major level so therefore nus i think it was uh it was one of the interviews with the professors um i i guess it was the scholarship interview and then um i actually applied as a undeclared major and then during the interview i asked oh so i was thinking about like at the point in time chemistry and history how feasible it is to do a double degree in chemistry and history and the professors are like yeah i go ahead we allow that we just declare it and then so far it's going fine with political

science yeah because i swapped it at the end yeah so how do you find yourself balancing the very quite different workload between the two majors actually pretty fine uh i'm doing both i don't know actually you're you're in your first year now right yeah i just finished my first semester okay okay apparently it's fine

you have taken just out of curiosity what have you taken what sort of courses have you taken so far okay i've taken because i'm also in uh the usp so i have what what is usp again uh the university scholars program right okay okay okay yeah and that is that that is something that would you know there is a threshold for you to jump over in order to get into usp is that right um not every not everyone can be a uspi oh there's only 250 billions each year in usd usb is that correct around there i think the cohort sizes change a bit and this year they recently announced the merger between the usp and yale and us i think after our batch there's a little difference it is defectos uh nus version of the yale and us program is that right uh

i the usp current it's not the de facto nus version i would say but i think it is like what i think they're combining the two programs to as a new college for the upcoming academic year but so far we do not know much information about that just yet because they announced it in the middle of our semester last semester the merger

yeah the usp for nus is a separate program so you up like after we got our undergraduate like acceptance we applied to go for another program and this allows us to take modules uh in replacement of the general curriculum so for this semester i took a writing module under the usp and a group project module so like there was different modules and four different modules including uh i think philosophy and some other ones that we are going to do upcoming um i did these two modules i did a chemistry introduction module which had a mixture of uh like material chemistry like an introduction to material chemistry a bit of quantum physics and uh like organic chemistry yeah and for political science i did uh singapore politics uh yeah and i did uh the introduction mod for political science so i did two modules yeah so you took five courses uh then because it's three two i think it was even

let me just double confirm this oh i did one more oh yeah still six uh i did a general education data uh analysis module under the chs yeah okay wow that's a lot of work yeah i i can send over like what the modules i took if you want to see the more specifics of the modules yeah that'll be very helpful yeah yeah so so i think what the usp gave to you the university scholars program gives you in addition to your chs is residential components right so can you tell us more about that experience and how that would differ from a regular chs students i would say it's pretty different because instead because chs has something called general curriculum which is to allow all students to experience like a multi-disciplinary interdisciplinary kind of like education so for example a science student would have to take like some arts modules about writing some computer science modules artificial intelligence there are different pillars to fulfill and as part of usp i am using the usp modules to fulfill these pillars instead so it's a it's what they call a residential college program where i stay there and i take models from there and they have their own group of professors and the modules are typically more in-depth and more niche as compared to the general ones that chs students have to undergo so to give an example most

chs all chs students have to take a writing module and the ones that we take in usp has an element of critical thinking in it so for our first semester the module i took we wrote i think like it's an introduction to writing a research paper essentially my module was about human trafficking and labor migration so i i did a paper about um foreign domestic workers in singapore so i guess it's the depth that chs students will not experience necessarily in the general curriculum i guess yeah right so you were introduced to do academic writing in the first semester of your university study is that what you said uh yes wow yes yeah doctor recall our conversation within child when he was a student at the us they didn't have any kind of formal academic writing uh courses it was mostly a teaching focus school but uh for for sure ling there she is able to just you know take some course in the first semester in university which is kind of extraordinary changes i think yeah right writing is a very important part of your life as you go on i'm sure people who can write and people who cannot write by the way most people cannot write and uh and so having a skill like writing is is an important part it will it will lift you out of the noise level right yeah well let me ask you um

your general you know before you entered nus what is your impression of nus and presumably you must have done some research into nus after all you're gonna devote your four la four years life in in nus you wanted to know you know what you're getting into

just want to hear your impression of the university

what is real and what is after you entered is not real and so on that would be great if we can get some sense out of you um okay i think in singapore there are very limited options for like public universities and nus is the most well established one right so definitely like when speaking to my parents my grandparents like they prefer me to go to a school where it's more established and nus is clearly the front runner for them yeah so um i mean i guess my grandparents referred to quota like as their quota is like the only choice to go for university uh yeah uh for me personally um i like the idea that there's a lot of like opportunities because of like how established nus is within like singapore and that like for me a priority was like internships because i i guess like a lot of people are able to get university degrees and what matters now is having the experience in the workforce right and immediately in the in the talks right they they emphasize that like most nu students have to go through at least one if not two internships in their like the duration of going to nus and that was what appealed to me here because in other uni i guess it was not a compulsory thing for like other programs i was also looking overseas so i was like doing the comparison there yeah um other than that um what yeah sorry what international students were you looking at you said you were looking overseas as well yeah i applied to the uk to king's college uh lse uh ucl uh uh warwick and i think that was oh no that's another there was a nottingham yeah

so i was looking to go to the uk uh to do international relations and i think with politics and all history and just between these two yeah so i think sorry to interrupt you go ahead but uh but not in the u.s right you have not looked into universities in the u.s i think the yeah i did not really look into universities in the u.s because uh i guess the uh i would say like the i i didn't i think my family was like not really certain how hard i put this about me going to the us i think for security

concerns especially because like last year was covered 19 and there was a lot of like violence against asians like i guess i'm not too sure if you experienced it my family was really worried about it if i go to the us so i guess i did not really have the opportunity to like look around at schools that's an interesting observation yeah very interesting observation thank you yeah what about australia

uh for australia i guess i didn't really look into it because a lot of my peers were considering australia to do a medicine or like dentistry so i really like at least for like even seniors i haven't really heard much about going to australia to do courses they are not related to the healthcare field so with that like i didn't i guess i wasn't like into exploring like there and when i was applying overseas i think i really wanted to do like international relations as like i guess that was the top choice before i finished a levels so um uk for me was a front runner yeah interesting yeah well uh max any other questions yeah uh i do uh well i think i think from your description you're looking for something that allows you to combine your multidisciplinary interests together and usp provides you the opportunity to do that but you know when we look online clearly not everyone thinks like that right if you go to reddit and see how people comment on the different courses not everyone is used to the way uh chs is structured what's your observation around that uh among the student community and where do you feel the friction is coming from i think okay so for my community because most of my friends are also from the usp so a lot of because usp is like focused on interdisciplinary education on itself so a lot of my friends are okay with like this challenge but i do know people other people who are really they're not as enthusiastic about like chs because i guess to ask someone who like is really like focusing on sciences as a niche in jc to start writing papers like like papers that are on like best kind of topics they may not necessarily be comfortable with it and i do understand it because my class was a physics class in jc and a lot of people are really uncomfortable with gp the only subject that was that involved writing in a levels so i guess it's just like how you would want to approach a challenge because i think that is it's really meaningful to not just be a specialist in university especially for like courses that are more academic-centered so you know in a sense that like like a lot of fields are interconnected like for example like there's like elements of computer science involved in like almost everything that we do now and that like even though it's really complicated and very difficult even for me because i have no background like having some knowledge about it would be good i guess for the future and the interdisciplinary advent of uh chs kind of forces you to to just get out of your comfort zone and actually try like to be uncomfortable and get the skills that are necessary for the workforce but i do get that in university cap like your grades like it's a cumulative kind of like effect and that like if you do badly for a mod that is not in your area of like what you specialize in and that would have an effect in your graduation grades and i think like a lot of like that originates like the the focus on grades also like kind of originates from all the pressures from like i guess the singapore education system like because in general there's a lot like emphasis placed on doing well like in terms of numbers on people yeah since we were like we're really young yeah like i guess like y'all may have the experience of it too so i think it's a challenge worth exploring and i've i believe that like it given a few years to like kind of like like establish the the new courses that they're trying to introduce as pillars like these courses would be more like developed and better able to provide um i guess a true like interdisciplinary kind of education for everyone in chs but i think right now like the mindset towards like uh this kind of

courses needs to change for it to actually be beneficial for everyone you know yeah right so take a few years for it to evolve to the state where it takes everyone's consideration and make it truly uh good for all students in a sense i mean it's good yeah students but not all students have the mindset to embrace it yet

what challenges do you foresee that lies ahead of you know the two programs you're involved in which are both undergoing dramatic changes the chs and usp what challenges do you see that's lying ahead of them separately or

i collectively separately for the s for usp in particular the merger is pretty interesting to me because uh the usp is an additional program on top of our majors whereas on the other side of the merger year nus itself is a degree like they give out degrees to their students so like combining a program with uh like uh like in a sense a university in itself it i i don't know how it would work especially for the students that currently enroll in your nus i am really excited to be able to take like liberal arts modules if like them after the merger works out and like we are we are eligible to take modules from year and u.s other than that like i just want to know more about like what would happen to us you know right right but when you apply to universities you could have applied to yale and us but it didn't right did

frozen did we lost you yeah she's frozen all right that's your next question i want to get into is oh here you come she's back okay i am so sorry i think i i i did not catch your question no worries uh i said you you said the merger of yale on the us and usp is an interesting one but i just recall that when you applied to university you could have applied to yale and us did you think about that i did uh i did think of that but i did i think i didn't want to take a degree on liberal arts it would be nice to take a module on it because it's interesting but i did not want my degree to be on liberal arts i would say that like i'm more interested in like chemistry and i as political science as specifically international relations as compared to yeah like anthropology so on right so so you're interested in some of the courses but not necessarily that degree so the murderer would actually be very good for you because it allows you to take more courses and more options yeah for sure if that actually happens for the merger but until now we don't know yeah i mean what i heard is like they don't even accept new usp students now right like i think for for new students you have to apply to this new college than your college yeah right right so that's sort of the challenge ahead of usp but how about chs the new college of humanities and science i think currently it's just the public opinion of it because as you say like reddit has a lot of like negativity surrounding like specific modules that chs is offering on first run this time around and i think that like the critics have there have a point because a lot of the modules are new and they require some time i guess to cook and kind of develop before like i guess they can keep the target that they want to do so i think one of the challenges would be to change the public perspective on like how people regard interdisciplinary education and it cannot just be a damper on like academics i would say so it's because uh chs is really beneficial for people like me who want to do something that is crazy that is no longer that is not like traditionally offered in most universities because you can do a mix and match and then we can still like come up with a degree like of our interest but for people who like the traditional pathway that they need some convincing before they can like wholeheartedly accept like the idea of like trying out new things

yeah right well on that i will extend it to another of doctrine's favorite topic the whole idea about intellectual depth and the width uh to you what are you expecting to get from a university education is it like a specialty in one area or multiple areas or uh what do you feel like a university should empower you to do for the next several years and several decades um i would say that okay i actually did do a rough plan for my next few semesters in universities and from the plan i guess i would say that like i i do enjoy like general education like to try my hand at like several things like even like computer science but uh i would prefer that like in a specific area and i would say that like currently to my knowledge it is still provided by nus and like i am able to do so uh in my in planning out the modules that i would take in the future to allow me to achieve a depth like for example um in political science there are four fields that are offered in nus like four areas and uh as a political science student i need to like actually do a module in these four aspects i think government politics comparative politics political theory

but as a political science major i can also like try to like the international relations basket oh no am i lagging okay can i be heard oh okay yeah so i can still like dedicate quite a substantial amount of my modular credits to doing international relations modules and that will allow me to be to have a more specialized education in international relations as compared to a more general political science education and i would say that using that example i guess you can still go deep into the topic which is what i prefer but at the same time i guess i'm curious to find out more about like i guess i i don't know i have a few modules like i wanted to do something about like philosophy like the very idea of democracy and inequality and there's a philosophy more that i'm trying to do soon sometime soon and like um i don't know like yeah there's quite a few but yeah this that will allow me to kind of like satisfy this curiosity at the same time

right so do you feel like i'm very curious that you kind of separated your interest your curiosity part with the depth part do you feel like you need a particular specialization a depth in order to build a career and then the curiosity is for fun and for curiosity like i i find it interesting that you kind of you started by talking about how you want to go into a a field kind of uh with the focus and depth and then meanwhile you can take courses that satisfy your curiosity why are you kind of keeping them separate or maybe not i think it's because like my interest for that particular like subject matter is very niche which is why i keep it separate because like in chemistry i would say that i'm less interested like just like using political science now using character as an example i'm much less interested in material chemistry as compared to medicinal chemistry so that like in a sense that like i can do a material cam mod for interest but i would much prefer focusing on like like what i wanted to do in a sense like medicinal chemistry um i would say that they are separate but i think it's just the way my interest works that that makes them seem really separate

yeah yeah i guess there are a lot of like connections i guess in undergraduate like thinking and writing is like the skills that you focus on and that like more like step or like area specific skill sets are postgraduate kind of like programs in a way so i guess that is where the the parallel or like the connections between everything lie which is that like kind of like honing how i think about something in a way yeah i think that's where the connection is but i don't know i it just the way my interest was that the kids weren't really separate i never really thought of that no it's

fascinating it's fascinating uh i heard you said you sort of have a rough plan for the next few semesters are you able to share with us at a high level what kind of the plan is are you like does that how does that affect your general course selection or the way you plan your time around summer or or during the year [Music] okay the usp kind of asked us to submit our academic plan for the next four years so technically i planned out every semester up to graduation including summers and winters uh apart from like internships and all that so if i'm doing i think i'm doing like two special terms uh one special term i can't remember but in my in my academic plan so um there is that uh for that i guess for my particular academic that plan impact like my academic life in particular i had to kind of like separate the time that i would like dedicate to each of my degrees and also usp because there's three three things running concurrently so i really really want to go on exchange to king's college because they have a really famous war studies department and i would really love to take like a module on it like from that department so i am trying to leave a semester free of chemistry so that i can go through case college which i guess it was year three semester do just to bring it as far away from kobe as possible yeah then um like other semesters i guess uh i was just trying to like achieve a good mixture of all so that um i would say like it's a good like mix and i would not get too tired of like a particular kind of module compared to others because like from this semester i realized that chemistry there's just a lot of practice and learning like numbers like elements and terms all that um and versus political sciences a lot of writing so having a good mix of both is i guess the best of both worlds in a way if they're tired of one dude right right right well doctor i do have questions i can keep going but i want to make sure you and uh i i have a generally you know um i have long discussions with ngai about nus or in general universities in asia and that is yeah you know the way the way the the leaderships of universities in asia tend to think of uh their growth is that they have some models in mind and generally those models are the top universities in the world such as harvard or yale or something like that what is of course my observation of nus and ntu uh maybe because nt used uh leadership in the last two rounds uh all foreigners not asians well actually the one is now currently is asian but but he spent almost all his life in the united states even though he's indian um the the idea of uh of an asia you know these are universities nus and ntu are now some of the top universities in asia or maybe even the world as as people would look at it um how much asian um how much asian is important to places like nus for example after all you know in the long run many of you i don't mean you particularly but i think the possibility is high then many of you will be leaders of asia and because you come out of the top asian universities how much do you think that nus actually could give you a good understanding of asia after all is that important at all to someone like you

i think i think it's really important uh i guess for me because uh i i'm considering multiple like different foods that i'm interested in and one of the field in particular is joining the ministry of foreign affairs for singapore so i guess geographical context is really important for me um i think leadership wise it does matter that like like i guess modeling after like like western universities it's pretty interesting because i think i personally have not made that observation before but i do not think that that would compromise that our knowledge of asia in particular because a lot of our professors are like like they come from different backgrounds so like people have different specialties and with that they bring a different like i guess era of interest to the table and like reading their works and being like taking a model from them right it gives you different



perspectives in a way like i did i took a intern i took a political science introduction mod under professor william bain i think he is he was from he is from the uk and yet like he spent many years in singapore and has a good grasp of like but at least like his perspective of like what singapore politics is like a lot like his class is grounded in singapore context and i think it's pretty interesting to see his take on what like the political spirit of singapore is and also i guess i would not say it compromises our education about this region because ultimately like um having multiple perspectives in terms of like the educator level is still like emphasized upon essentially so i'm not sure how leadership actually affects our contextual understanding well i i find it particularly interesting because of your interest in political science yeah you know um i would say that maybe just as little as 20 or 30 years ago um where china in asia was not like a factor like it is today and uh you know understanding china today especially if you're in asia seems to me extremely critical and it is not an easy country to understand it has it has a very complex history it has a very very complex way of life it has a very complex ways and means and and for singapore to navigate itself in this almost turbulent waters no pun intended about south south china sea

it is so important to me at least i could be wrong that students like you need to have a solid grounding of understanding china or understanding confucius philosophy because you know deep down i think confucius philosophy is always there whether you're doing political science or we're doing sociology you know it's it's you know it's it's there in the japanese culture it's there in the korean culture it's there in the taiwanese culture and of course even in the vietnamese culture so students like you who unders who likes to learn about chemistry which is quite different from political science and political science is uh it's a very exciting area uh and so how do you and i'm not phrasing my question clearly but i really want to just tickle your your intellect to think about this and give us some guidance i think for me when i was studying my modules for political science i really really wanted to like do like at least a breath at least like cover all the regions that are important so i think like having like i think i i did factor in taking like several like like more advanced modules on china administration and comparative politics with china and singapore although i do not know who the pros are like teaching those modules like i have no clue who what their background are like is right now and i i would say that they they probably have a good grasp on like i guess like like china politics and like in in sense like the history of like how they are approaching the region so but i do realize that that is because i did personally factor in like wanting to take such a module and that a general political science student can actually avoid doing so so i guess that's really interesting because um in in political science you don't have to they do not like they do not necessitate taking um regional studies or like like you have to take with service asian or you have to take whatever they do necessitate taking a singapore studies module under political science but other than that not not nothing else so i would say that like the i guess it allows you to choose whether you want to like learn more about the region you're in and i would say that like that taxability may not necessarily be a good thing i'm not too sure but yeah i yeah i factored it in because i wanted to do international relations and that um i guess china has a factor especially uh like china's involvement like passion to us and also like in a lot of like regional like i guess trade and all that it's really important to know like about china's policies with regards to economics politics and so on and i guess that would be coming out of my own interest to take those modules but i'm not too sure about other people i

haven't seen like my relative inexperience as a university student maybe in play though because i know that there are seniors who like systematically like like i guess turned out models especially those who are like your sciences that are like related to the region that they want to like focus on in the future or like the era the field that they want to do like example like it's theory like political theory in like what setting but like i guess as a young one i don't really know much more than this yeah well you're very lucky at nus because in nus you have probably one of the greatest walking treasures um faculty member his name is wonkan do you know him

you you should read all his you know he puts history of china in the perspective of chinese politics and and he is one of the deepest thinkers i think i have ever met we just had a conversation with him recently where he talked about the responsibilities of chinese diaspora uh in asia in southeast asia and how they and presumably that's what you are you're a chinese diaspora in a sense even though you know nowadays you are all singaporeans but but the so that's why i'm particularly interested to see how this thinking can permeates in all the students like you who are doing so much now in you know basically you're you're sucking up knowledge and you know uh every day you go to nus you just suck up knowledge and uh and and see how how it can transform you okay well i think that those are i have one follow-up question based on what darshan just said and i think we probably will let you go is that all right yeah please all right on the question of uh you know taking in knowledge of course you actually have a really full schedule and you guys are among the small groups on campus who actually plan four years ahead that did not happen to me when i was a student uh so given that you have already sort of looked into four years into a university study how worried are you about you know how do you feel like your university education is going to prepare you for the future disruptions you know a lot of courses we're taking today like artificial intelligence was not even a thing five years ago in most universities uh the the new geopolitics in the world is also kind of new uh the new reality of it how do you feel like university are preparing you for those unexpected disruptions or changes

um i would say like with changes right the only thing that is predictable and that you can prepare for is to always be uncomfortable and willing to learn and i think like the the ability to like adapt to subject matters that we are not necessarily very familiar with is something that the university is working on imparting us with so i would say that like things will keep changing and so long as like we pick up like the skill set of being able to learn fast adapt to the change and like be contextually prepared to like adapt to further changes that is a skill that has to be trained and something i guess interdisciplinary education looks into because i guess like it was a foreign concept a few years back to like at least it was a buzzword but people did not actually like do much about this interdisciplinary education until pretty recently in a sense like having like students all have to take like um i guess a bunch of modules that are not directly related to their majors or like garnering skill sets for like the particular field that they are interested in currently of their majors yeah so i guess that's the only thing you can prepare for if everything keeps changing right you think the u.s is working in the right direction and if we are to if you have like say provide let's say we have a we provide entire anonymous feedback what would that feedback be anonymous feedback yes i would want the modules to be more developed first like the new modules need like more time to like be to be better like able to give us the nature of like like um i guess the i guess the need like to give us like the real feel of an interdisciplinary

education like i took uh most chs students have to take uh four pre-assigned modules for this semester and one of their major modules but for me i took one only because the rest i am doing it under usp so um for me that one module i took i guess a lot of my friends also agree that like it just feels that a lot of touching goals and that we need a lot more or like to be tested at least on a lot more for it to be more beneficial for us like guitars um i guess excel skills everyone kind of like has to learn and they need 30 just excel skills another interesting thing that they taught us was how to use r commander which is like a semi programming software for you to work out data analysis and i would love to like have actually have problems and use r commander and like like solve it on the spot but i think the module like stop that the report using the r commander which you also can do with excel and i guess i would love to be pushed more in a way for it to actually be more beneficial if that makes sense so i think with the feedback i would want it to be more how do i put it like i don't know like the metaphor for it is to be like to have the module like cook a bit more to have more materials and more like challenges prepared right yeah absolutely right i i'm sure not all students are wishing that no that wasn't always of course i think that's another thing with with with like you know the university education it's like at the end you kind of you have to be in charge of your own pace if you want to go so you should be able to go faster you know that yeah um darshan do you have any other questions yeah i have one last question or for me at least you know uh for a long long time asian education both from the secondary all through uh university tend to separate signs from so-called non-science you know even in high school you have science class and the non-science class and and of course the the bad thing was that you look down on the students that's not in the science class has that mindset changed

i honestly speaking it has not changed much i think a lot of schools at least like before even before university education a lot of schools still like i guess like have the stigma if you're assigned you're art students that you don't do as far as the science student or like like basically our students are looked down upon and i find it really funny because i guess like even though art is so much more intangible as compared to science it's also equivalent in terms of the challenge it poses absolutely absolutely so i guess i never understood it but i i did myself experience a bit of it because i took history so a lot of like a lot of peers tradition my peers traditionally took econs because it's the social science that i would say that everyone calls it the most useful humanities at least at the high school level and so like they were like huh you took history like why how is why how's that useful like why do you do that in a way and then like i art classes also like i guess they have like like dead times like four of their subjects so yeah yeah unfortunately the mindset is still there i see and yeah well i assume that this merging of the two colleges is one way that aing chai and his team is trying to break this mindset and if it can be done at this high level at the national university of singapore it could you know by osmosis

push that concept into high schools as well and i think that that that's an important change in the mindset if that is so by the way that concept is not just in singapore it's throughout asia it certainly is in taiwan it certainly is in korea and maybe less so in japan but but you know in china is you know they only talk about uh students who is um you know a great in science and if you enter qinghua universities it's usually in science so i think this will be a fantastic you guys will have a fantastic opportunity to actually be in the front line of this chain mindset changing

i actually i really do hope though i have to be part of it too because this change will not just happen in just four years it's going to be a decade-long mindset maybe longer maybe longer because this is deep deep deep rooted yeah okay well yeah i think we'll have to prepare for our next interview dashan yeah thank you so much uh what's your name uh i think you have you have our emails and also we have yours so we could continue this uh conversation through emails if you don't mind okay of course i i

oh you know what we should do we should send her the uh the the the forum we had with uh uh yes i i will do that i'll send her away we had a fantastic uh uh conversation with one congo about this and also you know we watch i'm i'm a a great fan of um kisho mo babani uh do you know him or know of him i think i heard of him okay he was the former singapore uh ambassador to the united nations and the founding founding director of the lee kuan yew school of public policies in um so so what he talks about you know he's sort of a of a extremely noisy not well i don't mean noisy uh like saying the per the person who who is very very very strong in his opinion of china and so strong what is amazing to me is that the western society can still accept him

anyway that's a skill i can assure you that's a great skill

okay let's go thank you for me uh i'll call this an end doctor i'll see you and then mr i'll see you in the other gym soon okay all right bye bye thank you have a nice day have a nice day and have a nice evening