Fees at NTU med school $7,000 more than NUS

Despite that, over 800 have applied; ‘Balance’ sought in setting fees: NTU

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SINGAPORE’S newest medical school at Nanyang Technological University has set the fees at $30,000 a year – $7,000 more than the National University of Singapore.

But despite the higher fees, more than 800 A-level and diploma holders applied for the 50 places that the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine is offering this year.

The school is being set up by NTU and Imperial College London, which ranks highly for its medical and engineering degrees.

NTU Associate Provost in charge of undergraduate education Kam Chan Hin stressed that no deserving student will be denied an education because of financial constraints.

He said students can apply for student and travel bursaries, and emergency grants, along with interest-free loans to pay the fees.

He also noted that the fees for Singaporean students are significantly subsidised by the Government, and cheaper than many medical schools in the United States, Britain and Australia.

Imperial College London, for example, charges £27,500 ($52,700) for each of the first three years, and £39,150 for the fourth year.

He explained that in setting the fees, the medical school sought to strike a balance between affordability and setting them at a sustainable level to provide a quality education.

“The fees reflect the distinct quality and value of the school’s joint Imperial-NTU MBBS programme and are commensurate with the world-class training standards,” he said noting the first-rate facilities at the NTU’s Novena and Yunnan Garden campuses.

The medical school has made several announcements on its innovative teaching methods and use of the latest technological tools such as the Anatomage Table, which offers 3-D virtual dissection.

There will be simulated learning, including the use of actors for students to learn about communicating with patients and what to do in an emergency.

Classes will be small and taught by three faculty members to provide close supervision and mentoring.

The school has also recruited distinguished faculty comprising a mix of local and international clinicians and scientists.

On the applications, Prof Kam said NTU was encouraged by the number it has received, adding that many of the hopefuls were of top calibre.

Besides having a string of As or perfect grade point averages, they also have high scores in the British BioMedical Admissions Test, a requirement for the school.

The test is used by British universities to assess applicants in areas such as problem-solving and the ability to apply scientific knowledge.

Of the 800 applicants, 440 were shortlisted for the second round, where applicants went through eight mini-interviews with health-care professionals such as nurses, as well as laymen, who assessed the candidates from the perspective of a patient.

“It was a question of choosing between one straight A-student and another. Through the mini-interviews we hope to find the students who will make good doctors,” said Prof Kam.

The school will eventually increase its annual intake to 150 – half the number of medicine students which NUS admits.

Besides boosting the number of doctors for Singapore, the school hopes to see more of their graduates becoming clinician scientists – doctors who do research and drive scientific discovery in medicine, on top of treating patients.

One of the applicants, a straight-A student from Raffles Institution who did not want to be named, said although the fees are higher than NUS, it is a fraction of what he would have to pay if he were to head overseas.

“It will cost close to half a million dollars and my parents would have to sell their flat to pay for that,” he said.

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