Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony between
Nanyang Technological University and
National Junior College, Raffles Junior College,
Temasek Junior College and Victoria Junior College

Friday, 25 June 2004, 11:00am, Staff Club Function Room

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr Winston Hodge, Principal, Raffles Junior College, Mrs Lim Lai Cheng, Principal, Temasek Junior College, Mrs Chan Khah Gek, Principal, Victoria Junior College, Mr Koh Chong Mong, Vice Principal, National Junior College,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,
Good Morning,

The presence of so many Principals reminds me of my school days four decades ago. When I joined Raffles Institution from Catholic High School, I made many new friends. Most of them were in RI from Secondary One and had a tremendous sense of camaraderie. Although we got along very well I can sense some difference in between being together for two years is somewhat different from being together for six years.
For full schools such as Catholic High, the difference is even more stark. Many students were together for twelve full years. The school spirit is inevitably much stronger than if the students were together for just two years like what we have in our Junior Colleges today.

I am happy therefore to see the development of new Integrated Programmes by our Junior Colleges. The four or six years together not only allows students more room for creative pursuits but also create the kind of school spirit that to entry to university.

Our national school system, a product of system engineers under Dr Goh Keng Swee, fed our universities to produce graduates who fitted well into the newly industrializing economy of Singapore. But they tended to come from the same mould.

In line with the Remaking of Singapore for the economy of tomorrow, the education system is developing a wide variety of programmes. The Integrated Programmes are one of the latest. Skipping “O” levels and going directly to the “A” Levels or the International Baccalaureate, the schools can better prepare their students beyond mere regurgitation of what they have been taught. This is consistent with the four year programmes practiced by the best American High Schools producing the most creative students for the best universities.

Take the example of Stanford University. Two of its strongest feeder schools are Palo Alto High School and Gunn High School. The university offers programmes for the High School students to get an early taste of university life and earn advanced placement credits.
NTU signed a collaboration agreement with Hwa Chong Junior College last year, the very first Junior College to announce their Integrated Programme. Today, I am very pleased to sign collaboration agreements with four more Junior Colleges, all of them excellent schools starting Integrated Programmes.

Our MOU with the Junior Colleges provide the opportunity for students with outstanding abilities to begin taking university courses for credit during their last two years of study. Besides giving them a leg up in applying for university admission for having attempted the most difficult courses available, this arrangement also allows the best students to complete their degree requirements early. For those inclined towards R&D, they can undertake research projects under university faculty. The advance credits also allow our students to undertake graduate study earlier, graduating with both Bachelors and Masters degrees in four years, or taking double majors.

Nor does the benefit stop with the students. Under these agreements, we shall assist the Junior Colleges in their programmes whether in Science and Technology or the Humanities. This is only right since the National Institute of Education is part of our university.

These five junior colleges that we have signed agreements with are generally acknowledged as the top five junior colleges. We have created win-win situations with all of them. For the junior colleges, their students and teachers gain the benefit of association with our university and early access to the courses. For the university, the familiarity of the students
with our university will encourage more of the top students to consider entering our degree programs. We are completely open to discussing such agreements with other schools where such a win-win situation can be created.

I look forward to working with our five junior college partners to help create a much more vibrant educational system for the benefit of Singaporeans and potential Singaporeans.

Thank you.