As NTU braces itself for autonomy in the near future, it is my vision, as the new sub-dean for EEE alumni, that both our present and graduated students possess great pride in their alma mater. I think there are good practices to be learnt from the U.S. universities, where their alumni’s sense of belonging and willingness to play a stake in their alma mater’s development is a life-long commitment. Interestingly, in these universities, the alumni’s active contribution to the institution that has helped groom them has played an instrumental role in enhancing the value and recognition of their conferred degrees. Unfortunately, this culture, while prevalent in U.S. universities, has yet to be instilled within our Singaporean context.

With the quest for this culture to permeate through the entire EEE community, we hope to establish and strengthen the bonds of comradeship between the alumni, students, and the School of EEE. The School’s Committee on Alumni Affairs is charged with the objectives of cementing relationships within the EEE family and encouraging our alumni to be greater stakeholders in bringing our school to greater heights. With these aims in mind, I am pleased to present the motivation for some of the events that have been organized within the first half of this academic year 2005/2006 and give you a glimpse of what you can expect within the EEE alumni community.

In order to foster a strong alumni spirit among the graduates, it is critical that we instill a sense of pride and belonging to our present EEE students. We hope to bring forth the message to both cohorts of present and graduated EEE students that we are interested in your personal and intellectual development; and at the same time, we value your contribution to the school greatly. To this end, many of our planned events have both components of students and alumni in mind. For example, the planning of the 2006 Graduates Evening will involve committee members from our Final Year students, the EEE Club, and the EEE Alumni Association. Events planned by the EEE Alumni Association will involve the EEE students as well.

In the past, getting a small group of alumni engaged with the School’s activities was an easier task. However, our alumni base has grown significantly from 192 graduates in 1985 to 11,000 in 2005. We realize that we need to re-strategize our ways of building bridges between our alumni and the School. In order for us to develop efficient networks within such a huge family, we require the marriage of commitments from our present students and alumni. Part of our scheme is to re-establish links with previous EEE Club Executive committees and their sub-committees. In widening their network within the EEE community, this in turn helps them to reach out to other EEE alumni. We also aim to tap on the sub-networks presently existing in the NTU halls of residences. To allow for close links between the School, alumni and such informal groupings, the School is working to induct such leaders of past committees into the EEE Alumni Association.

In order for us to translate our vision into reality, we organized the Graduates Evening on 5 August 2005. While the event acted as an excellent initiation of the convocating Class of 2005 into the alumni committee, it also featured an exciting time of fun, laughter and celebration for our graduating class of 2005. Planned and organized by the EEE Club, the Graduates Evening was graced by the President of the NTU Alumni Association, Mr. Inderjit Singh, who is also currently the Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC. Preparation for the next Graduates Evening of 2006 is already underway. This will be the first time that volunteers from the final year of EEE come together and organize the Graduates Evening for their own final year classmates. It will also be the first time that the EEE Alumni Association is roped in to work closely with this committee to support the event. We are also excited to bring to you the next biennial edition of the Namecard Directory; which will be launched in July 2006. I am sure that this will serve as a valuable networking resource for our alumni.

The major activities of our School are actively supported, not just by the Association, but also with the NTU Alumni Affairs Office and the Sub-Deans (Alumni) for the other Engineering Schools. For instance, the Convocation Party celebration for the School of EEE was organized in conjunction with the School of MAE and School of CEE. Through this collaborative approach, we managed to reduce the costs of celebration by achieving economies of scale. Another major event was the recent 20th Anniversary Celebration for the Class of 1985. This is an event organized by the Class of 1985, for the Class of 1985, with support from NTU Alumni Affairs Office and the three Engineering Schools. This massive celebration lasted the whole day and included sub-events such as wine appreciation, NTU campus tour for alumni, tours of interesting local sites for family members, a magician’s show for children, tele-matches for both young and old, and rounded off with a barbeque dinner and the traditional “jam and hop” of the eighties.

With the increased responsibilities of the School due to the greater autonomy of the University, I would sincerely urge every student, staff and alumni to rally to the challenge of bringing our School and University to the highest pinnacle in the educational landscape. We may have to sow some seeds in doing this, but it is certain to me that we will reap the satisfaction of building life-long relationships with our NTU peers or colleagues.

Assoc Prof Chua Chin Seng
Sub-Dean (Alumni)