Top MBA list: NTU up 35 spots

Nanyang Business School makes Financial Times’ top 100 list for first time, rising to 67th

By Ho Ai Li

SIX years ago, Chinese national Peng Hong Jiang earned $46,000 annually as an assistant finance manager in a logistics firm here.

Now, armed with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Nanyang Technological University (NTU), the 38-year-old takes home nearly three times as much working as a financial controller for an American company in Shanghai.

This increased earning power of Ms Peng and other NTU graduates has helped to propel the university into a list of the world’s top 100 MBA programmes for the first time.

Its Nanyang Business School (NBS) clinched the 67th spot in the listing by British newspaper The Financial Times, second in Asia only to Shanghai’s China Europe International Business School (Ceibs), which was ranked 11th.

American business schools took the top spots: University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School was first, followed by Columbia Business School in second place, and Harvard and Stanford universities in joint third.

NBS, ranked 102nd last year, leapfrogged local rival National University of Singapore (NUS) Business School, which also rose from 92nd to 81st position.

The average wages of NBS students went up by 110 per cent three years after graduation, compared to 92 per cent for those from NUS.

This could be because more of its MBA alumni are working in rapidly developing countries like China and India and getting better jobs and pay, said NBS’ dean, Professor Hong Hai.

The percentage of salary increase accounts for 20 per cent of the ranking score in the Financial Times listing. The weighted salary – or the average salary three years after graduation – makes up another 20 per cent.

NBS also scored well in student and faculty diversity as about 80 per cent of its 100-strong annual MBA intake are international students from 16 countries, including Argentina, Morocco and Switzerland.

Other major ranking criteria include the schools’ research rating (10 per cent), international mobility (6 per cent) and number of faculty members with doctorates (5 per cent).

NUS Business School’s vice-dean of graduate studies, Professor Kulwant Singh, was pleased to see two Singapore universities among the top three in Asia and the top 100 worldwide.

He was happy with NUS’ improvement, but noted that it lost out on the “value for money” criterion.

NBS was the seventh-best in terms of value for money, while NUS was 53rd.

NUS raised the fees of its full-time MBA course from $20,000 in 2004, to $24,000 in 2005 and $28,000 last year. It is charging $34,000 for this year’s intake, compared to $25,000 at NBS.

Cheaper fees aside, NTU’s MBA graduates said they prefer the course because it lets them specialise in one of six areas, while NUS has only two for students to choose from.

Said Ms Peng: “In the market, an MBA is quite standard. What helps you stand out is a specialisation.”

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