NTU RSIS ranked third in Asia

Leading research and graduate teaching institution wins accolades

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NTU’s opinions on foreign policy now carry more weight than before, thanks to the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), a graduate school housed at NTU which was ranked third in Asia in a recent study.

The Global “Go-To Think Tanks” study, which ranks institutes doing research and problem solving in areas such as social policy and political strategies, was conducted by the University of Pennsylvania, one of America’s top research universities with over US$500 million in annual external funding.

The results were released late last month.

Its Think Tank and Civil Societies Programme has ranked more than 1,000 Asian think tanks every year since its launch in 2006.

RSIS was placed behind the Japan Institute of International Affairs and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences which came in first and second respectively.

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Associate Professor Joseph Chinyong Liow
Associate Dean, RSIS

“...signals to the world that NTU is excellent not only in science, engineering and business studies, but also in the field of security studies, strategic studies, international affairs, and international political economy.”

Having been officially inaugurated only on January 1st 2007, RSIS’ climb to the third spot has been an efficient one. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies—a centre within the RSIS—was ranked 10th by the University of Pennsylvania when Asian think tanks were first ranked in 2008.

Associate Professor Joseph Chinyong Liow, Associate Dean of RSIS, attributed the rise in rankings to the focused vision of the school.

“We are very research-oriented and do not publish just for the sake of it, but ensure that our publications are relevant and cutting edge,” he said. He added that this aspect of RSIS has been supported through generous funding from companies such as Temasek Holdings.

This ranking also bodes well for RSIS as it helps to elevate the school in the eyes of foreign funding agencies seeking to initiate research from Asian think tanks, according to Associate Professor Ron Matthews, Head of Graduate Studies and Deputy Director of Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.

Associate Professor Ron Matthews sees this enhancement in reputation as a benefit for students as “prospective employers and universities would be aware of this prestigious third ranking that RSIS enjoys.”

“This can only help their graduates gain excellent jobs and research positions.”

Students from RSIS also expressed their delight at the rankings and hopes for continual development of the school as a research institute.

“I am proud that RSIS is ranked third in Asia and I hope that the school will continue with this culture of excellence,” said Muhammad Ridzwan Bin Rahmat, 30, a Master’s student of Science (Strategic Studies) at RSIS.

Apart from RSIS, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy from National University of Singapore and Singapore Institute of International Affairs also snagged the 7th and 15th ranking respectively, a sign of Singapore’s growing intellectual capital.

“Singapore has always moved towards excellence in tertiary education and this success in the Global “Go-To Think Tanks” rankings definitely shows it,” said Associate Professor Liow.