NTU relief package to help students in need due to Covid-19

Clara Chong

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has launched a private philanthropic programme to help its students, with university president Subra Suresh and his wife, Mrs Mary Suresh, making a personal gift of $100,000 to seed and anchor the fund.

We will use the new NTU Priorities Fund together with other sources of philanthropic support to alleviate the financial burden of our students, so that those needing immediate help can continue to focus on their studies and their future,” said Professor Suresh, an American scientist who began his presidency at NTU in January 2018.

The university said in a statement yesterday that the fund is part of a new NTU Covid-19 Relief Package to help students who may be facing difficulties completing their research work amid the outbreak.

It is the university’s first such package of assistance, and comprises three new coordinated measures to assist students.

NTU said the fund will help its most needy students who come from families whose monthly household income per capita is below $690, and/or are experiencing an emergency situation, such as the student’s family breadwinner losing income due to the pandemic.

To fund the scheme, NTUs is tapping into its own resources together with available sources of public funding and private philanthropic gifts. A new $2 million NTU Priorities Fund will support students who are Singaporean citizens and permanent residents.

Eligible students may get an interest-free advance of up to $1,500 each, which will reimburse the university within two years of graduation.

The NTU Priorities Fund, which will be drawn from private philanthropy, aims to offer financial assistance to the most needy of NTU students from Singapore and abroad who are most affected by the coronavirus. Recipients of the fund will pledge to “pay it forward” within two years of graduation and remain committed to the NTU community, even in cash assistance to the university.

By nurturing this ‘evergreen fund’ as a university resource to benefit future generations of students, NTU aims to perpetuate the cycle of philanthropy so that future students who need assistance can continue to receive financial aid,” the statement said.

Priority will be given to those enrolled in the following courses:

Research students in their final year of candidature with a full waiver of tuition fees for the remaining duration of their course.

PhD and master’s students who are Singapore citizens and permanent residents, and who are facing difficulties completing their research work within this semester because of the disruptions caused by the closure of their laboratories.

New Singaporean undergraduates who enrolled in academic year 2019 or earlier who will continue to pay what they did during the 2019 academic year for the remaining duration of their course.

New Singaporean undergraduates starting university in academic year 2020 will also pay the same fees as those who enrolled in 2019-20.

This also applies to current and new postgraduate students, but, for them, deferment in fees hikes will apply for only one academic year.

Meanwhile, to assist final-year PhD and master’s students who face difficulties completing their research work within this semester because of the disruptions caused by the closure of their laboratories, NTU will extend their candidature with a full waiver of tuition fees for the remaining semester.

Meanwhile, to assist final-year PhD and master’s students enrolling in academic year 2020 or earlier who will continue to pay what they did during the 2019 academic year for the remaining duration of their course.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) and tertiary institutions announced this on April 1, saying applications will be made against available sources of public funding and private philanthropic gifts.

NTU’s announcement comes in the wake of a freeze in tuition fee increases for Singaporeans enrolled in government-subsidised undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for the 2020 academic year.

The six universities – NTU, National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore Institute of Technology, and Singapore University of Social Sciences – made the announcement in response to disastrous impacts on students in financial need.

Under the fee hike freeze, Singaporean undergraduate who enrolled in academic year 2019 or earlier who will continue to pay what they did during the 2019 academic year for the remaining duration of their course.

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NTU IN A STATEMENT

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Professor Subra Suresh and his wife Mary made a $100,000 gift to seed the Nanyang Technological University fund. PHOTO: CANISIUS WULLNER UNIVERSITY

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