

TAKING HEART

NTU staff donate over S\$10m worth of unused leave

On average, each donated the cash value of 11 days of annual leave to funds in aid of needy students

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MORE than 1,800 faculty and staff at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) have donated S\$10.25 million – the value of their unused annual leave – to the university, for the benefit of student aid and endowments.

On average, each employee donated 11 days' leave; the highest donation was 15 days. Collectively, these employees gave 20,145 days of their unutilised annual leave.

The initiative, NTU's Leave Redemption and Donation Exercise, invites employees to offer the value of their unused leave to a good cause.

In the opt-in exercise, all NTU employees can voluntarily redeem the value of their unutilised earned annual leave, a sum based on each individual's salary, for donation to an NTU fund of their choice.

Tan Aik Na, the university's senior vice-president of Administration, said: "The employee donations show how much the



The donations are part of the university's annual Faculty and Staff Giving initiative, in which employees can show support for the university's programmes and student welfare.

PHOTO: NTU

OneNTU community is invested in the success and well-being of our students. Everyone has been impacted by Covid-19, but some have been hit harder than others. Some of our students' parents have lost their jobs or have had their income reduced. So, it is doubly important during the pandemic for us to rally our support as OneNTU to help these students."

The donations are part of the university's annual Faculty and Staff Giving initiative, in which employees can support the university's programmes and student success and advancement.

Employees may choose to contribute to the university's bursaries, general en-

dowment, education and student life fund, or 18 other school or centre advancement funds that support student projects and club activities.

Among the employees who gave 15 days' worth of personal leave was Associate Professor Ivy Kwan, assistant dean for Career Services at NTU's Nanyang Business School (NBS). She channelled her gift to the NBS Student Aid Fund, which provides direct financial support to NBS students experiencing hardship; the fund was set up by the school's faculty members in the middle of this year, and complements existing forms of assistance such as bursaries and study loans.

Associate Professor Kwan said: "I really wanted to give back to NTU and NBS, which is my alma mater. This is a perfect opportunity that allows me to help out in whatever way I possibly can. I have benefited from an education here, and I would like others to be able to benefit from an education at NBS too. I teach at NBS and this is my little way of investing in the future of my students."

Babu Narayanswamy, a materials scientist and director at the Nanyang Environment and Water Research Institute, gave the cash value of 14 vacation days to the School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering (SCBE) Advancement Fund.

He said: "I consider myself one of the fortunate ones to have a job that has not been adversely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. I know there are families that are hurting and need help because of the pandemic's effects on the economy."

"While the government has been doing all it can, I believe this is the time for those of us who can, to pitch in and help in whatever way possible. Next year, I plan to donate my annual leave too."

On average, NTU employees each get between 21 and 42 days of annual leave, depending on their employment scheme and length of service. Another round of this leave donation exercise will be held in October 2021.