To celebrate the success of the Building Excellence Campaign and the NUS Business School Golf Challenge 2007 and 2008, the NUS Business School held a Building Excellence Donor Appreciation Night at the atrium of the swanky new state-of-the-art Mochtar Rady Building that the funds helped to build.

Close to 70 staff, students, alumni and donors attended the event on Friday, 14 January 2011. To kick start the evening, a video montage was screened. Photographs and short video clips introducing the Business School’s new home, as well as the highlights of the Building Excellence Campaign and the Golf Challenges were shown.

The Building Excellence Campaign appealed to donors within the School—faculty members and staff—to give towards building a better home for the faculty and students. The Golf Challenges were held in 2007 at the Marina Bay Golf Course and in 2008 at Laguna National Golf and Country Club. The events combined raised $450,000. When asked about how he felt standing in the very building he helped raised funds for, Mr Simon Phua, Chairman of the Golf Challenge 2007 & 2008 organizing committee said he felt a great connection to the building.

In his opening address, Professor Bernard Yeung, NUS Business School Dean and Stephen Riady Distinguished Professor thanked the individuals and corporations who “laid the foundation for the Mochtar Rady Building”. The Mochtar Rady Building was a 16,000 sq m, nine-storey building with a five storey atrium that serves as the focal point of the building, as well as a venue for corporate events. The building is equipped with ample meeting and seminar rooms to meet the needs of the school.

Professor Yeung called the Mochtar Rady Building a "home that gives a sense of community". He told of how the World Cup football final between Spain and the Netherlands was screened at the atrium last year, and how the event helped to build a sense of belonging and camaraderie among faculty members, staff and students within the Business School. He saluted all donors for their generosity and gave special mention to Mr Phua.

Mr Phua then took the stage. He said that it has been two years since the last golf tournament and he was grateful that the School organised the dinner. He thanked his co-chairman Mr Peter Koh and then-chairman of the NUS Business School Alumni Association, Mr Peter Tay for their support during the Golf
Challenge. He concluded by saying, “We should all be proud of the new building and that we have in our own small way contributed to its realisation.”

One of the donors to the Building Excellence Campaign was the UCLA-NUS EMBA Academic Director Associate Professor Jochen Wirtz. When asked why he chose to donate to the organisation he worked for, Associate Professor Wirtz said, “I gladly contributed as I feel it is important for students and faculty alike to have world-class facilities to perform at their best and shine, and in the process firmly position us as Asia’s Global Business School.” Having been working in the new building now for more than a year now, Associate Professor Wirtz added, “Teaching and working in our new building feels just wonderful. The classrooms have all the cutting edge technology we need, plus what I truly enjoy is they have lots of natural light. Thanks to the innovative design of the building. We now have a most conducive environment for learning, exchange and creativity we all can be proud of.”

Over a buffet dinner, the NUS Symphony Orchestra String Quartet entertained the crowd with their best numbers. The dinner ended with a tour of the building conducted by the Business School students. The tour began with the donor wall, where names of donors were displayed. Following that, the guests were brought to the heritage wall, which displayed artifacts from the NUS Business School’s illustrious past, including a brick from the old building. The tour then moved on to view a seminar room where classes are conducted; energy-saving features have been included in each seminar room in a bid to be eco-conscious. As recognition for its green efforts, the Mochtar Riady Building was awarded the Green Mark Gold Award by the Building and Construction Authority last year.

The Centre for Asset Management Research and Investments (CAMRI) lab was the next destination. Armed with computer terminals, resources and software for investment and research, the CAMRI lab was an ideal playground for students specializing in finance. The tour concluded at the School lounge on the sixth storey where staff take their coffee breaks.

The beneficiaries of the Building Excellence Campaign and Golf Challenges are certainly enjoying the fruits of the donors’ generosity. Ong Hui Ting, a first-year undergraduate student said, “The Mochtar Riady Building is very nice. I feel a sense of belonging, it’s like home. The Café makes the School seem nicer.” Another student, Choo Jun Yu, who is specialising in Management, said, “It’s very conducive for studying, especially the comfortable seminar rooms. I like the outdoor area on level six with the mini-garden.”

As someone who has studied in both the old and new buildings, Meryl Joan Lee, an honours accountancy and university scholars programme undergraduate called the new building “a huge step up”. She highlighted that in the new building, students are sheltered on rainy days, and there are quiet places for studying. Caroline Ng, an honours student specialising in Finance, Marketing and
Management agreed. She added, “It’s very well-equipped, the rooms facilitate interaction, and the CAMRI lab is equipped with more trading portals than the old one.”

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