To give opportunity to every student has been a long-recognised and treasured value at NUS Business School. So it was fitting that Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd, a commercial organisation that shares this vision, came into a partnership with NUS Business School to promote their common goal of enhancing the education of Singapore's future generation of leaders.

29 April 2009 marked a milestone, as the NUS Business School hosted the Mizuho Scholarship and Bursary Cheque Presentation & Donor Appreciation Ceremony. The event was graced by 30 distinguished guests, which included NUS staff members, Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd, Singapore Branch representatives, and NUS alumni.

A cheque for a grand total of $312,786.06 was presented by Mr Kosuke Nakamura, Executive Officer and General Manager, Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd, Singapore Branch to the NUS Business School Dean and Stephen Riady Distinguished Professor, Professor Bernard Yeung.

This is a significant progression from the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two parties in July last year, towards the establishment of bursaries, scholarships and the initiation of other related collaborations.

Inside the cosy confines of the exquisite Nexus at University Hall, Professor Bernard Yeung made his address to the audience.

Professor Yeung was deep in his appreciation of Mizuho's generous contribution of more than $300,000 in a “time of financial uncertainty”.

Said Prof Yeung, “This is a strong indication that, like us, Mizuho values education and believes in contributing to society.”

Prof Yeung recalled how during his days as a student, he was the grateful beneficiary of a scholarship just like the ones Mizuho is helping to fund. He shared that being poor then, he often had “less than a few hundred dollars for the whole school term”.

“When I received a much-needed scholarship, I felt an immense relief and had the freedom to solely focus on my studies,” said the Dean. “I also remembered how grateful I was when I secured a research
internship during my summer break – the timing was perfect as I was eager to look for a summer job. It gave me the opportunity to learn as well as get paid.”

Echoing Prof Yeung’s sentiment, Mr Nakamura expressed his understanding for the mounting challenges facing university students today as “the expectations from professors and parents are enormous”. Mr Nakamura acknowledged that students who hailed from lower income families faced even greater difficulty as they often had to work part-time in order to support their studies. For Mr Nakamura and the staff at Mizuho, the bursaries and scholarships were a way of doing their “small part to show them we care”.

Said Mr Nakamura, “When we started out, one of my colleagues asked me if we should really establish the Mizuho Scholarship and Bursaries in such economically difficult times. My answer was ‘Yes, because it is in bad times that people need help more badly’. I call this our Mizuho spirit – to be a reliable partner to our stakeholders in both good and bad times.”

In a time of economic downturn, such vigorous support is a much-needed boost for the students. Besides the existing option of deferring payment of school fees, students now have additional help, thanks to the Mizuho bursaries and scholarships. Each bursary is valued at $2,500, and each scholarship valued at $5,000, is to be given out in perpetuity.

Mizuho’s firm belief in the importance of investing in people extends beyond the top management. The staff of Mizuho contributed an impressive $63,000 to the total fund. Said Ms Kelly Chin, a human resource manager at Mizuho: “The staff of Mizuho's Singapore Branch are very familiar in giving in their own staff fund-raising initiatives, but this is the first time that they are giving jointly with the bank.

“Many of the staff are enthusiastic about giving as they can identify with the students’ situations, and know that this is a good and worthy cause to support. The staff also recognise the valuable impact that their contributions would make in the lives of the students.”

The collaboration between NUS Business School and Mizuho is extremely important in more ways than one. Besides the financial aspect, there is also the fact that a strong connection is established between the two parties with future mutually beneficial collaborations in the pipeline, which include more fund contributions and internship opportunities for students.

Associate Professor Quek Ser Aik, Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies, looks forward to the many benefits this would bring to all. A/P Quek said, “With our shared common vision of the value of education, we are certain that more agreements can be arranged which would bring up the standard of education and create more opportunities for the future generation. We are proud to be associated with an organisation that believes strongly in this.”
Similarly, Mr Nakamura believes in NUS Business School’s standing as one of the premier business schools in Asia, and is proud to be associated with such. “What greater satisfaction can there be than for two institutions with a common aim to work together for a better tomorrow,” he said. “It is therefore our privilege and honour to travel with you on this exciting journey as we look forward to many fruitful opportunities of partnership in the years ahead.”

The day concluded with an exclusive tour at the NUS Business School. Guests visited the Hon Sui Sen Memorial Library, where they were given a special viewing of the Hon Sui Sen Room with original furniture and artifacts belonging to its namesake. The guests also visited the School’s Career Services Office, which counsels students in their career choices as well as helps prepare them adequately for interviews and job-hunting with the array of resources made available.

This day proved a chance to iron-clad the relationship between NUS Business School and Mizuho, united in their bid to make a deep difference to deserving students who are set to impact the future.

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