“It’s our motto that all deserving students should not be deprived of an education just because of money, and I think we have achieved that with the help of our alumni,” said Dr Lan Luh Luh, Associate Professor, NUS Business School Department of Business Policy.

On the evening of 10 November 2009, 42 NUS Business School undergraduates were awarded bursaries, valued at $2,500 each, at the NUS Business School Undergraduate Bursary Award Ceremony 2009. Close to 100 people, comprising faculty members, members of the Mandarin alumni, private donors and award recipients, attended the award dinner, which was held at the NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House.

The NUS Business School Undergraduate Bursary Fundraising Project 2009 was initiated and chaired by Mr Peh Chin Hua, executive chairman of White Group and former MP for Jalan Besar GRC. Mr Peh is a graduate of the NUS Business School APEX-C MBA programme.

In a speech delivered in Mandarin, Mr Peh highlighted the difference between bursaries and scholarships. Bursaries are awarded on the basis on need, rather than merit. Scholarships are the converse. Mr Peh discourages his own children from applying for scholarships in order to give needy students a higher chance of receiving them.

Mr Peh urged recipients of the bursaries to give back to society when they are successful. In particular, he urged recipients to give back to the NUS Business School. He said that the relationship between students and the school does not end with graduation. Faculty members, with their wealth of wisdom, continue to be generous with their advice even after students leave the school. Their wisdom, combined with the practical experience that graduates will gain over the years, will propel the graduates to do better in their industries.

Under Mr Peh’s leadership, $440,000 was raised by the NUS Business School alumni and friends. A total of 42 bursaries are awarded in 2009, with the balance of the funds to be disbursed in future years.

One of the donors, Mr Thomas Pek, managing director of Tai Hua Food Industries Pte Ltd, a friend of NUS Business School, made a contribution of $45,000. This business owner felt it is important to support outstanding but needy students because they will be the future leaders of society. Mr Pek

Professor Bernard Yeung, Dean of NUS Business School (First row, centrel, Mr Peh Chin Hua, Bursary Fundraising Project 2009 Chairman (first row, fourth from right)
said that business people who have succeeded because of the support of society should use their wealth to benefit society.

In his address, Professor Bernard Yeung, Dean of NUS Business School thanked the generous donors and echoed Mr Peh’s call. He likened the spirit of the NUS Business School community to that of the salmon, always returning home and making contributions.

Professor Kulwant Singh, Deputy Dean of NUS Business School said, “One way of judging the quality of an institution is by the quality of its alumni.” Professor Singh said that the NUS Business School alumni not only make monetary contributions but also keep a constant lookout for the current students, helping them secure internships and jobs whenever possible. Professor Singh added that the bursaries become great motivators for students to do well.

Mr Eugene Chua, President of the NUS Students’ Business Club 23rd Management Committee, said that one way that recipients can contribute back to the school is by doing well in society and being a brand ambassador for the school among employers.

Dr Lan pointed out that the alumni also support the NUS Business School by having constant dialogues with the school, helping to shape the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the industries.

One award-recipient, Miss Koh Yan Fang, a second-year Finance major, gave a speech to express her gratitude. Miss Koh comes from a family of six. Her father is a fishmonger, whose business has been affected by the economic downturn. Her grandparents are in their 80s and require constant medical care. More than being mere financial aid, the bursary has become a motivating factor for this undergraduate to excel. Her aim is to get a good job after graduation to reduce her family’s financial burden and to give back to society.

Another recipient, Mr Vincent Wong, a third-year Finance major, said that the award will allow him to spend more time on his studies. Vincent said that one’s university days are often the most vibrant and demanding phase throughout one’s education. On top of the already taxing commitments that he has in school, Vincent has had to work part time with a startup company, as well as give private tuition in order to make ends meet.

Being a sportsman gave Vincent the mental discipline to meet all his commitments. However, they undoubtedly cast a great strain on him. He said, “As much as we value the monetary donations, we also value the good intentions and kind thoughts that went through the minds of the donors.”

-END