

# Top specialist schools to add new buzz

**NTU ties up with Cornell's hotel school as part of Singapore's move to attract the best schools in the arts and design**

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NANYANG Technological University (NTU) has tied up with Cornell University in the United States to run post-graduate courses in hotel management, marking the start of a new drive to bring smaller, specialist brand-name schools here.

The Economic Development Board (EDB), which has succeeded in wooing 10 top-ranked universities to set up campuses here, now wants to bring in some of the world's best schools in the arts, design, hotel management and the culinary arts from the US and Europe.

While not yet ready to name names, EDB deputy director (services) Kenneth Tan said that "only the best will do".

Cornell's hotel school in Ithaca, New York, has been ranked regularly as the No 1 hospitality management school.

Among the world's top design schools are the Parsons

School of Design in New York and the London Institute, which includes the London College of Fashion and the Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design.

In the food industry, the Culinary Institute of America and France's Le Cordon Bleu are considered top rank.

The speciality schools are part of a strategy to turn Singapore into an education centre that is not only high quality, but also diversified.

"With these schools, EDB hopes to capture a different group of students in Singapore, the region and the world. These schools will be No 1 or No 2, so they will draw in only the best talents in these fields," Mr Tan said.

The EDB expects that in time, the schools will collaborate in research with other local and foreign institutions and industry.

"In education, quality is everything. It will also give us the edge over other countries which are going after the same pie," he said.

Malaysia and Thailand are

also aiming for a slice of the US\$2.2 trillion (S\$3.8 trillion) world education market.

The Cornell hotel school will offer a joint master's programme with NTU and the degree scroll will carry the American university's name.

Fees will also be the same as in the US — US\$30,000 a year — but students will still find it cheaper to study here because of the lower living costs.

Singapore is also closer to home and more familiar to Asian students. Their being here will also spin off into visits here by family members.

Among those who found the prospect of having top-notch schools here exciting was Cornell alumnus Jennie Chua, president and chief operating officer of Raffles International, who expected industry standards to go up.

"It is the best hotel school, and they are going to draw the best and brightest in hotel management from the region and beyond. There is bound to be a levelling-up effect."

She thought it would be good if those who came here to study could be persuaded to join hotels here.

Fashion designer Benny Ong, a graduate of Central Saint Martins College and whose most famous client was the late Princess Diana, also welcomed the plans but felt that Singapore needed more than good design schools.

"London and New York offer not just the top art or design schools, but also a rich environment for creative talents to feed off from," he said.

"The kind of lifestyle opportunities that a city offers is crucial — be it the arts, museums, restaurants, bookshops or sporting facilities. Singapore has some of this, but it's definitely not enough. All these need to be built up in tandem."