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To: The Faculty of Yale University

From: Richard Levin and Peter Salovey

Prospectus for a liberal arts college in Singapore

Yale was invited more than a year ago by the National University of Singapore (NUS) to help design a new liberal arts college on its campus. In the fall of 2009, three committees of Yale faculty worked to sketch the broad outlines of such an endeavor. The goal was to conceive a new model of residentially-based liberal education to serve all of Asia and prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Yale has now been asked to consider joining with NUS as a full partner to establish Yale-NUS College in Singapore, with an intended opening in the fall of 2013. The College would be a highly selective, small, autonomous school within NUS, with approximately 1000 undergraduate students in its early years. The College would award its degrees through NUS, not Yale. The College's separate governing board, half of which would be comprised of Yale appointees, would have authority over curriculum, faculty appointments, and admissions policies. The cost of establishing and operating the College would be borne by NUS and the government of Singapore, at no financial cost to Yale. Of special concern in an international venture of this type is the degree of academic freedom for faculty and students, which is discussed in more detail below.

Yale has never embarked on a joint project to create an overseas campus bearing its name, but this initiative to establish a Yale-NUS College has special appeal. Because of the significance of this proposition, we are writing at some length to share our current thinking and to invite your counsel.

The Vision and the Proposition

We believe this initiative offers several very important opportunities for us.

First, creating an entirely new liberal arts college in Asia would allow Yale to extend to other parts of the world its long tradition of leadership in shaping liberal education.

Second, the new college could have a profound impact on the development of higher education throughout Asia, where massive investments will be made in universities over the coming decades.

Third, this initiative would permit us to demonstrate once again the powerful synergies, perhaps more fully realized at Yale than anywhere else, between a great liberal arts college and a vibrant research university.

Fourth, creating an entirely new college offers an exciting opportunity to develop a novel curriculum spanning Western and Asian cultures, exploring their similarities and differences, and better preparing students for lifelong learning in an interconnected, interdependent global environment.

Fifth, the college would present an opportunity to export and perhaps improve through redesign Yale's models of residential and extracurricular education.

Finally, we believe that the curricular and extracurricular innovations introduced in the new college not only would influence higher education in Asia, but would also very likely spread back to our own campus and our nation.

It is also pleasing to contemplate that the new college would hire 100 new faculty at a time when job market conditions are limiting the opportunities available to recent Ph.D.s.

It might seem surprising that we would even consider pursuing such an opportunity in our current budgetary environment. But NUS is not looking for Yale to make any financial investment; NUS and Singapore's Ministry of Education will provide the financial support for the undertaking, reimbursing Yale for all costs incurred. Instead, NUS is asking us to share our expertise and leadership in the development and ongoing operation of this new college. Yale appointees would constitute half the College's governing board; we would take the lead in the recruitment of the College's faculty, and we would be jointly responsible for the development of the curriculum, the planning of the residential colleges, and the admissions strategy for recruiting the very best and brightest students throughout Asia and around the world who would be attracted to a liberal arts curriculum.

Early in our history, Yale was at the center of the development of liberal education and the founding of liberal arts colleges throughout the United States. Yale scholars and graduates were the founders or first presidents of Princeton, Columbia, Williams, Swarthmore, Dartmouth, and Middlebury, as well as more than thirty other colleges. And Yale is widely recognized as leading the nation in the conceptualization of liberal education in the early 19th century.

Given this history, if Yale is to engage in the nurturing of higher education abroad, undergraduate education would seem to be a fitting focus. By collaborating in the development of an entirely new liberal arts curriculum for an emergent Asia, Yale could influence the course of 21st century education as profoundly as it influenced education in the 19th century.

There has never been greater need for undergraduate education that cultivates critical inquiry. As we know, the goal of liberal education is not to equip students for a particular career; instead, we encourage students to question relentlessly, to analyze problems carefully, and to evaluate consequences. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the qualities of mind developed through liberal education are perhaps more indispensable than ever in preparing students to understand and appreciate differences across cultures and national boundaries, and to address problems for which there are no easy solutions.

Yet, today, in virtually all of Asia and much of the rest of the world, undergraduates pursue specialized courses of study. Entering students are enrolled immediately to prepare in medicine, law, or a single academic discipline, and the pedagogy, in much of the world, focuses on memorization and mastering a particular body of knowledge. By giving students exposure to multiple disciplinary perspectives, and by steeping them in a pedagogy that encourages independent critical thinking, liberal education can help college graduates contribute most effectively to the economic and social advancement of their nations and facilitate the greater understanding among peoples that is so desperately needed in this century.

The idea of a four-year liberal arts education is gaining momentum in Asia. China and South Korea are already experimenting in this domain. A model college in Singapore, drawing students from throughout Asia, could have a profound influence on the entire region.

Locating a new liberal arts college at NUS also resonates with Yale's distinctive history of maintaining a focus on excellence in undergraduate education within the context of an outstanding research university with an array of professional schools. As at Yale, students in the new college would benefit from opportunities to work with faculty on research projects, and they would have access to courses offered by professional school faculty. Also, because English is an official language of Singapore and the language of instruction at NUS, we avoid the language barrier raised in pursuing such a project elsewhere in East Asia. Operating in the English language will also make it easier to recruit faculty with experience in liberal arts education, as there are few examples outside the English-speaking world.

In designing a new liberal arts college, NUS is especially attracted by what Yale offers undergraduates through the remarkable strength of its residential colleges and its rich array of extracurricular activities. Creating something entirely new offers us the possibility of improving some things we already do very well. For example, as robust as our co-curricular programs are, they rarely intersect with the formal curriculum. Designing a new college from scratch would allow us to consider how the rich experiences undergraduates gain from their leadership and service opportunities in student organizations might be more fully integrated into course work, writing assignments, or public-speaking opportunities in a way that might encourage deeper reflection and a more coherent approach to character development. It also would allow us to optimize the involvement of residential colleges in the educational process.

Such innovations, both extracurricular and curricular, that a new liberal arts college might yield have the potential to be adopted elsewhere, not only throughout Asia. A fresh approach on a new continent might result in surprising and powerful improvements that we might bring home to our work in New Haven, as well as to other colleges and universities in this country.

Creating a Yale-affiliated college or school outside this country would be a bold move. But many of our sister institutions already have launched overseas programs and campuses designed to serve students indigenous to the regions in which they are located. For example, Cornell has a Medical School in Qatar, and Johns Hopkins and Nanjing Universities have operated a joint program in international studies for two decades. Georgetown has opened a branch of its School of Foreign Service in the Middle East, and the University of Michigan has a joint institute in engineering with Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

We have been impressed by the efforts of the National University of Singapore to collaborate successfully with leading U.S. universities to create new educational models. For example, the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School has created a new paradigm for medical education for Asia, drawing on the U.S. experience where medicine is a graduate rather than a baccalaureate program. Duke's President Richard Brodhead (former Dean of Yale College) has been very pleased with the results of this joint School. NUS also has had a partnership with MIT for over a decade, including dual masters degree programs in several engineering disciplines. MIT President Susan Hockfield (former Provost of Yale) has nothing but the highest regard for MIT's engagements in Singapore

and for her colleagues at NUS. Finally, NUS has created a world-class conservatory of music in partnership with the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins, one of the best in the world. In short, NUS has a proven record of successful collaborations with institutions we know well.

Unlike a number of these overseas programs in which the U.S. partner grants degrees, we would not be issuing a Yale degree to graduates of the new college. The degree would be awarded by the National University of Singapore, even though the new college would have the word Yale in its name: Yale-NUS College.

The Planning Process to Date

Initial visit to Singapore. In late June 2009, the two of us – along with Professors Charles Bailyn, Deborah Davis, Edward Kamens, and Anthony Kronman – visited the National University of Singapore for exploratory conversations with its leadership and a few of its faculty. We were well acquainted with NUS because it has had an affiliation with the Yale College Summer Session for several years, and it participates in the 10-member International Alliance of Research Universities, which includes Oxford, Cambridge, Tokyo, Peking, Australian National, and Yale, among others. We were very impressed by the seriousness of NUS' interest in creating an outstanding liberal arts college and how the NUS leadership viewed Yale College as the guiding model. Our delegation agreed that we should consult with NUS to help plan the new college, but leave open, without commitment, the possibility of becoming a full partner in its creation and operation.

Faculty committees. During the fall semester 2009, 19 members of the Yale faculty were actively involved in three committees to support this planning process. One committee focused on conceptualizing an innovative curriculum; a second focused on designing residential colleges and extracurricular life “from scratch,” and the third studied how an outstanding faculty might be recruited. Parallel NUS committees worked on the same topics, and NUS representatives came to campus in November for two days of conversations with the Yale committees. The highlights of the committees' recommendations are as follows:

- The Curriculum Committee, co-chaired by Tony Kronman and Haun Saussy, recognized that the final design of a curriculum must await the hiring and participation of the inaugural faculty of the new college. But there was excitement in developing preliminary ideas for a new general education program for the freshman and sophomore years. It would be shaped explicitly to place Western and Asian perspectives in conversation and to engage all students in serious and sustained study of science as well as the humanities and social sciences. In the second two years of study, every student would be expected to conduct a significant and fully funded research project and have the opportunity and financial support to go abroad for study, research, or an internship. It was underscored that the new college would be alert to introducing innovations in pedagogy and would also employ new technology in exciting ways – possibly by connecting its students to classrooms in New Haven and elsewhere around the world.
- The Residential College and Co-curricular Life Committee was co-chaired by Ed Kamens and Linda Lorimer. The committee's recommendation for the creation of a comprehensive residential college system encompassing the entire student body – the first of this scope in Asia – has been fully embraced in Singapore. There would be three residential colleges of 330 students each, with space for the subsequent addition of a fourth. These facilities

would be adjacent to the main campus of NUS so students could take full advantage of the University; for example, specialized courses, research labs, and a two-million volume library would be available on the main campus. The college would attract top students from Singapore and around the world, particularly from Asia. There is agreement that the new college should work much more systematically to link living and learning than many of the leading liberal arts institutions in the United States. For example, all students will be guaranteed an overseas experience, and they will be required to reflect and report on those experiences in colloquia in their residential colleges. A program modeled on Yale's Mellon Forums, where students share their senior research projects with one another, would be an integral part of the collegiate program. Classrooms would be located within the residential colleges as would faculty offices, and there would be more faculty living in the residential colleges than at Yale, with room for visiting scholars as well.

- The Faculty Development Committee, co-chaired by Charles Bailyn and Peter Salovey, agreed that the quality of the faculty is critical to the success of the new college. Although we anticipate that few Yale faculty would want to go to Singapore for extended periods, we expect a number of colleagues would be interested in teaching for a year or a semester, and many more might be attracted by the possibility of teaching one of the two-week mini-courses envisioned in the new curriculum for August or May. We are delighted that several members of the faculty have already expressed interest, and we hope some of you who are now learning about this possibility will signal an interest if we decide to proceed.

The bulk of the faculty would need to be recruited externally, and perhaps Yale's most substantial contribution to the new enterprise would be helping to select and recruit the faculty, and sustain its quality over time. Given current job market conditions, we would expect to find a ready supply of outstanding talent to fill approximately 100 new ladder faculty positions. NUS was happy to accept our suggestion that Yale chair the search committees for the college's initial faculty; both Yale and NUS faculty will be on those committees. We are delighted that Charles Bailyn, who has been both Chair and DUS of Yale's Astronomy Department and who studied at Yale as an undergraduate, is prepared to serve as the inaugural Dean of Faculty, lead recruitment, and be in residence in Singapore for the year the college opens. He also is willing to chair the search committee for the new science faculty. Pericles Lewis, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, would chair the committee to recruit the new humanities faculty. If we proceed, we hope soon to identify a colleague to lead recruiting efforts in the social sciences.

The Faculty Development Committee also envisioned research grants and post-doctoral fellowships as part of the design, as well as a generous leave policy, since it would be important to recruit faculty who are active in scholarship as well as being outstanding teachers, and who wish to remain connected to colleagues around the world.

The three faculty committees that worked last fall recommended that Yale consider a full partnership with NUS in establishing the new college, but they shared our view that Yale should embrace a full affiliation only if we had assurances that (1) the new college would be funded at a level to ensure true excellence, (2) Yale would have a significant role in governance, faculty recruitment, and the development of the curriculum, and (3) academic freedom of the faculty and students, both in scholarship and in the classroom, was protected. We return to these issues below.

Consultation with faculty. In April 2010, we held a series of four meetings to take counsel from approximately 50 colleagues, mostly but not exclusively from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. These sessions were most helpful in identifying a number of the issues we have pursued in discussions with NUS this summer.

Negotiations with the National University of Singapore. Informed by the views of the faculty committees and those consulted in April, we proceeded this summer to work with our colleagues at NUS to negotiate a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will provide the basis for a Final Agreement if we decide to proceed with this ambitious venture. The MOU was signed on September 10, when Singapore's Minister of Education visited our campus. As we explain below, we will now engage in a process of wider consultation with the Yale faculty before determining whether we should proceed to a Final Agreement.

Issues for Special Focus

Funding. The government of Singapore has approved a very generous allocation to subsidize the college's operating expenses. Tuition and fees would be comparable to that of U.S. state universities, and need-based financial aid will be provided. In addition, the College would reimburse Yale for all expenses, including compensation to departments and programs for replacing the teaching of Yale faculty who are actively involved in the initial planning of the new college. Similarly, NUS would cover the salaries of Yale faculty who spend time teaching in Singapore, releasing funds to support their departments or programs at Yale.

Preliminary planning is under way for construction of the college's facilities, and we expect the government's final decision on the construction budget by the end of the calendar year or early in 2011. All indications are positive, but we have made clear to our colleagues in Singapore that we will not proceed unless the budget is adequate to ensure that the residential colleges, classrooms, labs, faculty offices, and student activity space are designed to a standard worthy of a world-class institution.

Yale Leadership. We are very comfortable with progress on this issue. Yale will lead in searching for the inaugural faculty. As mentioned previously, Yale would have half of the seats on the governing board. One of the initial responsibilities of the governing board would be to appoint the President of the college, following an international search. As suggested by faculty colleagues with whom we met in the spring, we would, at regular intervals, undertake a robust process of institutional assessment conducted jointly by Yale and NUS, and there would be an ongoing consultative committee comprised of Yale and NUS faculty, who would advise the President of the new college about issues that will inevitably arise.

Academic Freedom. A major focus for us since the spring has been developing an understanding of the parameters of academic freedom in Singapore, a concern shared by many of the Yale faculty with whom we have consulted. We have been grappling with the key question of whether liberal education can be successful where there is not the opportunity for public demonstrations as we know them, where defamation laws are much broader than they are in the United States, and where the popular writings of academics addressed to public audiences may be subject to such laws.

Our review to date shows clearly that faculty in Singapore publish scholarship on very controversial topics, and they are free to teach any topic and share their perspectives in the classroom. The student newspaper publishes articles challenging the University administration's decisions.

Although government policies may be subjected to critical discussion, the criminal and civil laws of Singapore impose constraints on the freedom to publish articles questioning the integrity of Singapore's institutions and officials. We were greatly concerned this summer when a British author was arrested for challenging the integrity of the judiciary in his book about the death penalty in Singapore. This gave us reason to inquire even more deeply to understand how free faculty and students would be to express themselves in scholarly publications, in the classroom, and on campus.

We consulted with attorneys in Singapore and had numerous conversations with our counterparts at NUS. We also took counsel from our alumnus, Richard Revesz, who is the Dean of the NYU Law School. NYU has had a dual Master's Degree in law at NUS in Singapore since 2007. Dean Revesz reports that the NYU faculty believe that they are not constrained in what and how they teach, and they do not feel inhibited in what they can publish in their recognized areas of expertise. For example, a member of the NYU Law faculty taught a course this summer on the death penalty. Members of the NUS law faculty have written on subjects ranging from criticism of defamation jurisprudence in Singapore to the selection process for the Singaporean president. As Yale faculty also suggested in the spring, we asked whether the humanities faculty at NUS published on emerging topics such as queer theory, and, indeed, some do.

We also took counsel on this issue from members of the Yale faculty with expertise on the subject of academic freedom, as well as those familiar with Singapore's culture and institutions. We were pleased, after considerable discussion with our NUS colleagues and the Ministry of Education, that, should we proceed, they are prepared to include the following provision concerning academic freedom in a Final Agreement:

"The College upholds the principles of academic freedom and open inquiry, essential core values in higher education of the highest caliber. Faculty and students in the College will be free to conduct scholarship and research and publish the results, and to teach in the classroom and express themselves on campus, bearing in mind the need to act in accordance with accepted scholarly and professional standards and the regulations of the College."

It is important to note that, in the last sentence, "scholarly and professional standards" refer to such things as scientific integrity, and "regulations of the College" would include the prohibition of sexual harassment and defamatory language concerning race or religion. Respect for racial and religious differences is an important cultural norm in Singapore. Also, although it is true that Yale's policies on free expression do not prohibit "hate speech," we should recognize that policies governing such speech are common among our peer institutions in the United States.

The language leaves open certain operational issues about how academic freedom actually functions for faculty and students in Singapore. These issues largely concern the application of the general criminal and civil laws of Singapore. As noted, there is not the opportunity for public demonstrations as we know them in the United States. The law governing defamation is much

more constraining than ours, as is the law governing sedition. Those who decide to go to Singapore to teach or to study will need to understand these differences, just as those who currently go to the Yale-Peking University undergraduate program or the medical school's new research program with King Saud University in Saudi Arabia have to understand and digest the different rules of those countries. We know that there are some in our community who believe that Yale should not have programs in places where the form of government and the laws regulating behavior are significantly different from our own. We respect that point of view; we heard it presented articulately before we established the Yale-Peking University Undergraduate Program when there were heartfelt concerns about Yale associating its name with an on-going educational program in that country.

We believe that if Yale is to engage in the world in ways that may shape the global future, we should recognize that many nations live by different traditions and norms. Despite obvious constraints on the scope of public discourse, our investigation shows that there is real opportunity for robust inquiry and discussion on the NUS campus. The limitations we would need to accept, given Singaporean tradition and law, have to be weighed against the opportunity we have to influence over time the curriculum and pedagogy in a major part of the world.

Non-discrimination. Our partners in Singapore have agreed that the new college would have non-discrimination policies governing employment, admissions, and educational opportunities that would be fully consistent with Yale's.

Concluding Reflections and A Request for Your Views

There is no urgency for Yale to venture abroad with a new campus now, but we do believe it is inevitable that the world's leading universities by the middle of this century will have international campuses. Without question, universities in the United States and the United Kingdom currently dominate higher education and attract the lion's share of outstanding students who leave their countries to study elsewhere. But this condition will not persist indefinitely. A number of countries, notably China, India and Singapore, see that education and research are the twin engines of economic growth and social advancement, and they are investing very heavily in strengthening their universities. If we are to serve the world as successfully in the 21st century as we have served our nation in the 20th, a greater global presence will be required.

Establishing a new college bearing Yale's name in Singapore would be a big step. If we proceed, we would not be making any financial commitment and, indeed, we would be reimbursed for costs incurred. But we recognize that there are opportunity costs in terms of time that will be required of some faculty leaders. Before the Yale Corporation makes a final decision, we must be confident that Singapore's government is willing to make sufficient investment in the new campus. We expect this issue to be resolved by the end of this calendar year or early in 2011. But we also want very much to assess the reactions of our faculty to this ambitious proposition. Your insights and advice are very important to us as we contemplate this undertaking.

If you have ideas or concerns about this initiative, or if you have any interest in getting involved should we decide to proceed, please write to us. If you wish to learn more, please join us in one of two discussions open to all ladder faculty: on Wednesday, September 22 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. in Luce Hall auditorium, or on Wednesday, September 29 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. in Room 114 Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall. We look forward to hearing from you.