Regardless of faculty, department, or major, being a member of our college is an opportunity for you to grow as an individual while discovering more about yourself and those around you – and doing so within a community that is itself always evolving.
Core to college values is an open-mindedness and curiosity that transcends any one interest or mode of thinking. Tembusu collegians are not narrow partisans of their particular disciplines. Many of the fellows of the college research, write, and teach in the multi-disciplinary field called Science, Technology, & Society (STS), which seeks to explain how society, culture, and history, among other factors, are bound up in the practices of science, technology, and medicine. This is now one of the best-established, and we believe, important, multi-disciplinary projects of the 21st century, as it seeks to bridge gaps restricting our sense of who we are as individuals and societies. Other multi-disciplinary projects also find a ready home within the college.

**ENGGAGING THE WORLD**

Our Rector, Professor Tommy Koh, declared early in the college’s history that he intended to “Bring the world to Tembusu, and bring Tembusu to the world.” Tembusu has since become a college with a global reputation, one that aspires to make its members — whether local or foreign — feel part of a global community. That means, among other things, acting and productively cooperating with those different than ourselves. Each year we take in a cohort of foreign exchange students from a wide variety of countries, and likewise encourage our Singaporean students to spend time abroad, either through university programmes or special opportunities we have created as a college. Our fellows also span the globe in their national origin and life-time experiences. And, of course, having Singapore’s Ambassador-at-Large as our Rector means that diplomats and figures of international reputation are regular visitors to the college.

**PROMOTING MULTI-DISCIPLINARITY**

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HELPING PEOPLE AND SPECIES IN NEED

Human and animal societies are under great stress in the 21st century, and as privileged and knowledgeable people it is our responsibility, if not obligation, to help where and when we can. Being named for a tree and containing houses named after endangered animals, Tembusu College feels a special commitment to biodiversity, the natural environment, and sustainability. This inculcates a particular awareness among our students of the dangers of habitat loss, the illegal trade in wildlife, and the ethics of human-animal relations — all highly relevant issues in Southeast Asia. Our students are also involved in projects, both within Singapore and in neighbouring countries, dedicated to actively helping the vulnerable — especially children and the elderly.

DEVELOPING CREATIVITY

Tembusu is a lively place for the arts, and is full of people who are nurturing an interest, skill, and talent in that direction. From music to dance to photography and theatre, the college creates space for — and encourages self-discovery through — the arts as part of everyday life. We also sponsor artists-in-residence, teach a course on mural painting, sponsor open-mike performances, and maintain a fully-equipped music room.

These elements of our ethos are not discrete — we strive as far as possible to activate them in combination. That can mean, for example, promoting an art project which helps conserve endangered species, mounting a multi-disciplinary course on a global problem which can be approached from various perspectives, or planning a college trip abroad to engage with underprivileged children in a local school or orphanage.
What you'll encounter at Tembusu College is a community — and a space — where people and ideas come together.

It’s a place where you’ll meet others who are different, unique, and singular in their own right. A place where you’ll have the opportunity to collaborate with people who love what they do and are good at it. Above all, you’ll explore and develop yourself, and your personal interests, whatever they may be — all whilst living and learning with those around you.
Tembusu College has a global reputation in the multi-disciplinary field called Science Technology and Society (STS).

Many of our faculty study and teach how society, culture, and politics affect our technological choices and knowledge about nature, and how these, in turn, affect society, culture, and politics. STS at Tembusu covers a wide variety of topics, such as the internet and media, concepts of time, artificial intelligence, gaming, medical innovations, climate change and natural disasters, criminal science, natural history, etc. As a bridge between the STEM disciplines with the humanities and social sciences, our orientation to STS goes beyond considering the ‘scientific’, the ‘cultural’, the ‘technical’, and the ‘social’, as inherently separate spheres, to considering how they come together to make the modern world.

No matter how broad a theme is, it will never be able to appeal to the interests of every single student. So, we also stay open to possibilities — keeping true to our motto. Thus, in addition to STS themed courses we also teach and run programmes in mural painting, critical theory, negotiation, leadership, and other themes that our fellows are interested in.
Most degree programmes at NUS require you to read five modules outside your home department. This is where the certificate-granting University Town College Programme (UTCP) fits in — four modules you read over your two years at Tembusu College fulfil these General Education requirements. The fifth satisfies another graduation requirement, an Unrestricted Elective (UE).

The classes you will take at Tembusu College contribute to your existing NUS graduation requirements, so are not 'extra' courses.
In your first year, you'll read one Junior Seminar and an Ideas & Exposition Module (IEM). In your second, two Senior Seminars and a second IEM.

The major difference between college classes and others lies in the learning experience they offer — you'll have the opportunity to engage in small group seminar-style learning that's closely integrated with residential life; and upon completion of the UTCP you'll be provided with a certificate in addition to your degree.

**JUNIOR & SENIOR SEMINARS**

Our seminars bring together students and fellows from different backgrounds and disciplines. The result is an interaction among participants that is steeped in diversity and an array of ideas that open new perspectives on the world. Small classes — of up to 15 persons only — let us spend time listening to each other as individuals, and give us more time to develop, discuss, and play with concepts and ideas.

The forms of the Junior and Senior Seminars are virtually identical — they are interactive, discussion-based, and continually assessed without any sort of final exam. The only difference is that Junior Seminars are taught by individual fellows — and are thus structured around their interests and specialisations — while Senior Seminars are taught by two or more fellows, around a common topic that invites multi-disciplinary input and perspectives.

**IDEAS & EXPOSITION MODULES**

Run by the Centre for English Language Communication, these classes are based on a diverse range of engaging topics taught by writing specialists. Particular attention is paid to honing your writing, critical thinking, and communication skills, thereby helping you better develop and express your thoughts, especially in the genre of academic writing.
Having a formal curriculum is an important facet of our college, but it only encompasses one aspect of education.

From the beginning, we’ve paid as much attention to developing an informal, non-compulsory, ‘out of classroom’ curriculum, creating signature activities defining the college experience. While our dining hall and many other spaces within the college provide room for conversations and informal encounters between our students and fellows, this deeper level of engagement requires planning and resources. Thus, a big part of the college experience happens in this ‘middle space’ between faculty-led seminars and entirely student-led activities (such as clubs, interest groups, and the like).
What we have created in this space is true out-of-classroom teaching: structured education-centred experiences designed either by fellows — in areas they are personally interested and invested in — or ideally by fellows together with a group of students with similar interests.

Some examples include:

**MASTER’S TEAS**

Over the semester, you’ll be regularly invited to the Master’s Common Lounge, a cozy room on the 3rd floor of the college, to meet and chat with guests — both local and international. Our guest list places a value on diversity and typically includes politicians, diplomats, artists, writers, poets, scientists, and activists. The only thing we ask of guests is that they bring something interesting to our community. Hosted by the Master of the College, Associate Professor Gregory Clancey, these sessions open the possibility for you to meet, mingle, and hear from our guests in an informal, small-group, setting over cake and tea.
FELLOWS AND STUDENT’S TEAS

In addition to teas sponsored by the Master, students and fellows alike are able to invite, and host, peers and guests — anybody they believe can add to, and enliven, the college community. Fellows often invite the whole college to have tea with guests they bring to their seminars, while student tea guests have ranged from interesting and successful alumni, to CEOs of start-up businesses, local social activists and entertainment personalities.

READING PODS

Reading Pods are opportunities for you to read, discuss, and respond to a book that interests you with a small group of like-minded readers. With students and fellows leading several pods every semester, each is a small and intimate engagement (usually capped at 5 people who come together around a book). Free from the traditional teacher-student model of the classroom, sessions are collaboratively structured — with the guiding principle being developing relational thoughts through a deep, close, reading of the text.

TRIPS

Echoing the promise of our Rector, Professor Tommy Koh, to bring Tembusu to the world, members of our community are voracious travellers. And not just for vacations and exchange programmes. Some of your seminars in the college entail fieldtrips to various parts of Singapore, as well as a few of our off-shore islands. You can also choose to be a part of the NUS Study Trips for Engagement and Enrichment (STEER), led by our fellows, which have taken members of the college to Komodo Island, Borneo, and various cities in China, amongst other places.

A significant proportion of our community also contributes to outreach activities in neighbouring countries: these include, orphanages in West Timor and Siem Riep, an elephant rescue centre in Chiang Mai, and several NGOs in Phnom Penh.
The flagship event of our college — the Tembusu Forum — takes place twice a semester, and is hosted and moderated by our Rector, Professor Tommy Koh.

Compelling, important, and occasionally controversial, issues — often suggested by students — are taken up, discussed, and debated by eminent personalities at the forefront of their respective fields. Hearing the different views of experts will help you develop and expand your own thoughts on the crucial issues of the day. The forum is also one of the few of its kind, as all questions to our prominent guests are directed by students, allowing you to hone your public speaking skills.
Students selected to stay in the college for a third year continue to explore their potentialities — primarily through our 'Out-of-Classroom Learning' programme.

In the spirit of being part of The Home of Possibilities, you’re also encouraged to make the most of your extended stay by engaging in self-directed projects on something you care deeply about — while interacting with, and being supported by, other members of the college community.

A small number of students will have the opportunity to be with the college for a fourth year. There is no set programme — you’ll have the chance to craft one for yourself based on your own targets, goals, and objectives. During this year, you can choose to be mentored by a fellow or staff member of the college, depending on your interests and needs. As a senior member of the community, you will also be responsible for imparting the values of the college to newer Tembusians, challenging and empowering them to step up and try new things.
Throughout your stay with us, you'll be part of one of the five houses in the college.

Named after endangered Asian animal species in their indigenous languages, Gaja, Shan, Ora, Tancho, and Ponya are smaller, more intimate communities within the larger college community; each house has its own traditions and sub-cultures — ones that you’ll experience, and perhaps also influence.

As part of our ethos, the Rector's Shield is annually rotated amongst the various houses in order to bring awareness to the plight of one of the five endangered animals the houses are named after. During that year, it is the responsibility of the house to remind the college community of the difficulties facing its namesake species, and educate us — through various activities, and initiatives — on what can be done in order to help in a concrete way. This usually culminates in a college-sponsored field trip to encounter the animal in its habitat, along with those individuals, groups, and organisations who are attempting to conserve it.
ROOMS
You’ll have your own room which comes furnished with everything you might need to work and rest in comfort. Whilst all the rooms are identically designed, you have the choice of a room along the corridor, or within a six-room apartment which comes with an additional living area to relax and chat with suite-mates.

DINING HALL
Eating together is a significant part of communal living. Breakfasts and dinners are included in your college fee to ensure you start and end your day well. Upon entering the Dining Hall, you’ll immediately notice the tables are arranged for conversation — often the most enjoyable part of eating. This is where you unwind and recuperate with friends, fellows, and guests, before and after classes. You can be assured you’ll never be starved — of choice, at least.

FORMAL DINNER
At least once a semester, the Master of the College hosts a formal dinner, which is an opportunity for the entire community to come together. And perhaps more importantly, it is a chance for you to dress up and look glamorous.
READING ROOM

The Reading Room is a beautifully furnished space that features a wide variety of books across a range of genres and disciplines — the perfect place to spend a leisurely evening. Reading Pods, amongst many other events centred around books, are often held here as well.

THE ATLAS

Even after you’ve graduated, Tembusu will always be a place you can return to. The Atlas is a room dedicated to our alumni — whom we often invite to the college for sharing sessions with current students. This is also a place where alumni can hold gatherings to catch up with old friends over an easy evening.

THE BOX OFFICE

If you’re interested in coffee, film, or just looking for a place to chill, you’ll definitely want to head over to The Box Office. Whether you want to relax, catch up and bond over coffee, or a movie (or two!), there’s no better place than in Tembusu’s own home cinema.

THE ABBEY

Go to the Abbey and you’ll find it equipped with guitars, drums, keyboards — everything you might possibly need to make music. Get together with your friends; jam and sing as much as you want.

THE BLANK CANVAS

As its name suggests, the Blank Canvas is a place for creative and artistic minds. Be it photography or other visual arts, it is the place where students can explore new ideas, materials, and techniques. Just let your creative juices flow.
Interest groups are where you can cultivate your hobbies, develop your skills, and most importantly, play, without the pressure of any sort of point system.

Join as many as you wish: we have, amongst more than 50 others, an acclaimed acapella group, an award-winning inter-collegiate debate team, various sports and musical groups, and a number of dance and theatre ensembles.

Or, if you fancy doing something entirely different, just start your own.

We also have several groups that embrace the call of helping others and are concerned with positively affecting, and changing, communities both locally and abroad.
To join the University Town College Programme at Tembusu College, you will have to submit an essay with your application. We will contact you to arrange an interview if you are shortlisted. The interview is an important moment as it is a chance for us to get to know you better and learn about you as an individual — as you also learn about us a little more. This is also an opportune moment for you to ask any questions you might have about the programme, or college life in general.

We are open to students from all faculties, and admissions are based on four criteria: your essay, interview, interests and talents, and willingness to contribute to the college community.

For students who require financial aid, grants, scholarships, and bursary schemes are available.

Admissions open in March.

For more information on application procedures, visit www.tembusu.nus.edu.sg/admissions

Please go to our website at www.tembusu.nus.edu.sg for the most up-to-date information.