

## Global links

Cementing its reputation as an academic institution of note is NUS' role as chairman of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, which meets in Singapore this week



# Leading light

UNIVERSITY presidents from 50 top universities are in Singapore this week for the Association of American Universities-Association of Pacific Rim Universities (AAU-APRU) Presidents Roundtable.

Hosted by the National University of Singapore (NUS), it will take place over two days, ahead of APRU's 9th Annual Presidents Meeting, also hosted by NUS.

Said APRU's Secretary General, Associate Professor Lawrence Loh, who is also Vice President, University and Global Relations, at NUS: "This is the first time that the AAU

is coming to Asia for an APRU event. It is also the first time that we will see participation from the Association of Indian Universities (AIU)."

Established in 1997, APRU is a consortium of leading universities in the Pacific Rim. The AAU and AIU are similar organisations, with member universities from North America and India respectively.

The APRU Roundtable is a platform for participants to exchange ideas and network, Prof Loh said.

"Events such as these help forge a bridge across the Pacific Rim and promote global understanding. University

leaders play an important part of building understanding."

Currently APRU has 36 member universities, which Prof Loh described as the region's "crème de la crème".

He added: "This year, there are 31 APRU presidents coming to Singapore. These are the thought leaders and opinion shapers, the movers and shakers of education. Many also advise their government leaders on important issues. When they come to

Beyond Singapore: Ms Zubaidah Mohamed Ramdzan and Mr Peh Buey Feng (above) both spent time in the United States as part of their NUS curriculum. See page 7.

Singapore, they get a feel of the place. NUS benefits in terms of its global standing and visibility and Singapore benefits because it helps strengthen our position as an education hub and as a dynamic global city."

NUS' leadership of APRU denotes endorsement and recognition from member universities, Prof Loh said.

"We are in the league of the best universities. NUS commands peer-to-peer respect. This opens a lot of doors not just for our faculty, but also our students, who benefit from more global opportunities such as overseas attachments," he said.

University presidents will share ideas at the Roundtable's plenary sessions on the theme, Globalisation and Universities. Other highlights include a dialogue session with Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, as well as a Question and Answer session with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Participants will also be attending a welcome dinner hosted by President S.R. Nathan.

APRU university presidents will

stay on for the Annual Presidents Meeting tomorrow. On the agenda is the yearly bid to be the next host of the Presidents Meeting, usually a keenly contested affair because of the "prestige and visibility" associated with it.

The association spearheads a range of programmes for various target groups, right down to the undergraduate level.

Driving the agenda for APRU is the secretariat, which works on this principle: It is about what members can get from APRU that they cannot get themselves.

This approach has translated into symposiums on important current issues such as the Asian financial crisis and communicable diseases. This September, in Kyoto, the topic will be earthquake hazards.

APRU events are also an efficient way for universities to garner support for joint initiatives, explained Prof Loh.

"I am looking forward to the success of the Roundtable and the Annual Presidents Meeting. It's a significant accomplishment because I don't think we've ever had so many presidents from universities of this quality in Singapore before," he said.

### APRU Members

- Australian National University
- University of Sydney
- University of British Columbia
- University of Chile
- Fudan University
- Hong Kong University of Science & Technology
- Peking University
- Tsinghua University
- University of Science & Technology of China
- Zhejiang University
- National Taiwan University
- University of Indonesia
- Keio University
- Kyoto University
- University of Tokyo
- Waseda University
- Seoul National University
- University of Malaya
- National Autonomous University of Mexico
- University of Auckland
- University of the Philippines
- Far Eastern National University
- National University of Singapore
- Chulalongkorn University
- California Institute of Technology
- Stanford University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of Oregon
- University of Southern California
- University of Washington