

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – National University of Singapore Partnership to Transform Pharmacy Practice and Education Globally

UNC-Chapel Hill has a strong commitment to develop and foster international partnerships to achieve its core missions. For example, *UNC Global* is a major initiative of UNC-Chapel Hill to affect positive change in the lives of people around the world through its leadership in global research, teaching and service. As another example, *The University of North Carolina Tomorrow* was adopted by the UNC Board of Governors in 2008 and serves as UNC's road map to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society in a 21st century knowledge-based global economy.

With the elevation of the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy's reputation as the leading Pharmacy School in the U.S. (ranked 2nd by U.S. News and World Report, 2nd in AACP ranking of U.S. pharmacy schools based on total federal funding), many government and private sector entities have invited the School to establish an academic and research program in various countries (e.g. UAE, South Korea, Saudi Arabia). In assessing the rationale for developing an international presence, the School has recognized the critical role played by students and faculty of international origin, specifically Asia, in the success of the School and broadly in the success of the pharmaceutical and biotech industry. Based on these considerations, internationalization has been made an integral part of the School's Strategic Plan.

Over the past three years, the School has embarked on extensive due diligence to identify potential partners in Asia based on specific criteria that were considered important by the School for any international initiative. This process led to our initial overture to the leadership of the National University of Singapore (NUS) about collaboration on graduate education and research in Singapore. Briefly, the selection of NUS and Singapore was based on the following criteria:

- NUS is a world-class university with a history of successful partnerships with UNC-Chapel Hill
- Singapore provides a strategic location to create a hub for enhancing our influence in Asia
- Minimal language barrier and multi-ethnic culture of Singapore is well-suited for faculty and student exchanges that are critical for a successful partnership
- A stable government as well as strategic governance and laws of Singapore (e.g. strong IP protection) are a magnet for many international educational institutions and businesses.

After many discussions and face-to-face meetings between the leaderships of the two institutions, among UNC-Chapel Hill and NUS faculty, and with the Singapore government ministries and agencies, the Singapore Ministries of Health and Education have invited the School to submit a proposal to create a world-class pharmacy education, training, and research program in collaboration with NUS. The Singapore government will recognize that the entire cost for establishing and sustaining the Program must be borne by Singapore. A 3-year UNC-NUS PharmD-International Program will be developed in collaboration with NUS and in close consultation with the UNC-Chapel Hill campus leadership. The Program will be designed as a contractual ~\$75 million 7-year (initial term) partnership that will have UNC faculty and staff, professional and graduate students, and post-doctoral trainees. In addition to the UNC-NUS PharmD-International joint degree program (which would require BOG approval), the proposal will include establishment of research centers of excellence in Pharmacy Practice, Pharmacy

Outcomes, and Educational Innovation, and a UNC PhD program in translational clinical sciences and pharmaceutical outcomes. This endeavor will make the School a global player in pharmacy education and healthcare research that will benefit patients everywhere including in North Carolina, create a brand-name for the School and UNC in Asia, and open up opportunities for UNC and the State to forge partnerships in Asia.

The UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy is exploring this international option with a clear understanding that its commitments to Elizabeth City and Asheville will be fully honored and very likely enhanced by this opportunity. Since the joint program would be fully funded by Singapore it would not compete with resources for these NC initiatives.