

Chinese business group doubles scholarship fund

THE Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce Foundation has doubled its scholarship funding to three local universities and Malay-Muslim self-help group Yayasan Mendaki.

From this year, the foundation will also be giving new scholarships to the recently-established Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD).

It will commit a total of \$480,000 to the four universities and Mendaki over the next three years, trumping the \$210,000 it gave out in 2010.

The universities' leaders and the foundation's vice-chairman Zhong Sheng Jian signed the agreement at a ceremony yesterday. "We want to... support leaders who will contribute to society in future," foundation chairman Thomas Chua said.

The scholarships are mostly given to those in business or Chinese studies, although Mendaki is free to distribute money to outstanding Singaporean graduates in the Malay-Muslim community.

Previously the foundation determined amounts for each scholarship. This time, universities are allowed to propose these amounts and use the funds for other needs, such as research and travel grants.

Under the new scheme, scholarship amounts for NUS, NTU and SMU have doubled to \$40,000 annually. Mendaki will receive \$20,000 a year, up from \$10,000. The SUTD will receive \$20,000 a year. None of the scholarships carry bonds.

SUTD associate provost Pey Kin Leong said he hopes new ties with the foundation "will allow our students to gain better career opportunities in China". The foundation is a subsidiary of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It has been giving out scholarships since 1997 and has supported Mendaki since 2004.

KASH CHEONG