

## At the forefront of training

**The Singapore Maritime Academy provides an excellent maritime education and training infrastructure for young Singaporeans**

WHILE it is a constant challenge to ensure that the Singapore maritime workforce is trained to meet the needs of the employers and industry, the Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) provides an excellent maritime education and training infrastructure where young Singaporeans receive subsidised education in marine engineering, maritime business and nautical studies for its full-time diploma courses.

Further upgrading for professional courses such as the Certificate of Competency (CoC) and Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) courses for deck and engineering officers are also offered at the institution.

Says Capt Mohd Salleh Bin Ahmad Sarwan, director of Singapore Maritime Academy: "The maritime industry experiences numerous regulatory and technological changes constantly, to which SMA responds by looking ahead and introducing new courses and initiatives to ensure that its graduates are prepared for the future needs of the industry."

In celebration of its 60th anniversary this year, SMA renews its commitment to prepare the next generation of maritime professionals with technical competencies, industry knowledge, overseas exposure and character development through the purposefully designed curriculum and activities beyond the classroom, he adds.

Singapore Maritime Academy has got the Special Mention Award at this year's International Maritime Awards. The institution is an invaluable train-



**Capt Mohd Salleh (right) demonstrating the capability of SMA's dynamic positioning simulator to an international visitor.**

ing partner and in particular is contributing under the SkillsFuture and Earn and Learn programmes.

As a forward-looking institution, SMA remains at the forefront of maritime education and training through three key thrusts: leveraging education technology, building staff capability and strengthening industry engagement.

"In keeping with technological advances in teaching and learning, SMA embraces education technology where conventional teaching methods are enhanced with e-tools and e-materials," says Capt Salleh.

To support this "blended learning" approach, SMA uses Blackboard, a learning management system where all the materials for the modules are uploaded (including lecture notes, videos and power point slides) and are accessible to the students from anywhere with Internet connection at their convenience.

SMA partners the American Digital University, Inc in USA to develop and offer the Certificate of Competency (CoC) e-learning programmes. The online programmes cover the CoC courses for deck and marine engineer officers and have been designed to facilitate learning from home or work at the learner's own pace.

SMA will continue to invest and develop maritime-related e-materials to aid in the teaching and learning of maritime topics for its students, says Capt Salleh.

The experienced staff at SMA is supported by sophisticated facilities including a fully integrated maritime

simulation centre and a waterfront training facility. SMA makes extensive use of simulators to provide an authentic learning environment for its students before they step out into the working world. It also embarks on various initiatives and enhancements to ensure that its students have access to the latest technology in training so that their skills are kept up to date and relevant to the industry.

SMA has been working on strengthening staff technical and leadership capability as well as enhancing industry engagement through structured training and developmental programmes. The staff are also required to go for industrial attachment at least once in five years to ensure that they are up to date with industry trends and developments.

Capt Salleh says that SMA has recently embarked on various SkillsFuture initiatives as it is the sector coordinator for the sea transport sector. As sector coordinator, SMA plays a central role in driving and coordinating engagements between the educational institutions and the industry for their respective sectors, to strengthen linkages and synergy between study and work.

Under the Earn-and-Learn Programme (ELP), which is a work-study programme designed to give fresh graduates from polytechnics and ITE a headstart in their careers, SMA launched the ELP for Maritime (deck officers and marine engineers) for the Diploma in Nautical Studies (DNS) and Diploma in Marine Engineering (DME) graduates in April 2016.