

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT



Mr Tan Kay Yong
Chairman

Looking Back with Pride

I looked back with pride as we celebrated 50 good years in 2004. We had a series of well-planned and successfully executed events which attracted the attendance of many who's who in Singapore and from overseas.

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Singapore Mr S R Nathan launched the celebrations in the presence of almost 2,000 guests from various industries and educational institutions with whom we have had extremely close association all these years. Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong officiated our Gala Dinner which was also attended by the Minister for Manpower Dr Ng Eng Hen and many of our counterparts from several countries including Japan, China, UK and USA.

A Global Conference on Excellence in Education and Training was organised for the first time and which was opened by the Minister for Education Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam. Another first of its kind organised on campus was the Arts@SP event. Launched by the Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Dr Lee Boon Yang, the event showcased the artistic talents of SP staff, students and alumni through their paintings, calligraphies, sculptures, potteries, photographs and digital art forms.

The Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Dr Vivian Balakrishnan

played at our 50th Anniversary Charity Golf Tournament organised by a group of SP alumni led by MAJ (NS) George Wong. Another alumnus, the Minister of State for Defence and National Development Mr Cedric Foo, kicked off our very first Flux - The International Cultural Festival which highlighted the talents of our students in performing arts alongside well-known local musicians, dancers and actors and a professional group from Australia. Flux also featured Singapore Youth Festival's award winning groups from various secondary schools.

The Minister of State for Education Mr Chan Soo Sen opened the National Entrepreneurship Convention at our School of Business and we counted 50 days to the year of celebrations 2004 with Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Manpower Mr Hawazi Daipi.

Looking Forward with Commitment

2004 was also the year in which we committed ourselves to taking the institution on a new journey from good to great and to maintain our indisputable leadership in polytechnic education based on the following four strategic thrusts:

- To formulate an education model of the future
- To unleash creativity, innovation and enterprise
- To make Singapore Polytechnic a great place to work
- To create a unique SP experience for our students

Adding Breadth and Depth to Poly Education

Following on plans made last year, aimed at evolving an education model that would produce graduates who would be able to meet the challenges of a multi-discipline, globalised world, several new initiatives went into operation during the year:

General Elective Modules or GEMs such as Basic Ergonomics, Drama and Film Appreciation, and Network Marketing commenced in the new academic year. Clustered under Arts and Humanities, Business and Management, and Science and Technology, these GEMs provided great opportunities for students to learn beyond their core subjects and with fellow students from other disciplines.

The Diploma-Plus programme, which allowed students to secure another qualification on top of their diploma by the time they graduate, started with a pioneer batch of 80. The additional knowledge and skills they would acquire within the same three-year time span would allow them to add even greater value to industry and at a quicker pace when they start work.

Existing courses were reviewed with inputs from industry to determine their relevance and to enhance the curriculum. This resulted in the Building & Property Management course being renamed the Diploma in Property Development & Facilities Management while the Diploma in Medical Technology became the Biomedical Science diploma.

To meet the evolving needs of the IT-related industry, a Specialist Diploma in Digital Media Creation was rolled out together with a Game Development option introduced in the Information Technology diploma course. Work started on the development of two new diploma courses - one in Bioelectronics and the other in Music & Audio Technology - which would be launched for the new academic year in 2005.

Further strengthening the excellent academic programmes offered by the institution were partnerships with industry including agreements signed with companies like Attogenix Biosystems Pte Ltd, Data Storage Institute, and Hunter Douglas Singapore Pte Ltd to facilitate joint R&D, staff and student attachments, and training programmes.

Nurturing Creative Capital

The newly set-up Innovation, Design & Enterprise in Action (IDEA) Centre was officially launched amidst much fanfare. Rightly so, as it had been tasked to build creative capital and nurture a culture of creativity, innovation and enterprise (CIE) among staff and students.

Management of the Innovation, Design and Enterprise (IDEA) module was also handed to the Centre. This new compulsory module opened up another much sought-after avenue to further the teaching of CIE.

Providing vital support to the CIE initiative were new facilities for learning and R&D. These included a Colour Centre in the School of Chemical & Life Sciences, Design Studios in the School of Info-Communications Technology, and Network Operation Centre in the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering.

Reaping the Fruits of CIE

I am pleased to report that these CIE initiatives have started to pay dividends. Two R&D projects by students met with commercial success in 2004.

In collaboration with Cosmetics Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore Polytechnic re-launched the overwhelming successful pair of "His" and "Hers" perfumes that were created by students for our 50th Anniversary Celebrations and as a gift to Romancing Singapore Festival 2004. It took two months and the mixing of more than 100 ingredients for our students at the Cosmetics and Fragrance Centre to come up with the commercially appealing scents.

The creation of the Romancing Singapore perfumes, which made news in many parts of world, was a milestone in the fragrance industry. This re-launch took the perfumes beyond the shores of Singapore.

The other success came in the form of a partnership with Kwong Seng International for the manufacture and commercialisation of a first of its kind two-ply noodles concocted by students to commemorate our 50th Anniversary. For each blend of noodle, the students creatively used two ingredients that began with S and P in their names, such as Sesame and Pandan, Spinach and Paprika, and Soya and Pumpkin, to identify the unique product with SP.

The many challenges they had to overcome to blend two flavours and two colours through extensive R&D efforts at our Asian Noodle Technology Development Centre included the need to find a way to ensure that the two strands would not come apart in hot water.

I am proud to report that our two-ply noodles have since won an Innovation Award from the Singapore Institute of Food Science & Technology, the Healthier Choice endorsement by the Health Promotion Board and selected as Singapore Premium Food Gifts by the Singapore Tourism Board.

On another front, the first IDEA Challenge organised by the IDEA Centre and the Department of Industry Services met with enthusiastic response from students. Over 300 new ideas for innovative products and services were received. The top three entries would be eligible for funding under the Singapore Entrepreneurship Talent Development Fund.

The Annual Singapore Polytechnic Innovations Exhibition (SPINNOVEX) brought together innovations by final-year students from all academic schools for the first time.

It showcased more than 360 projects related to the environment, IT, robotics, engineering, architecture, life sciences, maritime, business and many other areas of consumer and industrial interests, impressing industry leaders, parents, students from secondary schools and members of the public who visited the exhibition in record numbers.

Flying the SP Flag High

Staff and students shone beyond the campus as well. Teams from the Polytechnic excelled at national and international competitions like the Federation of International Robosoccer Association (FIRA) Robot World Cup, National Management Game and WorldSkills Singapore.

A record 60 Singapore Polytechnic students received the National Youth Achievement Gold Awards, the most that the National Youth Achievement Award had ever given out to an institution. In sports, the canoeing, *Karate*, soccer, swimming, *Tae Kwon Do* and *Wushu* teams also won gold medals at various high-profile competitions.

The first Singapore Idol was none other than an alumnus from Singapore's first polytechnic. We are proud to have given the first Singapore Idol Taufik Batisah a good education and inspired in him a passion for the performing art with many singing opportunities on campus when he was a student at Singapore Maritime Academy.

The institution was re-certified to the ISO 9001:2004 Standard by PSB Corporation during the year, affirming it as an excellent institution of higher learning.

With such achievements, Singapore Polytechnic continued to be the polytechnic of choice among 'O' level school leavers. In the February 2005 Joint Admissions Exercise, 35.8% of the cohort chose Singapore Polytechnic as their first choice. The Polytechnic had also been attracting better students over the years as evident in the mean aggregate of their 'O' level scores which improved from 16.9 in 2001 to 15.5 in 2005.

Providing Exceptional Experience

Providing opportunities for academic pursuits by itself would not make an institution great. We must also offer a life-enriching experience to our key stakeholders. In this regard, I am pleased to report that upgrading of campus facilities to provide students with an even more conducive environment continued vigorously in 2004.

These included the launch of a new Student Administration System to provide a one-stop self-service application for information and for e-services, a face-lift for the Main Library, improvement works to the sports complex, and an extensive refurbishment of a foodcourt.

Students' experience and learning opportunities on campus would soon be further enhanced as construction started in 2004 to build a new \$19 million six-storey complex with state-of-the-art facilities to house the Centre for Creativity, Innovation and Enterprise, the Technology Centre for Life Sciences and supporting facilities for the School of Chemical & Life Sciences.

A host of enrichment programmes were also introduced during the year in review. These included a series of 33 @ SP IDEA MarketPlace

and Exchange bazaars for students to set up stalls and get a taste of doing business and a series of 55 @ SP Entrepreneurship Talk and Networking sessions for staff, students, alumni and industry practitioners and professionals to share their entrepreneurial and business experiences.

An important avenue to enhance the experience of students was overseas stints. During the year, students continued to travel to various parts of the world for community service, educational tours and exchanges.

Infusing a Global Flavour

We have set up Singapore Polytechnic International Pte Ltd (SPI), both to internationalise the institution and to strive to inject continued vibrancy and relevance on campus. SPI had since successfully started to recruit full-fee paying foreign students. Additionally, plans were being developed to partner reputable overseas educational institutions to deliver part of the Polytechnic's courses in their home countries.

I am confident that SPI's effort in these areas would eventually provide an enriching experience for local students through the influx of a variety of cultures, experiences and perspectives on campus, nurturing in them a global mindset.

Building Human Capital

But all of these achievements and initiatives would not have been possible without human capital. Attracting talents, motivating staff and helping them to perform to their maximum potential continued to be emphasised. In line with this, over \$2 million were spent on staff training and development.

In addition, the year saw further improvements in employment terms for staff, such as a five-day work week, more staff well-being programmes and initiatives for work-life integration. And I am happy to highlight that we were bestowed the much coveted Family Friendly Employer and the Singapore H.E.A.L.T.H. Gold awards.

Taking SP from Good to Great

Looking ahead, the journey from good to great would require us to invest, not just in the brick and mortar needed to continuously upgrade campus facilities, but more importantly, in our people and in programmes that would add even greater value to the lives of our students.

For our staff, a new leadership development programme from the US would be launched in 2005. I intend this programme to nurture leaders and to effect a cultural transformation at every level of the institution to enable us to make quantum leaps in our journey from good to great. Complementing this would be a new performance management programme (PMP) that would help staff at all levels to identify where and how their potentials could be maximised to ensure that they have a fulfilling career in SP.

For our students, a multi-ply curriculum model would be adopted to integrate the teaching of values and ethics, and people and process skills with the teaching of domain knowledge. This new approach would provide our students with a more balanced and holistic education. It would shape them to be better able to take on the challenges of an

increasingly competitive and demanding global business environment.

Making it Great @ SP

We have started our journey to take the institution from good to great and to maintain our position as an indisputable leader in polytechnic education. With the four strategic thrusts in place, the foundation had been laid and much progress made during the year in review under the very capable leadership of the Principal, the Deputy Principals and the Directors of Schools and Admin Departments.

On behalf of the board, I would like to thank them all for their hard work and dedication. We are proud to be part of this great team. And to my fellow board members, I would like to extend my appreciation for your selfless contribution to the continued success of Singapore Polytechnic.

Let's make it great.



Tan Kay Yong
Chairman
Board of Governors