

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

True to our core mission, Singapore Polytechnic has continually taken active steps to educate and train our students to excel in work and in life. One such step is the introduction last year of an education model aimed at:

- Unleashing creativity,
- Encouraging innovation and enterprise, and
- Creating a unique SP experience for students.

Such efforts have produced positive results and benefits. Further steps were taken to enhance the strategic strengths of Singapore Polytechnic, tapping on the collective insights and experience of the board members, staff and other stakeholders. Centred on *human capital development; science, technology & industry, and globalisation* to drive the Polytechnic's next phase of development, three working groups were formed in 2006 to study each of these areas.

I am pleased to report that the Polytechnic has since implemented several initiatives in each of these areas.

People

The first area of focus, human capital, has been and will always be a top priority for the Polytechnic. Many of our staff have been with the Polytechnic for 20 years and more, a litmus test of their satisfaction at work. Staff wellness and welfare are promoted through a wide range of activities while continued education is encouraged through structured training and development, and incentive programmes.

We are fortunate to have good people who are well-engaged to our mission. In turn, we will continue to identify and groom our staff for leadership and management positions. To this end, we have implemented a more disciplined and structured approach to attract and retain talent, and build organisational capability. This revolves around a three-tracked career path for our academic staff which allows them to maximise their potential serving different roles in management, teaching or providing consultancy to industry. By this time next year, I hope to be able to share our progress in this area in more detail.

Technology

Technology, as the second focus area, is not new to Singapore Polytechnic. Technology has been a driver and enabler of knowledge and learning at Singapore Polytechnic. It has facilitated learning by our students and enabled consultancy services to be provided to industry by our academic staff and researchers.

To build on its inherent strengths, the Polytechnic has initiated plans to enhance the capabilities of existing laboratories and transform them into Technology and Innovation Centres (TICs) that are more multi-disciplinary in nature. The aim is to allow us to better match the needs of industry-based projects which usually require expertise in more than one discipline.

In the first phase of this evolution, the Centre for Applications in Environmental Technology, Centre for Biomedical & Life Sciences, Centre for Experience Design, Food Innovation & Resource Centre, and Interactive & Digital Media Centre will be set up progressively. Other new TICs will be considered, to support industries in bioengineering, business innovations, electronics and manufacturing technology, maritime transportation and nanotechnology.

Moving forward, collaboration and synergy across the academic schools is critical to the success of these centres. To helm collaboration, spearhead industry partnerships and identify areas of growth, the position of Chief Technology Officer was created.

Globalisation

Globalisation is about bringing the world to Singapore Polytechnic and bringing us to the world. In line with this, we continue to adapt from the best teaching approaches used anywhere in the world, harness and create new technology, recruit experienced staff and attract talented and bright students.

Our students actively participate in overseas Industrial Training Programmes and community service, while our staff are encouraged to go on overseas sabbaticals, staff exchanges and study tours. We have been busy forging new partnerships with reputable foreign institutions and strengthening existing ties. These efforts have served to promote Singapore Polytechnic's brand of education, leaving our footprint wherever we have chosen to venture.

Our global outreach efforts are paying off. Singapore Polytechnic International (SPI) recruited a record number of full-fee paying students for the second semester of academic year 2006-2007, a testimony to the quality of the Polytechnic's courses and reputation overseas. SPI also continued to explore new opportunities to broaden Singapore Polytechnic's global reach and create a global experience for its students while ensuring that they are deeply rooted in Singapore.

I believe that the new initiatives we have implemented will help Singapore Polytechnic develop further in the years to come.

More Options for Students

At the academic level, the Polytechnic continued to offer fresh options that challenged students to excel in and out of the classroom. The setting up of the School of Design last year made more options available. More importantly, it has enabled us to introduce experiential design in curricula across the Polytechnic.

New courses were added to meet the changing needs of industry and to cater to the diversified interests of our students. For academic year 2007-2008, three new courses were launched:

- Diploma in Environmental Management & Water Technology,
- Diploma in Experience Design, and
- Diploma in Integrated Events & Project Management.

In addition, discussions are ongoing with several specialised foreign universities to offer degree courses in niche areas, to provide viable avenues for further studies for our graduates. We have also continued to explore and introduce fresh learning opportunities. From performing in the highly successful 'SuperStar – the Pop Musical', which raised nearly \$100,000 for President's Challenge 2006, to bringing food products to the market, our students relished every opportunity given them to develop their potential. I am encouraged to see a growing cohort of competent, confident and articulate graduates.

New Curricula and Pedagogy

To remain at the forefront, Singapore Polytechnic is constantly tracking new approaches in teaching. The Conceive-Design-Implement-and-Operate or CDIO approach, which involves inter-modular integration, was implemented to make teaching and learning more meaningful, engaging and exciting. Three diploma courses were identified to spearhead the CDIO initiative:

- Diploma in Bioengineering,
- Diploma in Chemical Engineering, and
- Diploma in Electrical & Electronic Engineering.

I am especially proud that the Polytechnic has stepped up efforts to make lessons more vibrant, interesting and relevant, using teaching methodologies that stretch and challenge our students. Students are not only tested on their technical competency but also on their ability to think critically and creatively in the analysis of issues and problems. The Polytechnic also ensured that high-potential students were sufficiently challenged. Those with excellent grades were eligible to elect for the Diploma-Plus programme, a programme designed to allow students to take up another course in addition to their regular diploma programme.

Going forward, we will need to teach and redesign the curricula with a new mindset. The approaches to teaching and curricula must be meaningful, engaging and interesting to a generation of students who need to know how to gain new knowledge on their own. We aim to develop graduates with fire in their belly who are eager to learn the skills to excel in the world of tomorrow.

Delivering Our Promise

It is "all systems go" as we ensure that the Singapore Polytechnic brand of education remains relevant and top-of-the-class, worthy of its position as *the* leader in polytechnic education. Our strong industry linkages have helped to spur collaborative partnerships and research breakthroughs. They also contribute significantly to both teaching and learning.

Singapore Polytechnic is proud that it is able to attract quality students over the years, as indicated by the mean aggregate of their 'O' level scores, which improved from 16.9 in 2001 to 14.8 in 2007. The number of Junior College qualified students who joined the Polytechnic also rose from 38.2% in 2003 to 54.7% in 2007.

Our alumni continue to make their mark at home and abroad. One of them, Dr Lisa Ng, now a senior scientist at the Genome Institute of Singapore, went on to obtain a Degree in Biochemistry in the UK and a Doctorate in Molecular Virology in Singapore after getting her Diploma in Biotechnology from Singapore Polytechnic. She contributed to the development of the SARS diagnostic kit with Roche Diagnostics and the Avian Influenza H5N1 diagnostic kit. There are many more success stories like hers among our alumni.

We are also privileged to be the first polytechnic to undergo a review by the Ministry of Education's international External Review Panel in 2006, using the Polytechnic Quality Assurance Framework. While re-affirming the quality of our initiatives, the findings gave further impetus to the Polytechnic's planned initiatives. Several new ideas were also spawned, for implementation in the longer term.

Looking to the future, Singapore Polytechnic will continue to build on its strengths and value proposition. However, in a rapidly changing environment, we also recognise that the ability and courage to metamorphose are vital. Among other means, we will do this through dialogue with our stakeholders, whom we value and continue to nurture. Only then can we stay true to our desire and core mission of delivering a world-class polytechnic education.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I would like to thank the management and staff for their unwavering commitment and contributions (*I am so proud of you*) to another great year for Singapore Polytechnic, and our partners for their continued confidence and support.



Mr Tan Kay Yong
Chairman
Board of Governors

