



# ON A ROOF GARDEN

**M**any great ideas and creations occurred in the most unlikely circumstances – under an apple tree, the back of a napkin or on the rooftop of a grand colonial hotel. The idea of a polytechnic in Singapore was put into action on a warm August evening in 1951 at the Adelphi Hotel's roof garden. The ad-hoc committee comprised members from the Singapore Branch of the Technical Association of Malaya who wanted to put earlier informal discussions into action. The economy was growing rapidly and the need for skilled workers was beginning to surface.



Facets of campus life in the early years.

There were already trade schools but they provided basic technical training which was considered not good enough. The concept of a polytechnic for the training of craftsmen, technicians and engineers attracted the attention of many industry leaders and professionals who extended the scope to architecture, commerce and domestic science.

Ten months after the committee's first meeting, its chairman and a Legislative Assemblyman, Mr Thio Chan Bee presented a report to Sir John F Nicoll, the Governor of Singapore. The government did not deliberate long. It appointed another committee headed by Professor E H G Dobby of the University of Malaya to determine the need of a polytechnic against the resources and needs of the country.

On hindsight, the concept of a polytechnic was extremely appropriate but it was extremely difficult then to judge how the institution or even the country would thrive in the most uncertain of times.

The Dobby Committee considered various options of skills transfer, the costs and time needed for training. The findings were supported with data from census records, the Employment Exchange and surveys of commercial firms. Based on the meticulous study, the Dobby Report recommending the establishment of a polytechnic in Singapore was accepted in principle by the government.

1951

Local businessmen met at Adelphi Hotel's roof garden to discuss idea of a polytechnic

1952

Legislative assemblyman Mr Thio Chan Bee submitted proposal to Governor

1953

Dobby Committee's recommendation accepted

1954

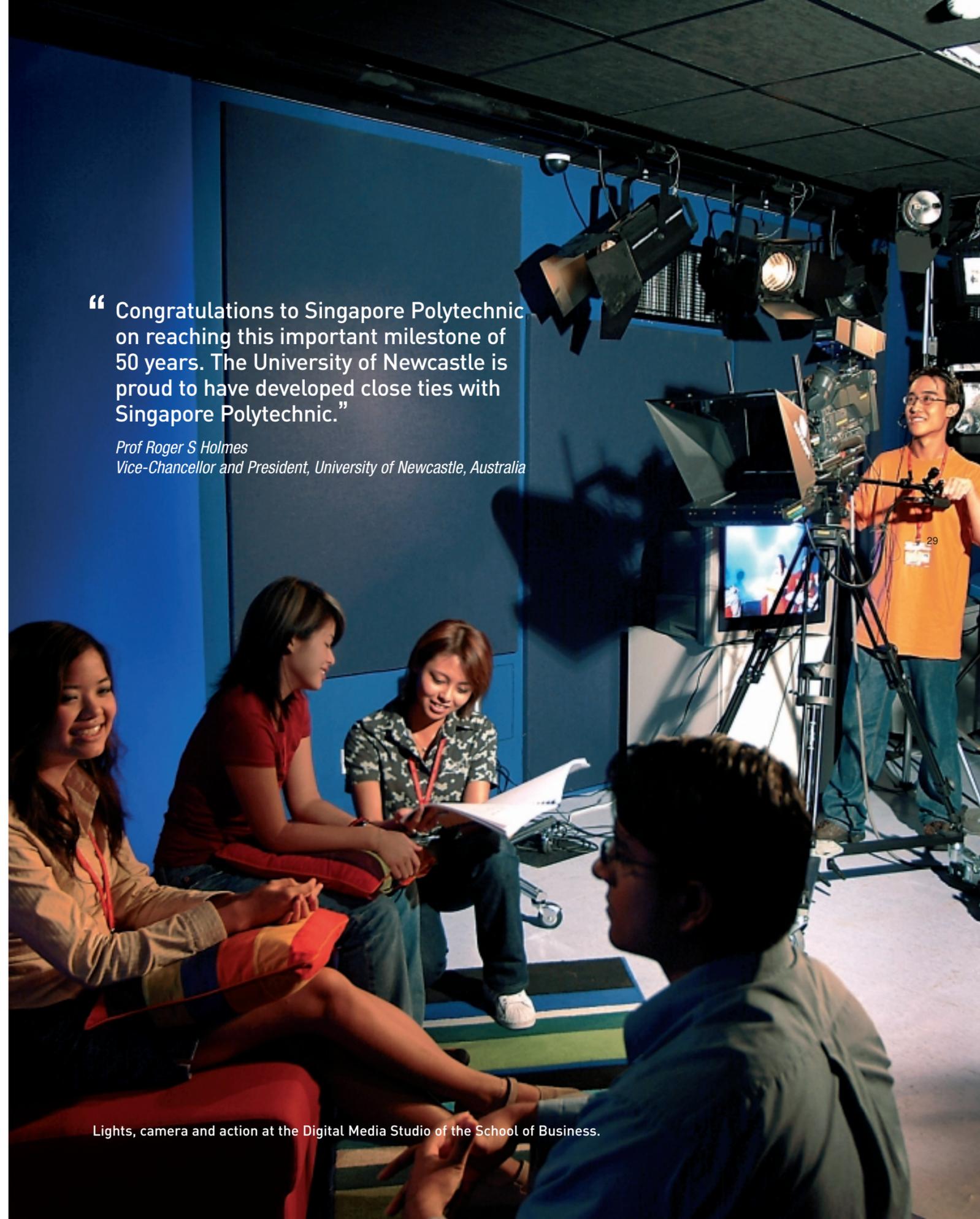


Mr A W Gibson commissioned to work out details

Legislative approval obtained with passing of Singapore Polytechnic Ordinance on 27 October

“ Congratulations to Singapore Polytechnic on reaching this important milestone of 50 years. The University of Newcastle is proud to have developed close ties with Singapore Polytechnic.”

*Prof Roger S Holmes  
Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Newcastle, Australia*



Lights, camera and action at the Digital Media Studio of the School of Business.



## LOOKING BACK WITH PRIDE



When all the coming events and plans for the 50th Anniversary Celebrations were presented at the Internal Launch in October 2003, one of the longest-serving staff took to the stage to share his experiences. Corporate Communications Officer Eddie Sim revealed most, if not all, his 39 years of service in a “never-been-told” account of the endearing and enthralling life in the Polytechnic.

The light-heartedness was contagious and everyone felt lifted by the rich tradition and commitment of the Polytechnic and its people. With the cutting of the 49th birthday cake, the preparation for an exciting year began.

Chairmen – Internal Launch Committee:  
Mr Richard Tan Kok Tong  
(Director – Corporate Communications)  
Ms Jayanthi Gopal  
(Manager – Corporate Communications)

Sir John Nicoll then invited Mr A W Gibson, the principal of the Dudley and Staffordshire Technical College in England, to advise on the implementation of the project. Two and a half months later in May 1954, the Gibson Report provided details on the departments, courses, possible sites, buildings, capital, recurrent costs and staffing. Included in the report was the constitution of an autonomous Board of Governors to oversee the polytechnic and the formation of advisory committees for industry cooperation.

In October 1954, the Legislative Council passed the Singapore Polytechnic Ordinance creating Singapore’s first polytechnic.

On the political front, Singapore was heading for self-government. In the same year, two political parties were formed – the Labour Front and the People’s Action Party (PAP). It was very clear that the political and economic landscapes in Singapore were changing very rapidly.

Meanwhile, plans for the establishment of a polytechnic in Singapore were ongoing. Starting from scratch, the first Board of Governors and its chairman, Mr L Cresson were appointed. In January 1956, Mr D J Williams, principal of the Lancaster Technical College and lecturer at the Liverpool College of Technology, arrived in Singapore as the Polytechnic’s first principal.

# GAVE ME EXPOSURE IN SOLVING PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

“I used to hound the lecturers a fair bit,” he said with a laugh. “The whole student-lecturer-staff interaction was really great. I had a really inquisitive mind, always wanting to find out more and more (from the lecturers), and so, over time, we became friends.”

This was part of Bill Chang’s answer to the question of how Singapore Polytechnic has shaped his mind and life. He was inquisitive and very methodical, breaking down answers into logical points and neatly summing them up.

For example, in explaining why he chose to study electrical engineering, he gave three ‘I’s – interest in maths and science, influence from role models (his uncles with engineering backgrounds) and the “in thing”. Engineering was the popular course then. One surmised that this logical approach was partly due to his training as an engineer.

“Singapore Polytechnic gave me a lot of exposure in terms of solving practical problems,” he shared. “It gave me a lot of confidence when I started my career as I could both research and apply practical solutions to problems.” And he has done well in his career.

He is currently Managing Director for Cisco Systems’ Advanced Services Group in the Asia-Pacific. He has been a member of several advisory committees and executive boards such as the Think Tank Committee, National Council of Social Service and the NTU Network Technology Research Centre. He is Deputy Chairman of the Advisory Council for the Ministry of Manpower’s Lifelong Endowment Fund and a member of Singapore Polytechnic’s Board of Governors.

Commenting on what the Board of Governors of Singapore Polytechnic hopes to achieve, Bill said, “We hope to bring Singapore Polytechnic from being a very good institution to a great institution, and to make it sustainable.”

“SP is known for academic excellence, all-rounded training, very good exposure, hands-on approach, excellent



**BILL CHANG**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ADVANCED SERVICES GROUP,  
ASIA PACIFIC, CISCO SYSTEMS  
CLASS OF 1986  
SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

facilities and services,” he said.

“I’m really proud to be associated with SP with its 125,000 graduates who have contributed to Singapore’s economic build-up and want to do my best in any way I can to give back to the Polytechnic, to help the Polytechnic stay in the forefront of the nation and the region.”

1955



First Board of Governors appointed, chaired by Mr L Cresson

1956

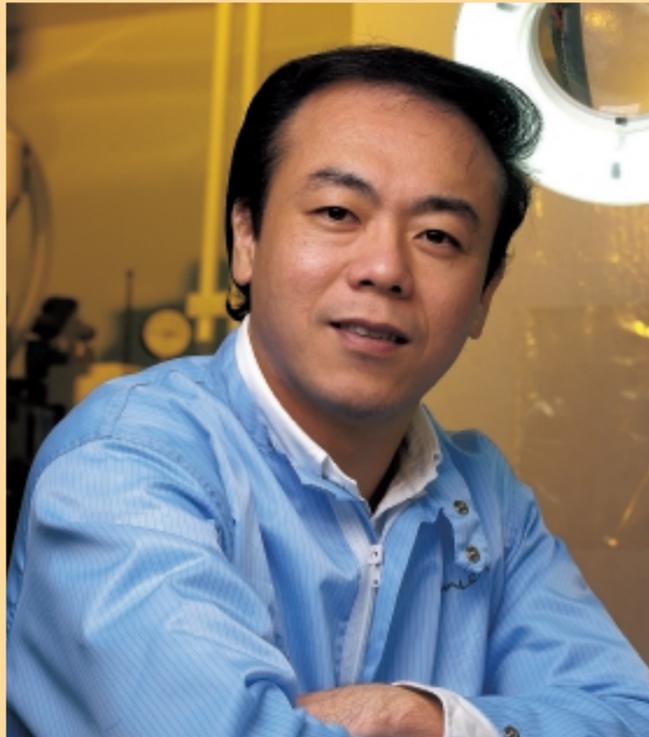


Mr D J Williams appointed first principal

1957

Construction of campus at Prince Edward Road began with classes conducted in borrowed premises in the meantime

# TAUGHT ME VERY PRACTICAL SKILLS



**CHEE TECK LEE**  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR, VALEN TECHNOLOGIES**  
**CLASS OF 1984**  
**SCHOOL OF CHEMICAL & LIFE SCIENCES**

**H**is first pay cheque was for \$600 as a supervisor in an injection moulding company in the midst of a recession in 1986. Today, Chee Teck Lee is the Managing Director of Valen Technologies Pte Ltd, a multi-million dollar business that supplies polymer optics and optical packaging. The company is also one of the few original design manufacturers in Singapore with technological competence in optics and optoelectronics, a field with huge market potential.

Teck Lee remembered the days when his family struggled to make ends meet and he chose a polytechnic education because it would help him get a job quickly. He was also not one for academic studies in his youth and found his three-month stint in a junior college unsuited to his preference for hands-on skills.

"I wanted to lay my hands on something practical," he shared. "The diploma gave me a chance to do organic and inorganic chemistry which I really enjoy. Chemistry is a lot of fun," he added with a laugh. Teck Lee graduated with a Diploma in Chemical Process Technology in 1984.

"I think Singapore Polytechnic teaches very practical skills. It gives you enough knowledge to allow you to expand on what you learnt and quickly apply it to industry needs. Definitely something very useful," he pointed out.

From the \$600-a-month job, he moved on to Hewlett-Packard and started on his Advanced Diploma in Plastics Technology at Singapore Polytechnic. "It was very tough. Mostly, I had to work the graveyard shift. I would go home at 11am and sleep for four hours before going to school for two years," he recalled. But he stuck it out and made it.

Hewlett-Packard later awarded him a scholarship to the Loughborough University of Science and Technology in the UK. The university treated his Advanced Diploma as a basic degree and he went straight into a master's course, graduating with a Master of Science in Materials Engineering with Distinction and winning the Lumist award for his thesis as well.

Successful as he is, Teck Lee has a deep sense of obligation to his alma mater. "SP did me a big favour and gave me a good education," he said. "I want to be able to serve SP if the opportunity arises. In small ways, I'm doing that now: taking students in for industrial attachments and going back to give speeches from time to time."

"But I hope to contribute in a bigger way one day, by giving feedback and suggestions on the syllabus structure. It is an ever-changing thing. You have to keep updating and improving it."

The government provided \$5.2 million to develop a 10-acre land along Prince Edward Road at the southern corner of what was known as Shenton Circus. While the building was being constructed, courses in office skills, navigation, town planning and surveying were conducted in Belvedere School, Connell House at Anson Road and Tanjong Katong Secondary Technical School respectively. When Prince Edward Road campus was ready, all classes were moved from the three locations to the new site.

The opening day on 3 November 1958 saw 2,800 students enrolled in the five departments for full-time and part-time courses. The structure of the courses and examinations were modelled after the system of technical education in Britain. The 30 full-time and 130 part-time teachers were either local or from countries like Australia, Britain and New Zealand.

Gifts in the form of equipment came from Australia, Canada and Germany. Australia, for example, supplied almost one third of the equipment for the machine shop.

On 24 February 1959, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, officially opened Prince Edward Road campus in traditional British pomp and grace. It was a memorable day for many who grew up with colonialism.

## GENEROUS GIFTS



In the foundation years, Singapore Polytechnic benefited from the Colombo Plan which began in 1951 as a regional organisation focused on social development and economic aid to Commonwealth and overseas expertise were made accessible to its staff and students.

Other developed countries such as Australia, Canada and Germany donated modern engineering equipment, joinery workshops and photographic equipment.

The Ford Foundation funded almost \$3 million worth of training, equipment, scholarships and provisions for visiting professors during this period.

The United Nations provided \$14 million in terms of expertise, training, scholarships and laboratory equipment.

1958



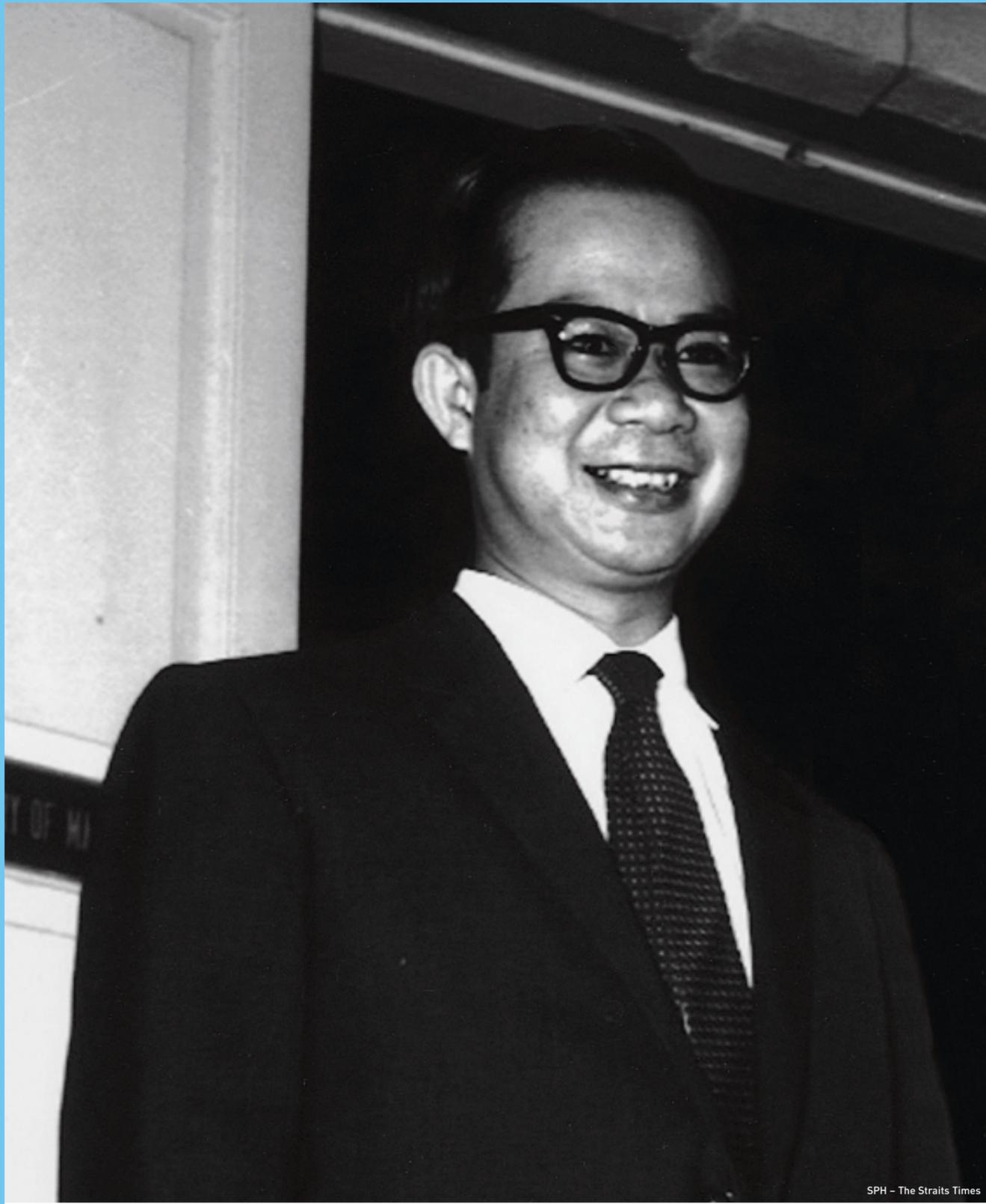
*Completion of Prince Edward Road campus with an enrolment of 2,800 students registered for 58 courses to prepare them for external examinations*

1959



*Official Opening of Prince Edward Road campus by Duke of Edinburgh on 24 February*

*Dr Toh Chin Chye, Deputy Prime Minister, took over chairmanship of Board of Governors and oriented Singapore Polytechnic towards meeting manpower needs of Singapore's industrialisation programme*



**DR TOH CHIN CHYE**  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF GOVERNORS (1959-1975)

SPH - The Straits Times

## IT WAS EXTREMELY TOUGH FIGHTING THOSE WHO SNUBBED OUR POLYTECHNIC DIPLOMAS

Students back in the 1950s wanted higher education as it was deemed the only way to eke out a better life for themselves and their families. Then, it was a matter of survival; Singapore was still a colony and heavily dependent on entrepot trade.

No one knew that better than Dr Toh Chin Chye. While pursuing his PhD in physiology at the University College London's Institute of National Medical Research, Dr Toh saw first-hand how the British education policies were affecting their young.

Recalled Dr Toh of those times, "I educated myself on the education scene in the UK by reading the British Education Times and the supplements. It gave me a grounding in their education policies and I saw how it could be emulated and adapted back in Singapore."

Determined to help shape the then colony on its course to self-government and eventual independence when he came home, Dr Toh became Founder Chairman of the People's Action Party (PAP) in 1954. When the colony finally won the right to self-govern, the party won a landslide victory in the 1959 elections. With its majority lead, it was in a position to reorganise and restructure areas of government which the British had conceded.

By then, the Polytechnic had just started operations. However, the courses offered were too diversified to be relevant to the growing colony's industrialisation needs. Dr Toh said, "The system was churning out graduates qualified for nothing and with nowhere to go. It was a waste of resources as there was no direction and things were in a muddle. The challenge was to produce technicians and train professionals in engineering, architecture and accountancy who were needed to run the country. The Polytechnic must play this role as the University of Malaya in Singapore did not have these courses then."

Taking over as Chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr Toh, in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister then, knew that the Polytechnic had to overhaul its entire structure in tandem with the growing industrial demands of the self-governing island.

"Not many shared my vision," recounted Dr Toh, "but luckily I had a few good men, among whom were Lee Kum

Tatt and Low Guan Onn, who were willing to see my vision of the Polytechnic through. Ironically, while some locals turned their noses up at the Polytechnic, I had some British expatriates who were on my side."

Establishing the accountancy, architecture and building, and engineering schools at professional levels to the technician levels was not without its problems. But Dr Toh's efforts and determination paid off. When it was decided that these schools were to be transferred to the University of Singapore after independence, Dr Toh, in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor of the university and Minister for Science and Technology, made sure that these professional disciplines and Singapore Polytechnic's technician training role flourished. This was despite dissenting voices to maintain the traditional faculties.

Dr Toh was also instrumental in ensuring that the Polytechnic had a permanent home at the present Dover Road campus when the old campuses at Prince Edward Road and Ayer Rajah were bursting at the seams. He was also determined to have his Polytechnic students get the recognition they deserved by persuading foreign universities to accept them. He also acknowledged the contributions and support of those who helped him.

"It was extremely tough, fighting those who snubbed our Polytechnic diplomas. At that time, I could never allow certain professions to dictate if certain degrees were recognised," Dr Toh said, the fighting spirit still strong despite the years.

"That we have today over 100,000 Polytechnic graduates is a testimony to our belief that technical skills were and still are integral to the demands of the market. None of that airy-fairy stuff!" Dr Toh said with a wave of his hand.

"I'm pleased that the Polytechnic has come so far. They must continue to cultivate and nurture the 'can-do' spirit. It is also imperative that our students never become qualified for the wrong thing and become unemployed," Dr Toh advised.

Singapore Polytechnic has much to thank this extraordinary visionary and retired politician who still has a soft spot for the institution he gave much of his energies and dedication to.



## COUNTING DOWN 50 DAYS TO 50TH YEAR



Singapore Polytechnic was 49 years in the making and it has a formidable reputation to boot. So, it was with much fanfare as Singapore Polytechnic trumpeted its 50-to-50 Countdown, an event marking 50 days to its golden year of establishment.

And what a way to trumpet its countdown. The spectacular pyrotechnics heralded the display on the digital clock to flash the number "50".

Officiated by Mr Hawazi Daipi, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Manpower, many among the 1,000-strong crowd were heartened by his review of the Polytechnic's achievements and what the future holds.

Chairmen – 50-to-50 Countdown Committee:  
Mr Peter Lee Hoong Fatt  
(Director – School of Design & the Environment)  
Mr C Pannirselvam  
(Deputy Director – Estates & Development)

In the months following, Singapore would be self-governing and the British influence would gradually slip away. PAP supporters were elated when the party won majority seats and Lee Kuan Yew became Singapore's first Prime Minister in June 1959.

The new government wasted no time in embarking on their economic strategy of industrialisation. It posed a "nationalistic challenge" to the role of Singapore Polytechnic which became more vital as it would be involved in the wider aspect of the country's survival. Within months, the Polytechnic experienced a major reorganisation as Dr Toh Chin Chye, then Deputy Prime Minister, took over as Chairman of the Board of Governors.

The first board meeting chaired by Dr Toh Chin Chye was radical and lasted till midnight. He abolished the system of training students merely for external examinations that did not have any relevance to the country's manpower needs.

The Polytechnic was to concentrate on accountancy, architecture, building, engineering, and nautical studies at craft, technician and professional levels. Courses such as those leading to the General Certificate of Education, sewing and shorthand were dropped. The result was a practice-oriented technical institution to train people for Singapore's industrialisation programme.

1959



Mr C I C Scollay  
appointed  
principal



Internal system  
of examinations  
instituted, leading  
to the Polytechnic's  
awards at  
professional,  
technician and  
craft levels

# PREPARED ME FOR THE REAL BUSINESS WORLD

She is known for the food her mum cooks as chief chef of My Mum's Cuisine, which started in 1995. The company has six restaurants around Singapore, does catering and distributes My Mum's food packages to supermarkets in Singapore and overseas.

Diana Cheng started the business with the encouragement of her Singapore Polytechnic lecturer, Mr Willy Wong. "My lecturers were my friends and mentors – especially Mr Willy Wong. He had a great influence on my academic life and career."

As a student on the Diploma in Business Administration (Marketing) course, Diana worked hard and played hard. "The time spent in the Polytechnic was probably the most fruitful endeavour I undertook," Diana confided. "I built many wonderful friendships and had opportunities to do things I believe I would have never been able to try if I were at other institutions."

She remembered how, as the first batch of business administration students, she and her course mates were given a lot of opportunities to do research work, which stood her in good stead when she was pursuing her bachelor's and master's degrees at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia and Cornell University in the US respectively.

"The diploma course required me to do a lot of interviews and presentations. It was fun and interesting," she recalled. "I like the kind of education system in Singapore Polytechnic. I like the freedom. You don't have to wear a uniform and it's great!"

Besides studying, she competed in SP's Talentime, was part of the debating team and joined Campus Crusade for Christ. "I got to know people from other departments and it widened my perspective."

She has sweet memories of the place, of studying in



DIANA CHENG  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, MY MUM'S CUISINE  
CLASS OF 1989  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

the classroom till midnight, and having picnics and a mooncake party in the gardens at Singapore Polytechnic. "Life in Singapore Polytechnic is not just about pursuing a certificate of recognition in academic excellence," she asserted. "You will learn to think out of the box and be prepared for the real business world."



Graduands, industry leaders and parents at the first graduation ceremony.

Principal Williams resigned “to facilitate the pursuit of the new policy” followed by an exodus of 40 lecturers. Harsh, controversial and heavy-handed as it seemed at that time, that momentous change in direction made Singapore Polytechnic what it is today – a resilient, relevant and responsible education institution recognised the world over.

There was much anxiety about the structure and the prospects of a technical education in the years from Singapore’s self-government in 1959 to her full independence in 1965. Several challenges awaited the new Board of Governors and the new Principal, Mr C I C Scollay.

Local examinations were instituted with assistance from external examiners to align its diplomas and certificates to international standards. In 1961, the first batch of professional diploma holders graduated from Accountancy and Building followed by graduates from Engineering in 1962, and Architecture in 1963.

To encourage continuous education and support the government’s skills upgrading scheme, the Polytechnic worked with industries on a special day-release or sandwich programme. Employees were given days off to attend classes. Although this was very popular, the dropout rate was high as the course lasted five or six years.



## FINAL COUNTDOWN TO A NEW YEAR



Swelling numbers of staff and students streamed in early to the Singapore Polytechnic Plaza for the first-ever party on campus to send out the old year and usher in the new.

Their hunger satiated, the casually dressed party-goers had a go at stage games and enjoyed the special items by staff and students, spiced up by the appearance of celebrities Paerin Choa and Steph Song.

When the clock struck twelve, the audience unleashed their true selves, waving light sticks and conquering the stage front with gyrating dance moves.

As the crowd thinned when the party came to an end, many staff and students could not help but felt it was a great way to welcome the 50th year of Singapore Polytechnic.

Chairmen – Welcome 2004 Committee:  
Mr Ong Eng Chan  
(Director – School of Mech & Mfg Eng)  
Mr Peter Lo Sai Ho  
(Section Head – School of Mech & Mfg Eng)

1960



Chan Chieu Kiat Commission set up to review vocational and technical education in Singapore

1961



First Graduation Ceremony held

# SINGAPORE COULDN'T HAVE INDUSTRIALISED SO QUICKLY WITHOUT SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC



DR LEE KUM TATT  
MEMBER, BOARD OF GOVERNORS (1959-1980)

Unaware that he had been appointed to the Board of Governors in 1959, Dr Lee Kum Tatt was startled that Saturday morning of 19 August to find his name in a newspaper article. It published the appointment of Dr Toh Chin Chye as Chairman and other members of the

Board of Governors to Singapore Polytechnic.

Turning up for the first meeting headed by Dr Toh that Saturday afternoon, the young chemist had no idea that he would spend a long and illustrious 21 years of service on the Board. From the Polytechnic's reorganisation and

restructuring, to its relocation to the present campus, and to the painful transfer of professional departments to the then University of Singapore, Dr Lee has seen Singapore Polytechnic grow, warts and all.

Throughout his long service on the Board, Dr Lee continued to work with all the ministers in charge of Singapore Polytechnic until even after Dr Toh's departure. These ministers were Dr Tan Eng Liang, Dr Ahmad Mattar and Dr Tay Eng Soon. This old-timer, together with his peers on the Board, was and still is a staunch believer in Singapore Polytechnic.

"That they put Dr Toh Chin Chye (then Deputy Prime Minister) in charge of the Polytechnic underscores how important the institution for technical education was for the economic development of the country and the welfare of our people," said Dr Lee.

As Chairman of the Establishment Committee at Singapore Polytechnic, Dr Lee was instrumental in developing the Accountancy, Architecture and Engineering schools at the professional level from infancy.

Said Dr Lee, "In those days, technical education was for dropouts. But we needed manpower for our industries and so it was crucial to build up the skills of our only resource – people."

However, technical education would only earn a diploma and the Polytechnic was in no position to confer degrees. After deliberations by the government to keep the Polytechnic in its status quo, Dr Lee oversaw the transfer of these very schools to the then University of Singapore soon after Singapore became independent.

"Singapore Polytechnic has contributed so much to the country's national and economic development. Without our creation of the Architecture and Building and Engineering schools, we couldn't have industrialised so quickly," said Dr Lee.

Dr Lee is to be credited with initiating the Polytechnic's signature trademark – industrial training or industrial attachment. "In my days, the Polytechnic and university were very academic. When I became Chairman of SISIR and Chairman of the Science Council, I decided that the professors and the industries had something to offer each other – industrial training that would mutually benefit both parties."

He was the go-between the university, the Polytechnic and the industries, arranging visits that would eventually result in the Polytechnic sending the historic first batch of a few hundred students for industrial training.

Adept at raising funds, Dr Lee said, "We raised money for the Science and Education Fund through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce to pay the students. The interest earned from these monies raised was more than enough to pay for the expenses of industrial training. There was even enough money left over to buy teaching equipment for some schools."

"I do what I like, otherwise, I have to like what I have to do," is Dr Lee Kum Tatt's personal motto. Nowhere has he practised what he preached more evidently than in the long service that he has given to Singapore Polytechnic.

"I spent 21 years there because when I see it growing, I am very happy and satisfied about it," said the sprightly 78-year-old who peppered the whole interview with passionate thumping of the table.



## INSTITUTION WITH HEART



"The 50th Anniversary is a time for celebration but it is also a time to think of those who need help." As guest-of-honour Principal Low Wong Fook's words of compassion resonated throughout the Singapore Polytechnic Plaza, the Giant *Hong Bao* Line fundraising event was launched.

Timed to coincide with the Lunar New Year, it was to raise funds for the Polytechnic's needy students as well as the new Alumni Scholarship for outstanding graduates to fund their first year in a local university. The red packets put up by students snaked around the campus perimeter fence. Each symbolising \$1 donated.

That beautiful day of January 2004 had Singapore Polytechnic's own Chinese Orchestra making music while cultural dances and stilt walkers added to the already festive air of the event.

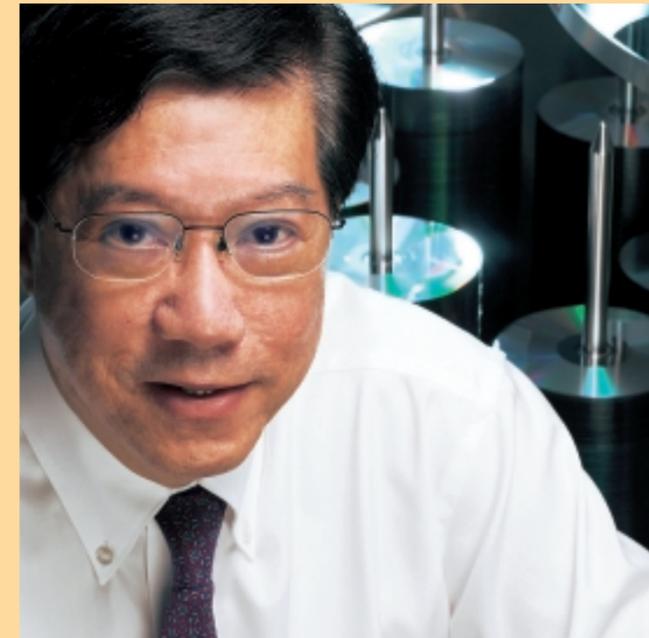
Chairmen - Charity Fundraising Committee:  
Mr Roland Tan Keng Hock  
(Director - Singapore Maritime Academy)  
Ms Pearly Gan Chwee Lian  
(Manager - Student & Alumni Affairs)

The first few batches of students were also worried about "declining" diploma standards when the Polytechnic revised its entrance requirements to attract more students particularly from the Chinese stream and when it discontinued external examinations set by educational bodies overseas. New graduates at that time were unsure of industry acceptance of their diplomas and the working conditions and salary scales of technical workers. Internally, the Polytechnic was facing three main obstacles.

Firstly, it was not easy to attract students to Singapore Polytechnic because of the general prejudice against blue-collar work. Industrialisation was new to the masses that had depended on commerce and trade for their livelihood for generations. With determination and continuous public education, the government gradually convinced the people of the need to change and to accept technical training as an essential step for the country's progress.

Secondly, the prevalent British standards of the late 1950s did not recognise technical training by itself as professional credentials. There was and still is a distinction between a technician and an engineer, a bookkeeper and an accountant, and a draftsman and an architect.

# PROVIDED VIABLE PLATFORM FOR MY CAREER AND BUSINESS



**GOH HUN KENG**  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO, EASTGATE TECHNOLOGY  
CLASS OF 1968  
SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

Diploma in Telecommunications Engineering. With diploma in hand, he was offered a job as a service technician in an European office equipment company, gradually rising through the ranks before setting up Eastgate Technology Ltd in 1989.

In 1999, Goh Hun Keng, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Eastgate, listed the company. It is a manufacturer and distributor of digital storage products such as CD-ROMS, VCDs and DVDs.

Hun Keng feels that what he learnt at Singapore Polytechnic has helped him in his career and business. "The polytechnic education provides a viable platform either for career advancement and opportunities for further studies or for running one's own business," he commented.

"I would say the possession of hands-on experience helps to increase one's confidence level when developing plans to shape a business venture," he added.

He also observed that in today's business environment, having technical and engineering knowledge gives a person the competitive advantage. And so, "to obtain a polytechnic education before pursuing other fields of higher learning will certainly enhance one's competency in future jobs".

He pointed out that the changes Singapore Polytechnic has implemented over time have increased that advantage. "Singapore Polytechnic has changed over the years, I believe, not only in its infrastructure, facilities, course and subject offerings, but also in its approach towards education, by providing students with an all-rounded exposure to multiple disciplines and connecting them to industries."

"The emphasis on more creativity and entrepreneurship is a positive direction taken towards grooming a new generation of Singapore Polytechnic graduates to meet the challenges ahead."

**H**e enrolled to study Electrical Engineering at Singapore Polytechnic only to realise a few weeks later that the course did not offer the subjects he was interested in, namely radio and electronic engineering. "There was not much guidance given at that time to lead you to the right course," he explained.

So, he switched courses and graduated in 1968 with a

1963



Craft courses transferred to Singapore Vocational Institute to make way for expansion and upgrading of professional and technician courses



Mr A R Edis appointed principal

1964

Dr C A Hart led Colombo Plan team to study development of advanced courses. University of Singapore looked into feasibility of a faculty of technology and granting university degrees to Polytechnic graduates

1965

Professional diploma courses gradually replaced by degree courses

“Crop & Food Research values its research links with Singapore Polytechnic and the closeness of the interaction between our scientists over the years. Congratulations on your 50th Anniversary.”

Paul Stephen Tocker  
Chief Executive, New Zealand Institute For Crop & Food Research Ltd, New Zealand



Applied research and development work is given emphasis by the Polytechnic.

To meet the needs of the industry for professional workers, Dr Toh proceeded to offer professional courses in all departments in addition to what was offered at the certificate and diploma levels to full and part-time students. Professors were recruited for the professional courses and external examiners appointed to assist staff in setting and marking examination papers.

Thirdly, the introduction of professors to teach professional courses was not readily accepted by the existing heads of departments who were not as qualified as their new staff. There were pockets of discontent and insecurity among teaching staff as the knowledge gap widened. Meanwhile, development of the local industry was facing fierce competition elsewhere and there was an urgent need to improve on the already high standards of work in the Polytechnic.

In 1961, a Commission of Inquiry headed by Mr Chan Chieu Kiat, principal of Queenstown Secondary Technical School, was formed to study and define the Polytechnic's role in the overall structure of technical education in Singapore. It recommended that technician courses be enlarged and craft courses be transferred to another institution. It also recommended that the Polytechnic should be developed into a college of advanced technology.



### SP-ECIAL MERCHANDISE



Creativity, innovation and enterprise were very evident when staff, students and alumni of Singapore Polytechnic proudly showcased the products they created specially for the 50th Anniversary.

Among the products were two-ply noodles of unique SP flavours (Spinach/Paprika, Sesame/Pandan and Soy/Pumpkin) the world's first multi-layered brass, copper and titanium diffusion-bonded accessories and Romancing Singapore perfumes.

Other collectibles produced were a distinctive tin box depicting Singapore Polytechnic's campuses over the years with chocolates inside made by an SP alumnus and original room sprays in two scents. An alumnus also lent a hand to import specially bottled wine to commemorate the institution's 50th Anniversary.

It was a merchandising effort that was meaningful because proceeds went to the Singapore Polytechnic Needy Fund for students in need of financial assistance.

Chairmen – Merchandising Committee:  
Mr V Maheantharan  
(Director – School of Business)  
Dr Ng Cheng Siong  
(Director – School of Chemical & Life Sciences)  
Mr Tu Myint  
(Director – Industry Services)

1967  
First batch of degree graduates produced

1968  
Decision taken to transfer degree courses to University of Singapore

1969



Polytechnic restructured into School of Industrial Technology and School of Nautical Studies



Two-year Industrial Technician Certificate (ITC) programme introduced

## A MAN OF COMPASSION WHO LEADS BY EXAMPLE

**A**s Deputy Director of the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Goh Poh Heng not only lectures, but also manages the staff in the publications & publicity, course promotion and student activities units. Sounds like the profile of the stereotypical administrative bureaucrat? Hardly.

This man is a visionary for change and a man of compassion to boot. Enconced he may have in Singapore Polytechnic since he signed up as a lecturer in 1980, but he has most certainly not lost touch with society. So all those of you who think he is your classic academic stuck in the proverbial ivory tower – banish those thoughts.

“As Singapore Polytechnic celebrated its 50th Anniversary, it is a time to reflect and take stock of what we have done well, and what needs to be improved upon. One of the greatest challenges is to adapt to the changing mindset of our new generation of students who have different expectations of polytechnic education altogether,” Poh Heng shared candidly, with hints of passion underlying his tone.

He pointed out how Singapore Polytechnic has evolved from a curriculum with a manufacturing focus to one that

focuses on creativity and innovation, skills required by today’s workplaces.

“This makes SP different as it trains the students to adapt to the changing needs of the industry,” he explained.

Adaptability, creativity and a thinking worker – all buzzwords for today’s workforce. This former student of Singapore Polytechnic who graduated with a diploma in 1974 has caught on to them and in a big way too.

And while others of his social status are mostly involved in grassroots organisations and professional groups, he has chosen to devote time to a most often forgotten group – underprivileged children. He sits on the Board of the Children’s Charities Association and is Vice Chairman of the Spastic Children’s Association of Singapore.

He tries to inculcate that caring spirit in his students too. Once, student volunteers from his school helped wheel a group of 14 from the Spastic Children’s Association at The New Paper Big Walk. It was not a big deal, but neither was it something to be taken lightly.

“We want our students to show more concern for the less fortunate. It is the third core value of the Polytechnic,” said Poh Heng. Kudos to the man for leading by example.



GOH POH HENG  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

A photograph of the Singapore Polytechnic building at night. The building is illuminated with warm yellow lights, and a large sign on the facade reads "Celebrating" in a cursive font. The sky is dark blue, and a large tree is visible on the right side of the frame.

“ Singapore Polytechnic is a fine example of a higher education institution achieving a consistent high quality output. The University of Canberra joins with other universities in congratulating the Principal, Mr Low Wong Fook and his staff on this prestigious occasion and sends warm wishes for the future.”

*Prof Roger Dean  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra, Australia*

“ Being the first to offer a polytechnic education in Singapore, the Singapore Polytechnic set the course of excellence for the other polytechnics to emulate ... It is heartening to note that as the Singapore Polytechnic marks its 50th Anniversary by celebrating how far it has come, it has also demonstrated that it has its eye fixed firmly on the future ... ensuring that future generations of Singaporeans will be well trained and educated to support the new industries and economy of Singapore.”

*Mr Hawazi Daipi  
Parliamentary Secretary  
Ministry of Education & Ministry of Manpower  
at Singapore Polytechnic's 50-to-50 Countdown Ceremony  
12 November 2003*

Teaching Block 16 all lit up for the celebrations.



## FRAGRANCE OF LOVE



Love is in the air and romance is in a very special bottle. It was a challenge by the Romancing Singapore Task Force for the School of Chemical & Life Sciences to create a scent to “capture the hearts of the people and set the nation in a mood for love and romance”. In the Valentine month of February 2004, Singapore Polytechnic’s Romancing Singapore Eau de Parfum made its debut in floral and musky fragrances for the ladies and men as a gift to the nation to mark its 50th Anniversary.

All 3,000 bottles retailed at Seiyu were sold out within nine days of its commercial appearance, much to the thrill of everyone involved in the project.

**Staff:**  
Ms Chan Yok Ling & Ms Jessie Tong Yoke Ling (Lecturers – School of Chemical & Life Sciences)  
Dr Ng Kok Chin (Section Head – School of Chem & Life Sciences)

**Students (Chemical & Life Sciences):**  
Cai Jing Min, Chen Qiu Ling, Chen Zhengjian, Sherwyn Ghui Zhong Wei, Lee Sok Kuan, Liew Cai Yun, Richard Lin Ziyang, Seah Li Ping and Tan Teck Ann

In October 1962, the Board of Governors made a request to the Council for Technical Education and Training Overseas (TETOC) in London for a team of experts to advise and assist in the development of the Polytechnic as a college of advanced technology.

In 1963, Dr B V Bowden, principal of Manchester College of Science and Technology in England, led a committee to study the upgrading of Polytechnic graduates. The recommendations detailed in the Bowden Report were for a close relationship between the Polytechnic and the university, and that university degrees should be awarded to suitably qualified Polytechnic graduates. More changes were underway for the young Polytechnic.

In 1963, Mr A R Edis took over from Mr Scollay as principal. All craft courses were transferred to the Singapore Vocational Institute and considerations were made to develop Singapore Polytechnic to achieve university status. These considerations took into account that Singapore was part of the newly formed Federation of Malaysia. In the light of this expanded geographical reach, the Polytechnic was in an excellent position to offer higher levels and regional technical training.

In 1964, a team of Colombo Plan experts headed by Dr C A Hart was requested to study the upgrading of professional courses. The Hart Report recommended immediate collaboration between the local university and the Polytechnic, standards for entry level to degree courses, and facilities for outstanding students from technical stream to qualify for degree courses.

1970

Temporary additional campus site at Ayer Rajah Road acquired

Industrial and Business Orientation Programme launched by Dr Toh Chin Chye, Minister for Science and Technology

1971



Nautical Studies, Civil Engineering and Building students housed in Princess Mary Barracks

## MOULDED ME INTO A BETTER PERSON



**KATHERINE GOH**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, GSY GLOBAL  
CLASS OF 1999  
SINGAPORE MARITIME ACADEMY

She chose to take up a Diploma in Maritime Transportation Management because she was passionate about it. “Singapore Polytechnic prepared me for my career through the practical applications I learnt and most importantly, through the six-month Industrial Training Programme,” Katherine Goh shared.

With this experience, instead of going into teaching as she had planned, she ended up starting a company in 2002, GSY Global Pte Ltd, which deals with freight forwarding, packing and crating services and logistics.

In 2004, she started GSY International Pte Ltd, a marketing house specialising in exporting home, gifts and accessories products. The company has a factory in Cebu, Philippines, where skilled craftsmen and weavers use natural materials such as corn husk, raffia, rattan, bamboo, beads, glass, seashell and wood to make handicrafts.

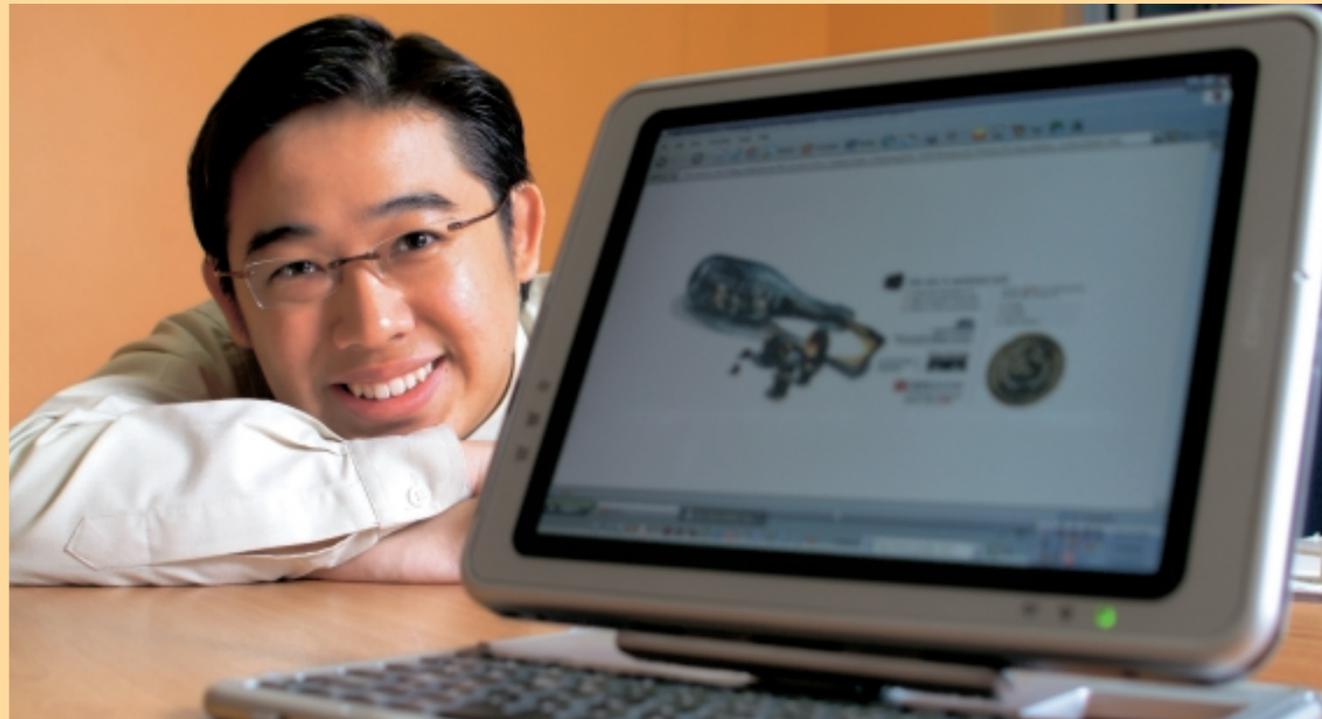
A gutsy move for someone who graduated from a course designed to train junior executives for shipping services companies. In the first year alone, her company registered a turnover of \$500,000.

To students who cannot decide between a polytechnic and the junior college-to-university route, she said, “If you think you prefer a more practical, independent and disciplined environment, a polytechnic is the one which will give you all these.”

And more too. Katherine remembered her time at Singapore Polytechnic fondly. “My lecturers were caring and good mentors,” she shared. The lessons she had, the time they spent with her and the total SP experience have shaped her. “Singapore Polytechnic moulded me into a better person.”

She feels a sense of gratitude towards her alma mater and hopes that it will mould more students into successful people who will contribute to society.

# MADE ME A WELL-ROUNDED RISK-TAKER



**NICHOLAS AARON KHOO**  
**PRINCIPAL, DAY SOLUTIONS**  
**CLASS OF 1998**  
**SCHOOL OF INFO-COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

**A**rmed with a Diploma in Computer Information Systems from Singapore Polytechnic, he marched right into the unknown as an entrepreneur while many of his compatriots headed for the safe sanctuaries of salaried employment.

Nicholas Khoo dived into his first business right after National Service, dealing in desktop computers and accessories for six months. Then, he started Day Solutions Pte Ltd, which develops software applications for the web and wireless space as well as provides interactive multimedia design and content.

This fearless risk-taker feels that his education at Singapore Polytechnic has helped him in his chosen path. "The poly not only trained us to be programmers, it also trained us to develop IT business systems," he said. "We were trained to see how these businesses worked."

He explained that this was important as he had to understand how a client's business functioned first in order to automate it. "The lecturers encouraged us to do a lot of

commercial projects and they encouraged us to be more hands-on. Overall, they tried to develop us in a well-rounded way, which I really appreciate," he added.

More than just a computer geek made good, he started the school's first debating team and saw it transform from underdogs to champions. He also graduated among the top students of his batch, receiving the Certificate of Merit with book prizes from Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard, and was invited to be the valedictory speaker at the graduation ceremony.

Impressive. But when this young entrepreneur chose to go to a polytechnic instead of a top junior college, many of his friends and college lecturers thought he was crazy. "Well, at least they don't think so now!" he said with a smile.

"I've always been proud to be from Singapore Polytechnic and have really fond memories of the place," he declared. "May it continue to produce great students who are academically strong, on the cutting-edge and who possess a good sense of social responsibility."

At the 4th graduation ceremony held that year, Dr Toh unveiled the new plans and vision to turn the Polytechnic into a Technological Centre for Malaysia. Polytechnic students were elated as the standard of their qualifications was immediately raised. In the meantime, Singapore was experiencing a politically and socially volatile period. Although the communist threat was diminishing, the Indonesian confrontation and a bomb explosion in MacDonald House in 1965 were affecting the country's progress and stability.

A year after Dr Toh's optimistic announcement, Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9 August 1965. The nation was stunned as they saw the vision of a secure prosperous island with a large hinterland shattered irrevocably. With the separation, a bleak future awaited the young nation as she faced slow economic growth, high unemployment, high birth rate, inadequate housing, hygiene and education. Her economy depended on entrepot trade and British military spending.

The withdrawal of the British military forces from Singapore, which was completed in 1971, dealt another big blow to the struggling country with the disappearance of some 30,000 jobs and a huge loss of earnings. At the same time, a debate was brewing about the Polytechnic's progress towards university status. Such a development meant that the government could face the risk of producing too many degree holders chasing too few jobs.



## A FABULOUS START TO A CELEBRATORY YEAR



It was a red carpet event with guest-of-honour President S R Nathan given a rousing welcome by students, complete with Malay *kompang* and a lion dance. On campus to officially open the Singapore Polytechnic Convention Centre and Plaza, the President also launched the Polytechnic's 50th Anniversary Celebrations that February evening.

With the push of a lever, President Nathan, flanked by Acting Education Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Mr Leong Charn Huen, Deputy Chairman, Singapore Polytechnic's Board of Governors, and Mr Low Wong Fook, Singapore Polytechnic's Principal, lighted a giant 50th Anniversary logo bearing the slogan "Opening Minds, Shaping Lives", illuminating the buildings around the Plaza and the Convention Centre in a light bath. Earlier, President Nathan toured the official exhibition and unveiled an oil painting of the new Convention Centre and Plaza by Ong Kim Seng to officially open the facility.

Chairmen – 50th Anniversary Launch Committee:  
 Mr Chee Sing Fong  
 (Director – Estates & Development)  
 Mr Ong Eng Chan  
 (Director – School of Mech & Mfg Eng)

1971

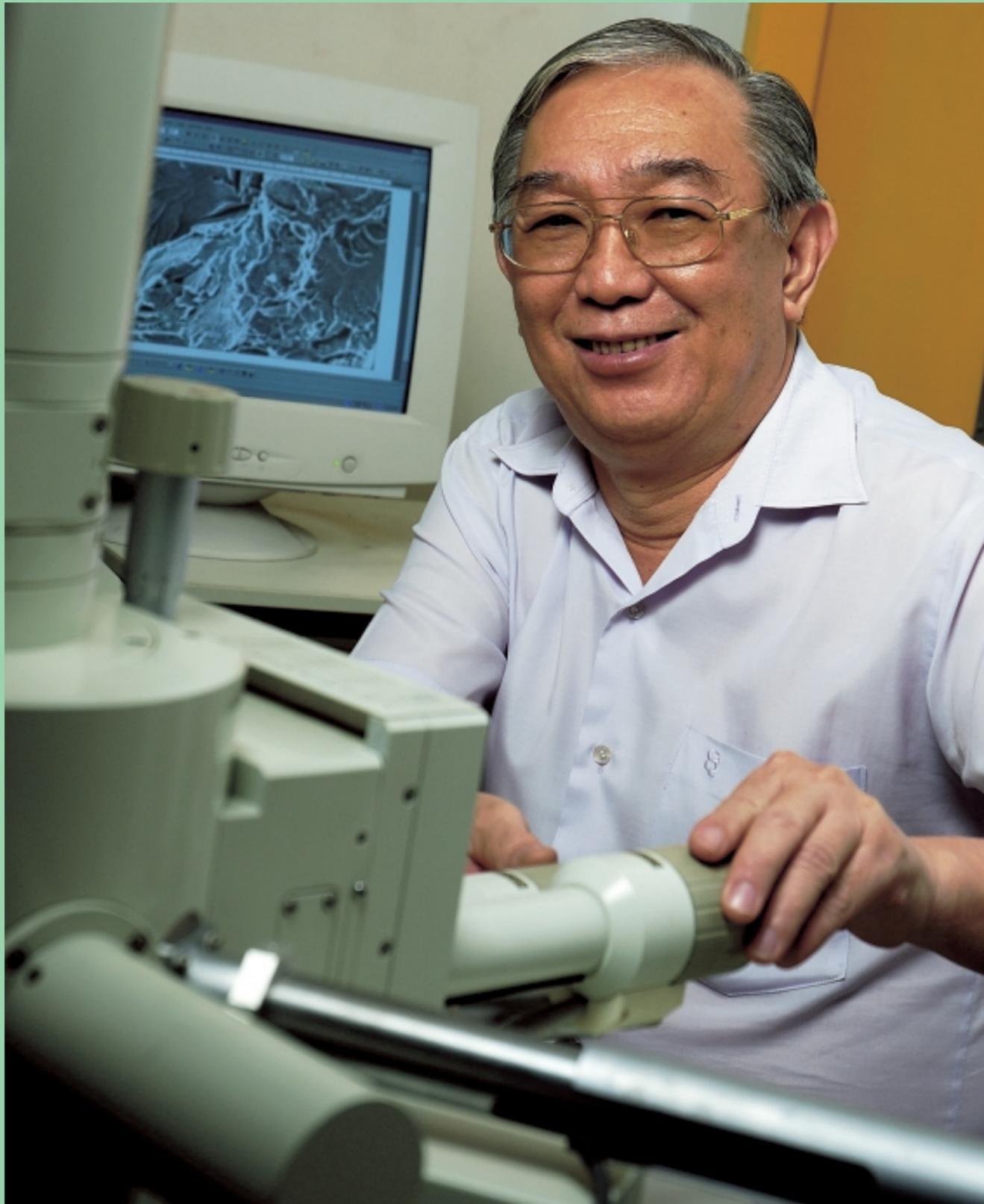


Present campus site at Dover Road chosen as permanent home of the Polytechnic

1972



Ayer Rajah Road campus completed. Polytechnic began functioning on three campuses



LEE LYE HOCK  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT OFFICER, SCHOOL OF MECHANICAL & MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING

## GROWN ROOTS IN A CARING POLYTECHNIC

It is his first job for “38 solid years” right from secondary school in 1966. Through it, Lee Lye Hock raised two children, now both in their thirties and graduates from Nanyang Technological University.

This former office boy is now a technical support officer with the School of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering – Materials Laboratory. He maintains lab equipment, sets them up for experiments and helps out during lab sessions. He also updates lab records, operational manuals and experiment procedures.

When asked about job satisfaction, he laughed and exclaimed, “How to describe that?” And then sobered up sufficiently to explain how he felt good when students are doing all the experiments happily and the satisfaction he derived from learning to operate instruments such as the scanning electron microscope in the materials lab.

“Actually, it can do a lot of things, like manipulation of images to analyse the fracture surface ... but wait, if I say some more, I might confuse you with all the scientific terms and theories,” he chuckled.

In fact, there are times he has problems with the equipment himself, and he would turn to the lecturers. “Most of the lecturers help us in our daily work. As they are more well-versed with the subject matter, they can

explain the operations to us.”

The students pitch in at times too. “Singapore Polytechnic students are courteous, humble and cooperative. Sometimes, they are very helpful too. There may be extra calculations we don’t know about, and they would explain them to us and work together with us on the experiments.”

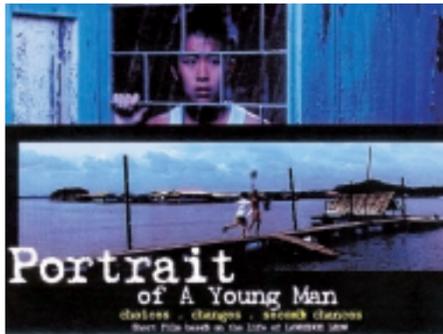
It seems that the drive to learn is very strong not just among the students but also among the technical support staff like Lye Hock. In the early years, he took up technical certificate courses at the Vocational & Industrial Training Board (now Institute of Technical Education), paying out of his own pocket until Singapore Polytechnic started sponsoring the courses in 1973.

“We took up the courses on our own initiative to upgrade ourselves,” shared Lye Hock. “Later on, when SP saw that many staff were taking up these courses, they started sponsoring them, without any bond.”

This caring culture at Singapore Polytechnic has engendered strong employee loyalty. As Lye Hock explained, Singapore Polytechnic is good to have looked after him for so long.

“I have grown roots in SP already. Even a scud missile cannot move me!” declared Lye Hock with guffaws.

## VISUAL AND AUDIO FEAST



Adding music and drama to the celebrations were two specially produced videos that were screened during the official launch and the duration of the exhibition. They were extra special as the videos were scripted, directed, produced and acted by Polytechnic staff and students.

Re-enacting the rags to riches story of alumnus Lawrence Leow was the video 'Portrait of a Young Man'. It captured his difficult childhood days, his transformation while studying at Singapore Polytechnic and his subsequent climb to become Executive Chairman of Crescendas Group.

On a lighter vein but equally engaging was the MTV-style music video starring student talents on campus. Titled 'A New Day', it aptly portrayed the Polytechnic in a new light. At the same time, it celebrated the vibrant and creative spirit that has been so inspiring in the last 50 years and that will continue to move Singapore Polytechnic forward.

Chairmen – Exhibition Committee:  
Mrs Lam Yoke Peng  
(Director – Language & Communication)  
Mrs Fang Sin Guek  
(Director – Library)

Against this tumultuous backdrop, Dr Toh had been negotiating with Professor Lim Tay Boh, then vice-chancellor of the University of Singapore to take the professional courses into the varsity. Dr Toh felt that Professor Lim was the best person to approach as he was aware of the country's developments and the government's industrialisation plans. To much disappointment, the professor preferred to keep the university's identity as an academic institution rather than dilute its status with professional courses.

A turn of events occurred when Professor Lim passed away while on an overseas study tour in October 1967. Dr Toh was not one who waited for things to happen. When he was appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Singapore in April 1968, he activated the transfer of the professional schools from Singapore Polytechnic. Later that year, the Board of Governors decided to abandon the technical university idea.

The School of Accountancy moved out of the Polytechnic and merged with the university's Department of Business Administration. The transfer of the other two schools resulted in two new faculties in the university, namely the Faculty of Architecture and the Faculty of Engineering. The two faculties, however, continued with their operations at Prince Edward Road campus. The Architecture Faculty later moved out to accommodate the expansion of Engineering.

## HONED MY LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS ACUMEN



**LAWRENCE LEOW**  
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, CRESCENDAS GROUP  
CLASS OF 1978  
SCHOOL OF MECHANICAL &  
MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING

just 24 years old. Fast forward nearly two decades later in September 2000, he won the Entrepreneur of the Year award as the head honcho of Crescendas Group.

He feels that "SP has played a significant part in Singapore's economic success" by supplying a constant stream of graduates that meet the needs of the various industries.

"I always regard my years in Singapore Polytechnic as the crucial years of my life. It was in SP that I learnt as a Mechanical Engineering student to appreciate and analyse details accurately," he shared. "These attributes are very important in business and they have been instrumental in helping me manage my business."

Coming from a man who has sterling results to show, one would do good to listen. The Crescendas Group's turnover is about \$150 million, with a diversified portfolio in property, electronics, healthcare, leisure and logistics.

As a respected business leader, Lawrence is routinely quoted in the media on financial and business matters, as well as on his myriad social contributions through ASME, National Arts Council, sports, youth and other grassroots activities.

Success has not, however, made the man forget his roots though. Lawrence remembered his time at Singapore Polytechnic fondly. "I truly cherished the camaraderie, not just among friends, but also with lecturers and instructors who were often a source of inspiration."

This achiever was more than just a bookworm in Singapore Polytechnic. He was also involved in badminton, table tennis and chess. "The co-curricular and group activities provided me the opportunity to learn the essence of teamwork, and hone my skills in leadership and human interaction."

"I have in no doubt benefited greatly from this very enriching experience at SP."

This Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP) was once a sales engineer before he started a company to provide local courier services. He is the ordinary Singaporean made good, and very good too, as Executive Chairman of Crescendas Group, President of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME), and now NMP.

For Lawrence Leow, starting his own company proved to be a stepping stone to business success when he was

1973



New Boat and Radar Station at Pasir Panjang completed



Mr V P W Ager appointed principal

SPH – The Straits Times

# MADE ME PROUD OF WHERE I CAME FROM



**LIM CHIN AIK**  
THE FIRST STUDENT, REGISTRATION NO. 1

**A**s the first student of Singapore Polytechnic, with registration number 1, Mr Lim Chin Aik is special to the Polytechnic. Even more special is his sense of loyalty even though he did not graduate from it, but from the London Advertisers' Association.

In 1957, he was in the first batch of students at Singapore Polytechnic studying for a part-time Diploma in Advertising. The company he was working for then, Nestle, had mooted the idea for an advertising diploma to Singapore Polytechnic and had sponsored him for it.

After two years, Mr Lim and his classmates were transferred out of Singapore Polytechnic as the course was taken over by the Advertisers' Association. Yet, when asked by former principal Mr Khoo Kay Chai to serve in the Singapore Polytechnic Graduates' Guild, he did not hesitate to devote his evenings and lunchtimes to it.

"My wish is that graduates will not forget where they come from and although they have improved themselves, they should be grateful to be able to be where they are because of the Polytechnic," the 80-year-old said.

Although he felt that he did not qualify totally to be part of the Graduates' Guild, he was very happy to serve when invited to. Nowadays, even though he is retired and based in Malaysia, he travels back to Singapore to attend meetings at the Guild House at least once a month.

He is clearly proud of the Guild House. "This is a very nice place. This is the place where graduates can come back to meet their old friends. Regardless of whether you have a degree or not, surely friendship must count," he said.

And his enthusiasm does not just stop with alumni work. A grandpa seven times over, he has no qualms about his grandchildren studying at Singapore Polytechnic. "I have a grandson now in ACS Independent. If he wants to go to the Polytechnic, I would certainly encourage him."

The transfer of professional courses was likened to the separation of conjoined twins according to Dr Lee Kum Tatt, then a member of the Board of Governors. "Both twins must live and grow independently, each through its own resources and conviction. It was a very delicate operation." Staff morale was low as colleagues went different ways. Some moved to the university. Others left academia for the private sector. The rest remained in the Polytechnic. By 1969, the transfer was completed and the restructured Singapore Polytechnic offered courses in two schools – the School of Industrial Technology and the School of Nautical Studies.

By then, the Polytechnic was facing space problems with increased enrolments. Principal Edis announced that the Polytechnic would have to move to a bigger site to accommodate the growing number of students and additional courses in the future. The Board of Governors was asked to help look for more space for the Polytechnic. In record time, a temporary annex of 45,000 square feet was built at the junction of Shenton Way and Maxwell Road, on a piece of land between the Polytechnic and the Singapore Conference Hall.



## MEMORIES



President S R Nathan graduated from the University of Malaya the exact year when Singapore Polytechnic was born. No one would have felt more nostalgic than our honourable guest as he reminisced and enjoyed the delightful walk down memory lane in the 50th Anniversary Exhibition which displayed old photographs and various aged paraphernalia, reminding everyone of the Polytechnic's rich heritage.

Chairmen – Exhibition Committee:  
Mrs Lam Yoke Peng  
(Director – Language & Communication)  
Mrs Fang Sin Guek  
(Director – Library)

1974



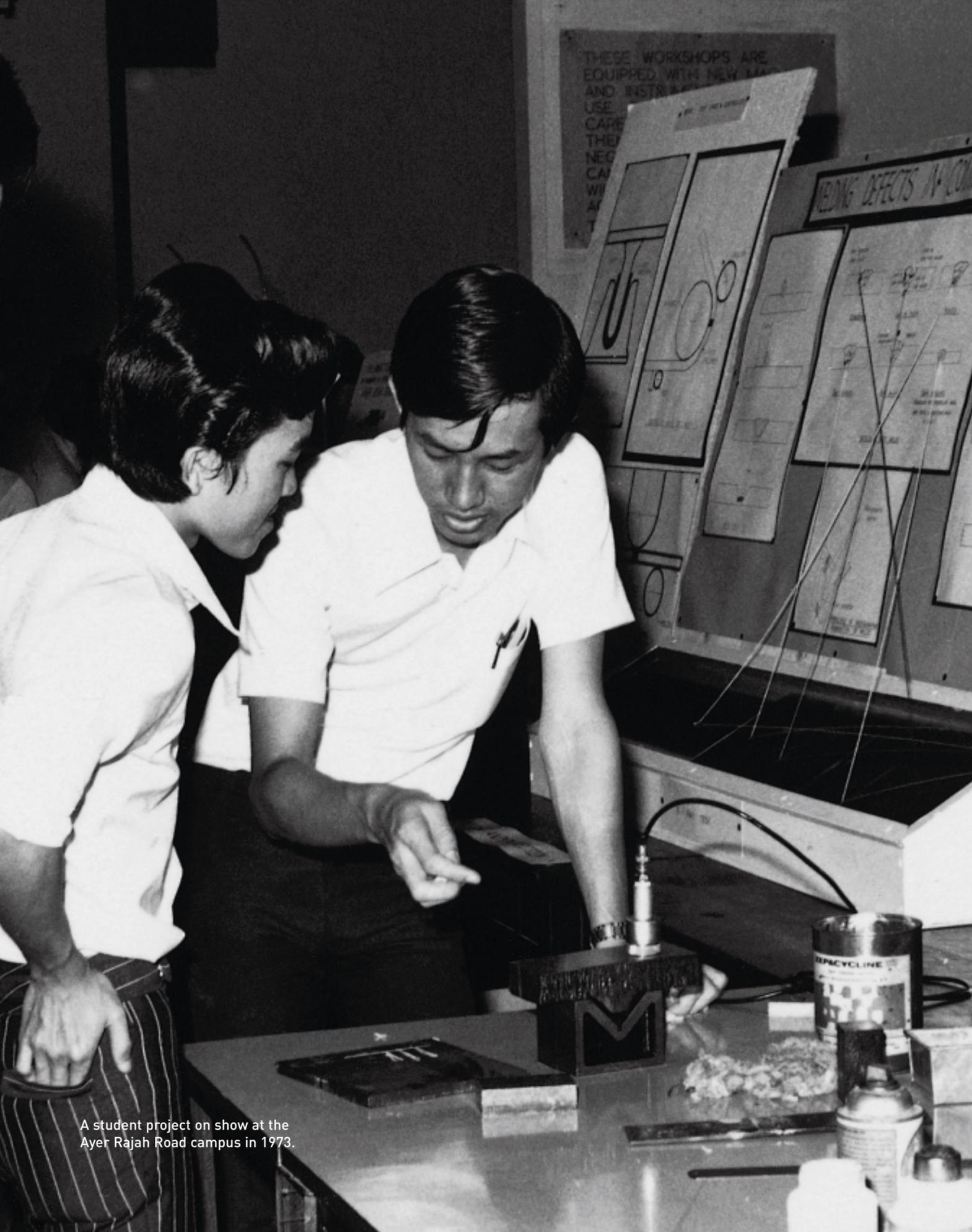
Construction of Dover Road campus began

1975



Foundation stone for new campus laid by Dr Toh Chin Chye on 12 April

Mr Low Guan Onn appointed Chairman of the Board of Governors



A student project on show at the Ayer Rajah Road campus in 1973.

The search for a site for the new campus took longer. The first consideration was a land opposite Prince Edward Road campus which is now the MAS Building. For economic reasons, this site was not selected. The second consideration was the Bukit Timah campus of the University of Singapore, which would be available when the university moved to Kent Ridge. This was found to be unsuitable as the buildings were not designed to accommodate the heavy machinery needed by a technical institution.

Two more temporary premises were created at the former British government land in Ayer Rajah and Princess Mary Barracks at Dover Road. Thus, the Polytechnic operated in three campuses from 1972 to 1978. The occupation of Princess Mary Barracks turned favourable for the Polytechnic for it had first-hand information on the availability of a larger plot of land that would become its permanent home. The over 30-hectare land surrounding the barracks was ideal for the Polytechnic's present needs and future expansion, and planning began immediately.

On 12 April 1975, Chairman of the Board and Minister for Science and Technology, Dr Toh Chin Chye laid the foundation stone of the new campus. A significant moment, no doubt. But the visionary leader and champion of Singapore Polytechnic had already put the institution on a strong footing 16 years ago when he took over the chairmanship. It was time to pass the baton. The institution then had entered a new era of rapid development, amidst storms on perfectly sunny days.



## FAME IN FLUX



The most wonderful feeling for any aspiring artiste is to work together with renowned performers. A minute of fame perhaps but certainly a lifetime of great memories for those who shared the stage with the Chambermaids, Huili Academy of Fine Arts, Lindy Hop Ensemble, Rhythm Masala and the T'ang Quartet to open FLUX, the three-week International Cultural Festival.

Mr Cedric Foo, Minister of State for Defence officiated at the launch.

Among the many events which made up the festival was a Dance Fiesta, featuring secondary school students. About 500 students and 50 staff and alumni performed in the Polytechnic's first-ever arts festival which was opened to the public from March to April 2004.

Chairmen - Intl Cultural Festival Committee:  
Mr Tan Chin Chye  
(Deputy Director - Student & Alumni Affairs)  
Ms Hope Lee Hooi Meng  
(Manager - Student & Alumni Affairs)

**1975** ITC courses transferred to Industrial Training Board

**1976** Polytechnic restructured into nine academic departments and divisions

**1978**



Dover Road campus completed



Mr Khoo Kay Chai confirmed first local principal after two years in acting capacity.

“ On behalf of the entire QUT community, let me extend our very best wishes to the Principal, Mr Low Wong Fook, staff, students and alumni on reaching this milestone. Such a milestone provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the many achievements that your distinguished organisation has made since its foundation in 1954. We look forward to further developing and strengthening the ties of friendship and collaboration between our two institutions.”

*Prof Peter Coaldrake  
Vice-Chancellor, Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

“ Zhejiang University extends its sincere congratulations to Singapore Polytechnic on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary. Zhejiang University values its good relationship with Singapore Polytechnic and looks forward to further collaboration in future.”

*Prof Pan Yunhe  
President, Zhejiang University, China*

Active research and development work in fields such as robotics.



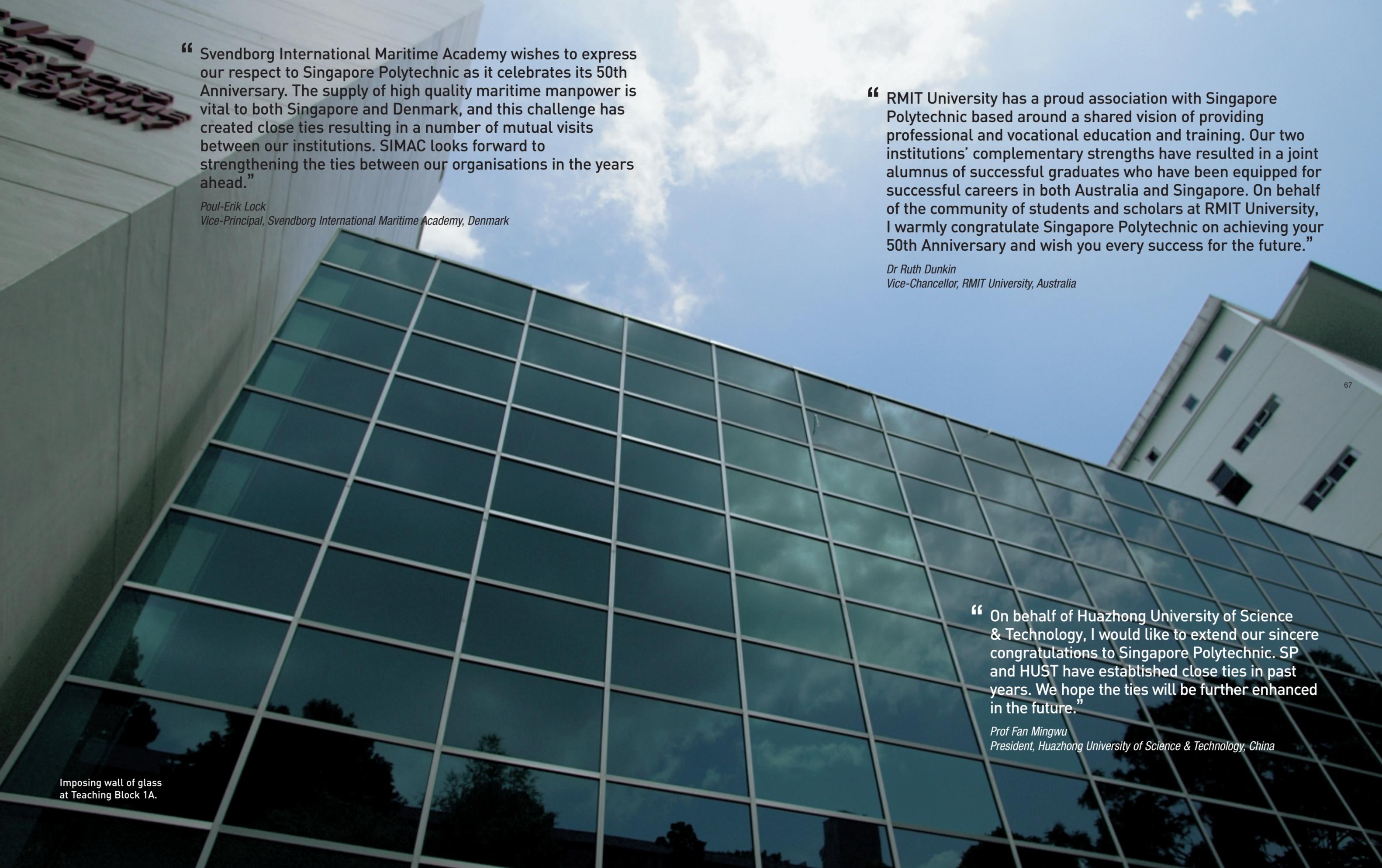
“ AMC is proud to have a long-standing and strong association with Singapore Polytechnic and recognises its standing in the international maritime education and training community. We congratulate Singapore Polytechnic on its achievements as it celebrates its 50th Anniversary and we look forward to maintaining our close ties into the future.”

*Dr Neil Otway  
CEO and Principal, Australian Maritime College, Australia*

“ I congratulate the Singapore Polytechnic for building a solid reputation on the excellence of your engineering and technology education over the past 50 years. I am indeed heartened to see that the Singapore Polytechnic has also taken a strong interest in the arts. I understand that one of the important pillars of your mission is “unleashing creativity, innovation and enterprise” and that your students will soon be able to choose general elective modules in the arts as well. This is a very progressive and timely move.”

*Dr Lee Boon Yang  
Minister for Information, Communications & the Arts  
at the opening of ART@SP Showcase  
14 April 2004*

The concert band giving one of its rousing performances, this time at the Esplanade.



“ Svendborg International Maritime Academy wishes to express our respect to Singapore Polytechnic as it celebrates its 50th Anniversary. The supply of high quality maritime manpower is vital to both Singapore and Denmark, and this challenge has created close ties resulting in a number of mutual visits between our institutions. SIMAC looks forward to strengthening the ties between our organisations in the years ahead.”

*Poul-Erik Lock  
Vice-Principal, Svendborg International Maritime Academy, Denmark*

“ RMIT University has a proud association with Singapore Polytechnic based around a shared vision of providing professional and vocational education and training. Our two institutions’ complementary strengths have resulted in a joint alumnus of successful graduates who have been equipped for successful careers in both Australia and Singapore. On behalf of the community of students and scholars at RMIT University, I warmly congratulate Singapore Polytechnic on achieving your 50th Anniversary and wish you every success for the future.”

*Dr Ruth Dunkin  
Vice-Chancellor, RMIT University, Australia*

“ On behalf of Huazhong University of Science & Technology, I would like to extend our sincere congratulations to Singapore Polytechnic. SP and HUST have established close ties in past years. We hope the ties will be further enhanced in the future.”

*Prof Fan Mingwu  
President, Huazhong University of Science & Technology, China*

Imposing wall of glass  
at Teaching Block 1A.

“ Congratulations! On behalf of the University of Hawaii at Hilo, I extend our best wishes to Singapore Polytechnic as you celebrate your 50th Anniversary. We wish you continued success in your quest of ‘Opening Minds and Shaping Lives’.”

*Dr Rose Tseng  
Chancellor, University of Hawaii at Hilo, United States of America*

“ Massey University congratulates Singapore Polytechnic on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary. Massey University greatly values our working relationship and wishes Singapore Polytechnic every success in the future.”

*Prof Judith Kinnear  
Vice-Chancellor and President, Massey University, New Zealand*



The robotic band, a collaboration between the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering and SMC Pneumatics (SEA) Pte Ltd, is one of many projects with industry.