



CHANGING TYRES ON A MOVING CAR

For decades, people have debated about the inventor of the electric light bulb. Thomas Edison, an American, has been closely associated with its creation. But prior to his accomplishment, an English physicist and a German inventor had separately and successfully developed and installed electric light bulbs in their own countries. It was, however, Edison who demonstrated the first practical use of the light bulb and patented his work. His achievement could only be attributed to his relentless research and eventual commercialisation of the invention.



Facets of campus life in the 90s and 21st century.

Edison made his millions not from the invention of a single light bulb but from building the entire value chain as he spent several years developing the electric industry and making every element of the light bulb into practical, reproducible components. An invention without commercial application, practical production processes and appropriate distribution channels will remain only as good as a concept.

Another famous personality, Leonardo da Vinci, best known for his painting of the Mona Lisa, was a true renaissance man and often hailed as a universal genius. He was ahead of his time and renowned for his incredible knowledge and concepts in architecture, engineering, geometry, the human anatomy and mechanics.

His 'Vitruvian Man' is a revered illustration of the relationship between the human body and the beauty of proportions. The drawing shows a male figure in two superimposed positions with his arms and legs apart, inscribed in a circle and a square in perfect harmonised composition.

Just as the 'Vitruvian Man' is an embodiment of a well-balanced, superbly proportioned individual, the focus of the Polytechnic is on producing renaissance students who are technically sound, creatively inspired and enterprise-driven in the Edison way. This is not simply lip service.

1995



Mr Lim Yong Wah appointed Chairman of the Board of Governors

Principal Khoo Kay Chai retired after 19 years at the helm

1996

Mr Low Wong Fook took over as new principal

1997



Virtual College launched, offering online courses including part-time programmes and various modules



“ On behalf of the management, lecturers and students of Vietnam Maritime University, I would like to express our warmest congratulations on the 50th Anniversary of your esteemed institution.”

Dr Dang Van Uy
President, Vietnam Maritime University, Vietnam

Community service to construct a hard court for a rural school in Vietnam.

PROVIDED ME OPPORTUNITY TO VENTURE INTO BUSINESS

He is director and co-founder of FoodBex Global Pte Ltd. But Shahrin bin Surif has so much of that boy-next-door quality about him that it is difficult to imagine that he is at the helm of one of Singapore's fastest rising companies.

But looks can be deceiving. Get past the boyishly pleasant and genial countenance of this Singapore Polytechnic graduate and you find a razor sharp mind constantly identifying potential business opportunities even in the most mundane of circumstances.

That explains, in part, how Foodbex has more than 250 suppliers and customers ranging from hotels and restaurants to the US military and industrial caterers like Sodexo, one of the largest food and facilities management services companies in the world.

His venture into business started during his Polytechnic days together with his enterprising course mates. "We got the oldest amongst us to register a company to make graduation plaques for the universities," said Shahrin. An initial order of 50 soon encouraged them to expand their scope of business to include printing of name cards and t-shirts for the various student clubs and societies.

Their business venture, however, came to a halt after they graduated from the Polytechnic's School of Business in 1992. But Shahrin and former classmates Edmund Choo and Perry Ong kept in touch. Four years later, together with Edmund's brother Sam – another Singapore Polytechnic graduate – they started selling upmarket espresso machines and commercial blenders.

They ventured into the food and beverage industry in 1998 and discovered that businesses had to deal with many suppliers with various credit and payment terms. Although short-lived, the experience sparked off the idea of a one-stop food and beverage service that provided transparency to the whole procurement process. With that, Foodbex Global Pte Ltd was born in 1999.

For the winner of the Emerging Malay/Muslim Entrepreneur Award 2004, his successes or as he humbly puts it, "all the good things that have happened to me" are due to his lecturers. "Their approach to teaching, their personalities and their ability to deconstruct complex theories made it easy for us to absorb and retain core concepts. But the most important thing was that they were willing to get down to our level just to get through to us".

Excellent lecturers were not the only pluses in campus. For him, life at Singapore Polytechnic was very fulfilling



SHHRIN BIN SURIF
DIRECTOR, FOODBEX GLOBAL
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
CLASS OF 1992

with active involvement in various clubs and societies. And it was where the Business Administration graduate found his future business partners.

The man's affable personality shines through when he states that his trio of Polytechnic mates are still working in the company, each responsible for their own department, sharing an easy camaraderie. Congratulate him on his success and he is quick to point out, "I didn't do this alone. My partners, Edmund, Perry and Sam helped make Foodbex a reality."

For Shahrin, making Singapore Polytechnic his choice after 'O' levels was, not surprisingly, also a business-like decision. "It wasn't an agonising decision. If I chose the junior college route, I may just hang in limbo if I didn't do well enough to go on to university. With the polytechnic route, the worst that can happen is ending up with a diploma and making something of it. Ultimately, life is what you make it out to be," Shahrin shared matter-of-factly.

The Polytechnic under Principal Low Wong Fook has embraced this mission very seriously by implementing an Education Model of the Future that employs multi-mode teaching in a flexible, experiential learning system. The aim is to broaden students' knowledge using a multi-disciplinary approach. Tangible components of this new education model include the Creativity, Innovation and Enterprise (CIE) initiative, modules with such colourful names as GEMs and IDEA, and the drive to equip students with Critical Reasoning Skills (CRS) and to allow the academically outstanding ones to pursue an additional course in a Diploma-Plus programme.

By incorporating CIE into its curriculum and as an intuitive part of its teaching and learning processes, Mr Low is fostering a critical success factor for his staff and students to meet the challenges of new and more complex industries and markets of the future. And to prepare every student more holistically for such a future, GEMs (General Elective Modules), IDEA (Innovation, Design and Enterprise in Action) and CRS are specially designed to complement the Polytechnic's full-time diploma curriculum.

Today, two of the most sought-after qualities employers demand of their employees are the ability to think critically and to communicate effectively. CRS is aimed at meeting this demand. It develops students' analytical and communication skills so that they are able to share and sell ideas across disciplines, in classrooms as well as in their future workplaces.

WORLD'S FIRST 19K PURPLE GOLD



In 2000, the World Gold Council, an association of gold producers, approved the 19k Purple Gold invented by Mr Loh Peng Chum, then a lecturer with the School of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering.

He took two years of research to perfect the process, known as plasma vacuum pressure, to produce an outstanding purple, malleable precious metal.

Purple Gold is being marketed internationally and used in high-fashion jewellery.



Clementi Student Service Centre, a joint project with the Tanjong Pagar Community Development Council and Clementi Citizen's Consultative Committee, opened its doors as part of the institution's effort to reach out to the community



In recognition of its attainment of a commendable level of performance in its journey to excellence, the institution was made member of Singapore Quality Class

THEY CALL HIM “SIR” EVEN WHEN THEY ARE IN THEIR MID-FORTIES

The Poly 50 race was once renamed Poly 30 in honour of Singapore Polytechnic’s 30th Anniversary. And there was a bungalow at the Prince Edward Road campus, designated the Students’ Union House, that few staff members go to as they found it “intimidating”. The students there had the “hostile look”.

These nuggets of information came from the Deputy Director of the Student & Alumni Affairs Department, Tan Chin Chye, a 30-year veteran of Singapore Polytechnic. Once a national swimmer and water polo player, he signed on as a sports instructor in January 1974 and has since been instrumental in developing Singapore Polytechnic’s sporting history.

“SP has a rich history of sporting achievements,” he said, and proceeded to rattle off a list of names effortlessly – Teo Keng Soon, former captain of water polo; Hamid Khan, seven-times national badminton champion; Anthony Chua, multiple East Asia squash champion; Fergus Quek, swimming; Gerald Yeo, Asia’s top junior triathlete; Lim Tong Hai and Indra Sahdan, soccer; and many others.

In the early days, Singapore Polytechnic was operating on three campuses and Chin Chye had to travel to all three almost daily to check on facilities, conduct lifesaving and survival swimming classes and to teach physical education.

Besides teaching, he also witnessed many student protests and confrontations with the administration in the seventies and early eighties. He described the student union leaders then as “powerful” and “radical” with a

“strong voice”. They would march into the principal’s office and surround him, voicing their grievances and unhappiness over certain policies.

“Students then were quite different, perhaps more mature and enterprising due to their age,” he explained. Their mindsets were different as was the society then. These days, with the modular system, students have more hectic schedules and less time to take part in other activities.

“But there are advantages to all these changes,” he was quick to add. “They are necessarily part and parcel of a continuous improvement process to meet the industrial needs and objectives of the nation.” He also pointed out that with the modular system, students do not have to repeat the whole year if they fail one or two modules.

Ultimately, pros and cons aside, the recipient of 2001’s Public Administration Medal (Bronze) felt that the most important thing in life is one’s attitude. “With a positive attitude, you will always find life more challenging and interesting.”

He shared that Singapore Polytechnic gave him two scholarships for further studies and the sense of gratitude he feels has spurred him to contribute as much as possible to students and colleagues who need support.

“I am very indebted and extremely loyal to SP. I have many fond memories too of physical education classes and students. The most satisfying experience is having them still address you as ‘Sir’ even when they are already in their mid-forties.”



TAN CHIN CHYE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT & ALUMNI AFFAIRS

GOOD TASTE



Thanks to the good taste, research and hard work of a group of students, we are now able to enjoy the cool and refreshing Lemonsi Delight.

In 1996, students from the then Chemical Process & Biotechnology Department and their mates from Business Administration were finalists in the National Entrepreneurship Competition.

The concoction of lemon and kalamansi, a superb blend of the alluring Mediterranean and the exotic Asia flavours, won the attention of one of the world's leading food and beverage manufacturer, Pokka Corporation. It included the new drink in its product line to target the young, energetic and health-conscious consumers.

Within a year, the company celebrated Lemonsi Delight's one-millionth can sale and presented a sponsorship of \$10,000 to the Singapore Polytechnic Endowment Fund.

Staff:
Mrs Ser-Low Wai Ming
(Lecturer – School of Chemical & Life Sciences)
Mr Lucas Ng
(Manager – Industry Services)

Students (Chemical & Life Sciences):
Ang Guat Theng
Tan Hui Loo
Jinny Yeo

On the other hand, GEMs ensure learning beyond classrooms, and beyond specific course syllabus and domains. Each GEM class draws students from different schools, different courses and even different cohorts. Thus allowing students, and even staff, from different disciplines to be connected not just physically but through the sharing of perspectives and interests, and hopefully resulting in project collaboration that involves various expertise and fields of study.

A prominent icon of the CIE initiative is the Innovation, Design and Enterprise in Action (IDEA) Centre which runs the IDEA module. IDEA encourages experiential learning.

It challenges students to see things from different perspectives, to question “what’s wrong?” in order to improve, and to brainstorm “how else?” in order to create. For the students, it will be a new mindset to take nothing for granted in their constant search for new knowledge, new ideas and new applications.

The IDEA Centre itself is designed to allow students and staff from various disciplines to come together, share ideas and explore and experience the possibilities of turning them into viable products for commercialisation with the help of industry practitioners and venture capitalists.

Working together is one of the Polytechnic's ways of promoting experiential learning that is vital in an economy that values experience. Collaborative projects with industry, government bodies and overseas institutions allow staff and students to apply their knowledge and problem-solving skills through teamwork.

“ It has been a long road but we have arrived together. The road ahead is wider and faster but together, we will make it. Happy Birthday!”

Joel Tan
Final-year student (2004)
Diploma in Business Administration
School of Business

1999



Singapore Polytechnic received People Developer Standard Award which recognises organisations that invested in its people and had a comprehensive system for developing employees



For its many initiatives to protect and preserve the environment, the Polytechnic was picked for Green Leaf Award (Organisations Category)

The IDEA Centre allows students and staff to come together, share ideas and explore possibilities.

A VISION FULFILLED



In 1994, the School of Chemical & Life Sciences started a new diploma course that sparked off a debate between Singapore Polytechnic and a regional body of healthcare practitioners.

The International Federation of Asian and Pacific Association of Optometrists, representing 18 countries, snubbed the three-year full-time diploma course as inferior and speculated that its graduates would not be recognised.

Over the years, however, the Singapore Polytechnic Optometry Centre has become entrenched as an institution of excellence, producing graduates much sought after by the industry. It works closely with the Eye Institute of the National Healthcare Group and Singapore Optical Trade Association.

The Diploma in Optometry has been over-subscribed by junior college-qualified 'O' levels school leavers since its inception.

An example of this is the Robotic Band, the result of a joint effort of the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering in partnership with the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering and SMC Pneumatics Pte Ltd.

The Robotic Band is often seen at campus functions and even had the opportunity to perform at the Istana for His Excellency, the President of Singapore and his guests.

Also providing an experiential extension to the Polytechnic's CIE drive are the many R&D and learning centres that have sprouted on campus.

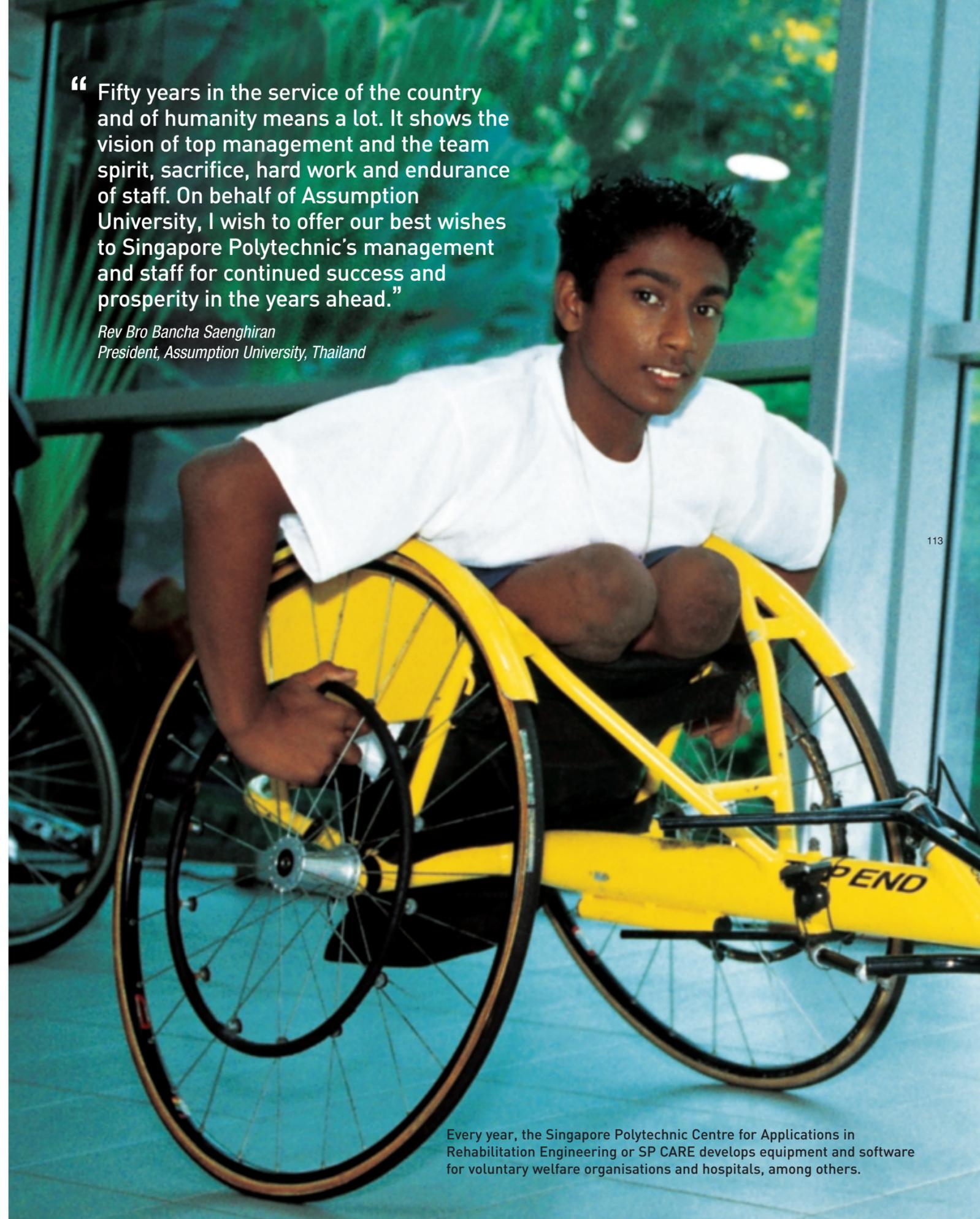
These facilities, like the Optometry and the Cosmetics and Fragrance Centres, the Digital Media Studio, and the Music Technology and various food-related laboratories run courses based on products and services that appeal to the five senses.

There is even a series of cascading bio-streams to serve as an outdoor classroom for landscape architecture students. A new plaza and an integrated state-of-the-art exhibition and convention halls, opened in 2004 right next to Dover MRT Station, provide a multi-sensory environment for networking and knowledge sharing and for showcasing talents, innovations and achievements.

On its part, the Department of Educational and Staff Development established an Innovation Processes Section in 2003 to promote the integration of creativity and innovation into the curriculum and the teaching culture.

“ Fifty years in the service of the country and of humanity means a lot. It shows the vision of top management and the team spirit, sacrifice, hard work and endurance of staff. On behalf of Assumption University, I wish to offer our best wishes to Singapore Polytechnic's management and staff for continued success and prosperity in the years ahead.”

*Rev Bro Bancha Saenghiran
President, Assumption University, Thailand*



2000



Singapore Maritime Academy was formed with the merger of the Polytechnic's Department of Maritime Technology & Transportation and the Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore's National Maritime Academy



100,000th graduate received his diploma at the 40th Graduation Ceremony

Every year, the Singapore Polytechnic Centre for Applications in Rehabilitation Engineering or SP CARE develops equipment and software for voluntary welfare organisations and hospitals, among others.

“ We share the common goal to be world-class, innovative and forward-thinking institutions producing graduates who are recognised for their cutting-edge expertise, flexibility and ability to apply their knowledge to find creative answers to new problems. Our two institutions have a long history of cooperation, which will certainly be continuing into the future.”

*Prof Glyn Davis
Vice-Chancellor, Griffith University, Australia*



VIPs at the 50th Anniversary Golf Tournament: (from left) Deputy Chairman of the Polytechnic's Board of Governors Mr Leong Charn Huen, Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Chairman of the Golf Tournament Committee MAJ (NS) George Wong and Board member Prof Er Meng Hwa.

Besides the new education model and CIE initiative, creating a unique Singapore Polytechnic experience for students and making the organisation a great place to work are the other thrusts in the re-branding effort of the institution being championed by Principal Low.

This is to ensure that it moves closer to becoming a world-class institution with global recognition as an indisputable leader in polytechnic education.

Despite its challenging early years, the Polytechnic has gained an excellent reputation in Singapore and the world. This is due largely to its proactive stance to continually adapt to changing needs. The bold re-branding exercise aims to reinforce this.

The impetus to make quantum leaps while staying on track in the last 50 years has borne fruit. Singapore Polytechnic's graduates readily find employment and do well in their chosen fields, in many instances even better than their university counterparts, judging from the findings of employment surveys.

As a result, over the years, more and more top secondary school leavers opted for Singapore Polytechnic as their first choice to further their education. One of these was Ms Teng Li Yeng who became the first polytechnic graduate in Singapore to receive the prestigious Public Service Commission (PSC) Overseas Merit Scholarship in 2002.



ON THE GREEN FOR A GOOD CAUSE



It seemed like just another day on the green at the Raffles Country Club and National Service Resort and Country Club. But there was nothing ordinary about the 510 golfers who had descended on the green, putts, clubs and caddies in tow. Their purposeful strides told of the game they would play to raise funds. And raise the funds they did – \$100,000 over 18 holes in 10 hours under the scorching sun.

Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan mingled with and pitted swings against members of the Singapore Polytechnic Board of Governors, staff, alumni and some students.

Fun it may have been but this event, together with Singapore Polytechnic's other fundraising events over the year, had benefited the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) and the President's Charity Challenge, among others. In commemoration of its 50th Anniversary, this institution with a heart had raised more than \$2 million for charity.

Chairman – Golf Tournament Committee:
MAJ (NS) George Wong
(Managing Director & Principal Consultant –
Hoclink Systems and Services
1973 Alumnus – School of Mech & Mfg Eng)

2000



Electronics & Communication Engineering Department merged with Electrical Engineering Department to form the Electrical & Electronic Engineering Department



Mr Tan Kay Yong (left) appointed Chairman of Board of Governors

2001

The Polytechnic satisfied requirements for ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 certifications

Academic departments renamed as schools to better reflect their central role in offering programmes to prepare students for work and life



TEO HOCK HIN
CHAIRMAN, SP BRANCH OF THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (AUPE)

HIS MISSION – TO ENSURE THAT MEMBERS TRULY BENEFIT FROM THE UNION

Not one to shy away from tough action, Teo Hock Hin resigned from the Singapore Polytechnic's Branch of the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees (AUPE) in 1994 when he felt that its leaders were not performing up to par. It was a drastic move considering that he was with the union since 1972 and was the branch's former Secretary for 11 years.

But today, the Technical Support Officer with the School of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering is Chairman of the branch. On why he took up the mantle of leadership again in 2000, he explained, "I wanted to make sure that members truly benefit from the union. Otherwise, what is the *raison d'être* for the union?" he asked rhetorically.

Hock Hin has worked tirelessly to preserve the original role of the union in Singapore Polytechnic – to organise non-academic staff and look after their interests and welfare. The union branch in Singapore Polytechnic has grown from dealing mainly with grievances to organising activities for members like parties, excursions to fruit farms and seafood dinner in neighbouring Malaysia. These days, the branch also encourages members to upgrade themselves through courses.

As Hock Hin claims with pride, the branch in Singapore Polytechnic is the only one in the country to pay Mutual Benefit Aid to its members and their immediate family members. When there is a death of either parent or a child aged between one and 17, a sum of money is paid to the bereaved member. In addition, wreaths are sent and branch

officials make it a point to attend the wake or funeral. And when members are hospitalised, union officials, bearing fruit baskets, visit. Such is the union's careful attention to detail in providing that human touch.

Over the years, Hock Hin, who joined the Polytechnic in 1972, has seen significant changes in the union's membership. Previously, only non-academic staff may join the union. Then in 1996 a new category of membership was introduced for those not eligible for collective bargaining. Such officers may join as General Branch members and enjoy all the benefits of union membership except union representation. But it will provide guidance and advice should these General Branch members experience problems with the terms of their employment.

But there has never been an occasion when such a need arose. Hock Hin candidly shared that the union has excellent rapport with the Polytechnic's management. "Excellent beyond words," was how he described it. He added, "The management has always been very willing to resolve any problem, no matter how small or big. Many times, a solution was hammered out over the telephone, dispensing with the need for a meeting."

For the future, Hock Hin shared that the union hopes to make every staff a member and to encourage more young blood to come forward to serve. Ever keen to improve the lot of members, he also looks forward to the day when General Branch members are included in the branch's Mutual Benefit Aid scheme.

KEEN ON GREEN



Life at Singapore Polytechnic is a walk in the park, literally. Rare birds can be seen nesting in the campus' lush greenery with trees older than the institution itself.

Venture a walk into the eco-garden behind Foodcourt 2 and the tranquillity of nature will make you feel detached, in a good way, from the high-technology equipment and lecture notes.

The Polytechnic is serious in being green and environmentally friendly; it has won the Green Leaf Award and was certified ISO 14000 compliant for its environment management system.

Besides these, it has participated in and initiated countless community projects and activities to protect the environment such as establishing artificial reefs and setting up of a river-watch programme to help clean up the Singapore River.

Chairman – Green Committee:
Dr Ng Cheng Siong
(Director – School of Chemical & Life Sciences)

Many Polytechnic graduates who pursued further studies in local and overseas universities have accomplished first-class honours and emerged as top students, citing the years spent in Singapore Polytechnic as excellent foundation for their Bachelor and post-graduate degrees.

Just looking at the past few years in the new century, the Polytechnic has much to be proud of besides the excellent students it has produced. It received the NOVA Merit Award for its innovative use of technology at the 2001 graduation ceremony, the Public Service Award for Organisational Excellence after attaining the ISO 9000, the People Developer Standard and Singapore Quality Class status in 2002. Other certification to add to the Polytechnic's string of accolades includes the ISO 14000 for its environment management system.

Each year, the Singapore Polytechnic Annual Report details the many awards and prizes achieved by the institution and its students in academic, arts, community, industry and sports competitions. These awards are recognitions for the achievements of specified goals and for outstanding personal accomplishments of staff and students.

But to prepare students to be part of a competitive economy and an evolving global marketplace, the Polytechnic continuously benchmarks itself against others through national and international competitions and industry standards.

2001



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Dr Tony Tan (extreme left) officially opened the Singapore Polytechnic Graduates' Guild's new clubhouse

Industrial Training Programme commemorated its 30th anniversary

2002



The Public Service Award for Organisational Excellence, one of the most prestigious service-wide awards, was presented to the Polytechnic

PREPARED ME WELL FOR UNIVERSITY

He calls himself Kenny Yap the Fish and is open about his fish trader status, heedless that others may think him "low class" or a mere fishmonger. In fact, he is neither, but the Executive Chairman and Managing Director of listed company Qian Hu, a leading exporter of ornamental fish.

The path to success has not been smooth. His family had started out as pig farmers. When the government clamped down on pig farms, they converted it into a fish farm in 1985.

But the business lost its entire guppy and goldfish stock in 1989 in a thunderstorm and, a few months later, all its high fin loaches worth \$400,000. With first class honours in Business Administration from Ohio State University in the US, he could have abandoned ship and easily found a job elsewhere but he could not leave his family stranded.

So he stayed, putting in seven days a week, eventually listing Qian Hu in 2000 and winning a host of entrepreneurial awards. He even published a book called "The Making of an Asian Entrepreneur". And he is from Singapore Polytechnic.

After completing his secondary education at Chinese High School, he took up Mechanical Engineering at Singapore Polytechnic, all the while helping out at the pig farm. He chose to go to Singapore Polytechnic because he wanted to study in a freer learning environment, and because many of his good friends went there.

As a child, he was not swayed when his brothers laughed at him for buying a goldfish with a broken tail. As long as he liked the fish, the opinions of others did not matter.

Little wonder then that he chose not to take the traditional route to university via a junior college and went to a polytechnic instead. Looking back, he pointed out that the less structured learning environment at Singapore Polytechnic prepared him for his studies in the United States. He hopes that "SP will continue to produce entrepreneurial managers rather than just diploma holders."



KENNY YAP
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR,
QIAN HU CORPORATION
CLASS OF 1985
SCHOOL OF MECHANICAL &
MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING

The self-proclaimed "buay hee eh" (Hokkien for "fish seller") is happy to identify himself with the Polytechnic. "Those old students who are embarrassed to identify themselves with the Polytechnic basically lack confidence," he noted. "Many successful non-educated people openly acknowledge that they did not complete their formal education because they have the confidence."

This is indeed one confident big fish.



worldskills
SINGAPORE 2004

Industrial
Electronics

Maintained by
Singapore Polytechnic Ltd

“ It was a wonderful learning experience in Singapore Polytechnic. The Polytechnic has definitely made an impact on me as it has taught me all about being independent. I will always treasure the sweet memories I had with my friends and lecturers.”

Anro Raymond
SP Alumnus
Class of 2004

Students regularly excel at national and international competitions like WorldSkills Singapore.

Since 1995, many Singapore Polytechnic students have won in international competitions such as the Bentley Design International, WorldSkills and Robocup contests. Its business students have also excelled at the National Management Games and NTU Financial Futures Games, beating their university counterparts.

In 2004, a bumper crop of 60 students – the largest ever from an institution – received the gold award from the National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA) Council.

Helping and working with the less fortunate make the Polytechnic a well-balanced and outstanding place to study and to work in. Nurturing students with the right values in life is as important as producing well-trained and academically strong individuals.

A fine example is the Singapore Polytechnic Centre for Applications in Rehabilitation Engineering or SP CARE. Every year, through SP CARE, students build useful tools and equipment to improve the daily lives of the physically and mentally challenged.

This spirit of community service extends beyond Singapore's shores. In one project, civic-minded students and staff built underground water storage tanks for villagers in remote Dongxiang County of China to solve their water supply problems. Optometry students have also ventured to places like Cambodia and Vietnam to conduct eye screening and prescribe refurbished spectacles to those in need and who cannot afford them.



A GRAND FINALE



There were squeals of delight and warm handshakes as past and present movers and shakers of Singapore Polytechnic gathered for the 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner, the culmination of a string of exciting celebratory events.

Adding to the significance of the occasion in October was the presence of the new Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, and guests from several countries including Australia, China, Japan and UK.

The 1,500 members of the audience were treated to a truly made-in-Singapore Polytechnic night with enthusiastic performances by staff and students and a walk down memory lane via a video produced in-house. The grand affair was complete with SP concocted noodles and chocolates and a customary toast with the special 50th Anniversary wine.

Chairmen – Gala Dinner Committee:
Miss Caroline Hu Wei Choo
(Director – Human Resource)
Dr Dave Chong Tad Weng
(Director – School of Electrical & Electronic Eng)

2002

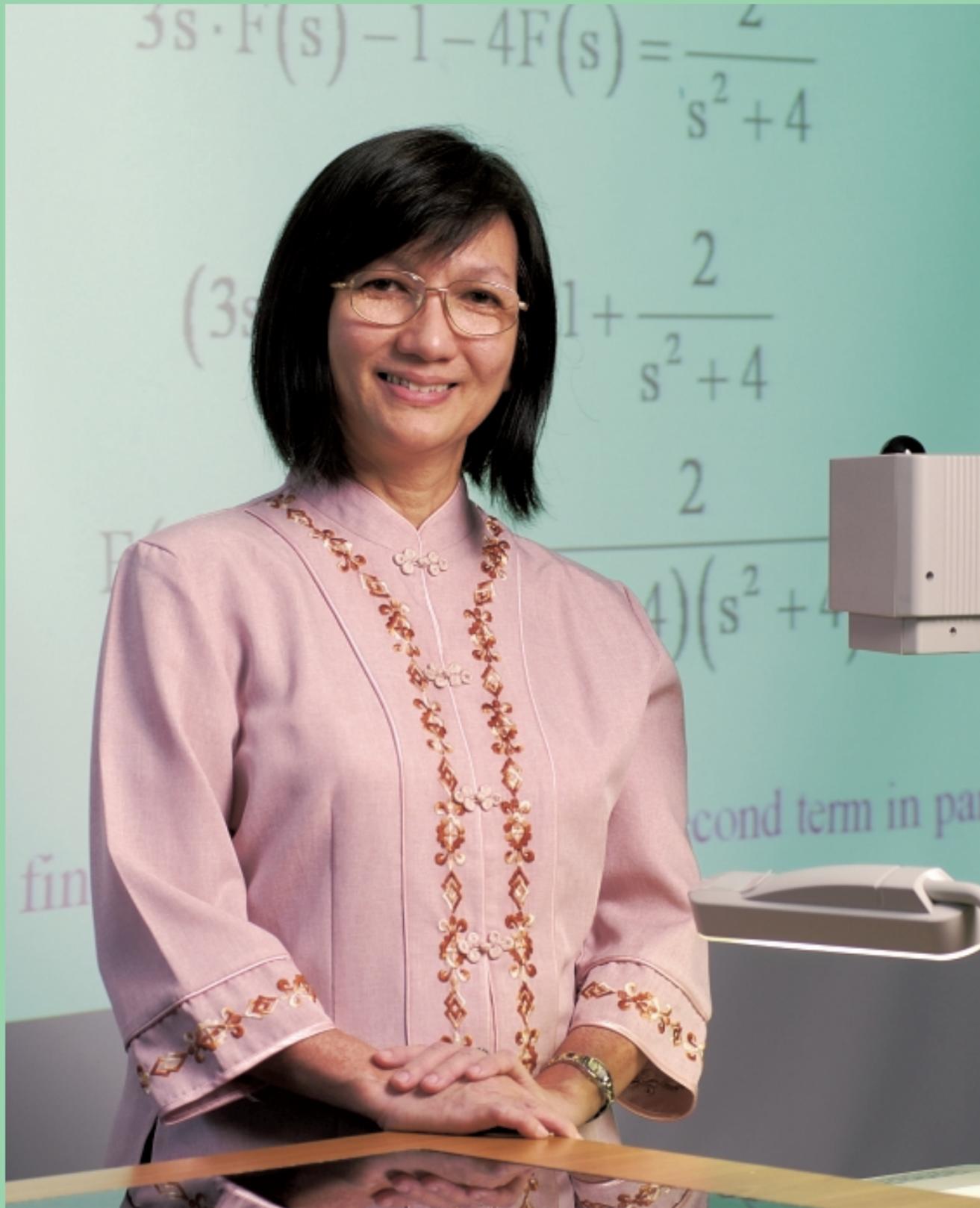


Singapore Polytechnic received its first NOVA Merit Award for innovatively transforming the way its graduation ceremony was conducted since 2001

2003



Official opening of Fifth Phase campus development project by Minister for Education RADM Teo Chee Hean (second from left)



CHENG-WONG LEE LING
LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF MATHS & SCIENCE

THIRTY-ONE YEARS BECAUSE OF STUDENTS, COLLEAGUES AND GOOD LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Hooray, hooray, happy 50th birthday, and keep up the 50 years of nurturing our youth!" This unique birthday greeting came from Mrs Cheng-Wong Lee Ling who has taught in Singapore Polytechnic since 1973 and is still happily entrenched in her teaching shoes. This cheery lady remembered the good old days vividly and with a clarity that will shame many young students who cannot remember their mathematical formulae well.

"At the Ayer Rajah Road campus, we had to bring a portable loudspeaker to class. Sometimes, halfway through a lecture, we would overhear some conversation from the police or some contractors who used walkie-talkies with the same frequencies and were passing by outside the campus. It created some amusement in class."

Lee Ling also treasured the instances when students send her thank-you cards or greeting cards, even after graduating from Singapore Polytechnic. "I really get great satisfaction from that," she quipped.

The sweet-natured and good students are a contributing

factor to the mathematics lecturer's long stint at Singapore Polytechnic. It has been 31 years and still counting. She has never moved on because of the good teaching environment, the wonderful colleagues and the many enrichment programmes for the staff.

"Now and then, there are classes we can attend for free. We try to do a lot of IT courses and apply what we learnt in our lecture presentations." And besides contributing to its staff, Lee Ling noted that Singapore Polytechnic has invested in teaching equipment over the years too. "There are better teaching aids available now," she said.

From chalk boards to white boards, they graduated to overhead projectors, which lecturers had to wheel from the audio visual aids unit to the class and back at the end of the lesson. Now, every classroom comes equipped with an overhead projector and is air-conditioned for comfort. There are also many multimedia rooms equipped with computers and visualisers – an improvement by leaps and bounds that is a boon for both teachers and students.

SOLVING REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS



Final-year students from the Schools of Electrical & Electronic Engineering and Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering have been showcasing their projects over the years.

Each year, the projects increase in number, sophistication and commercial appeal.

The success of these projects is a testimony to the dedication, creativity and collaboration of the teaching staff, students and sponsoring companies.

It demonstrates the effectiveness of the teaching methodologies of the Polytechnic in steering the students towards applying theoretical concepts to create innovative products and solve real-life problems.

On many fronts, staff and students have been doing the nation and Singapore Polytechnic proud. This all-rounded success is reflective of the Polytechnic's commitment to staying relevant.

But keeping up with the times is like "changing tyres on a moving car". The Polytechnic has always kept an eagle eye on emerging technologies and new markets to add new courses and options to its existing curriculum.

When the Air Hub Development Fund was launched in 2002 to strengthen Singapore's position as an aviation hub, the Polytechnic introduced new courses in aerospace electronics and aeronautical engineering.

Life Sciences are another of Singapore's investment in her future and planting the seed of new expertise in these fields, the Polytechnic has offered a Diploma in Biotechnology, with an option in bioinformatics. It has also launched "non-traditional" courses such as Interior Design and Music and Audio Technology.

New technologies play an important role in defining the Polytechnic's learning and communication channels.

SPWireless, a wireless Local Area Network (LAN) enables students and staff to access information and e-learning services in what is fondly referred to as SPICE or the Singapore Polytechnic Intelligent Computing Environment.

2003



New Convention Centre and Plaza project completed

Re-branding of the Polytechnic initiated with a new Education Model of the Future, and with programmes to unleash creativity, innovation and enterprise, to create a unique SP experience for students and to make SP a great place to work

GAVE ME THE DRIVE AND DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED



EDMUND TIE
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, DTZ DEBENHAM TIE LEUNG
CLASS OF 1972
SCHOOL OF DESIGN & THE ENVIRONMENT

He never says die, even when life was really tough. He had enrolled for the six-year Professional Diploma in Architecture at Singapore Polytechnic. After two years, realising that he was not cut out for mathematical stuff like structural mechanics, he took the brave step to switch to the four-year Professional Diploma in Valuation Surveying that opened doors to his career in real estate consultancy.

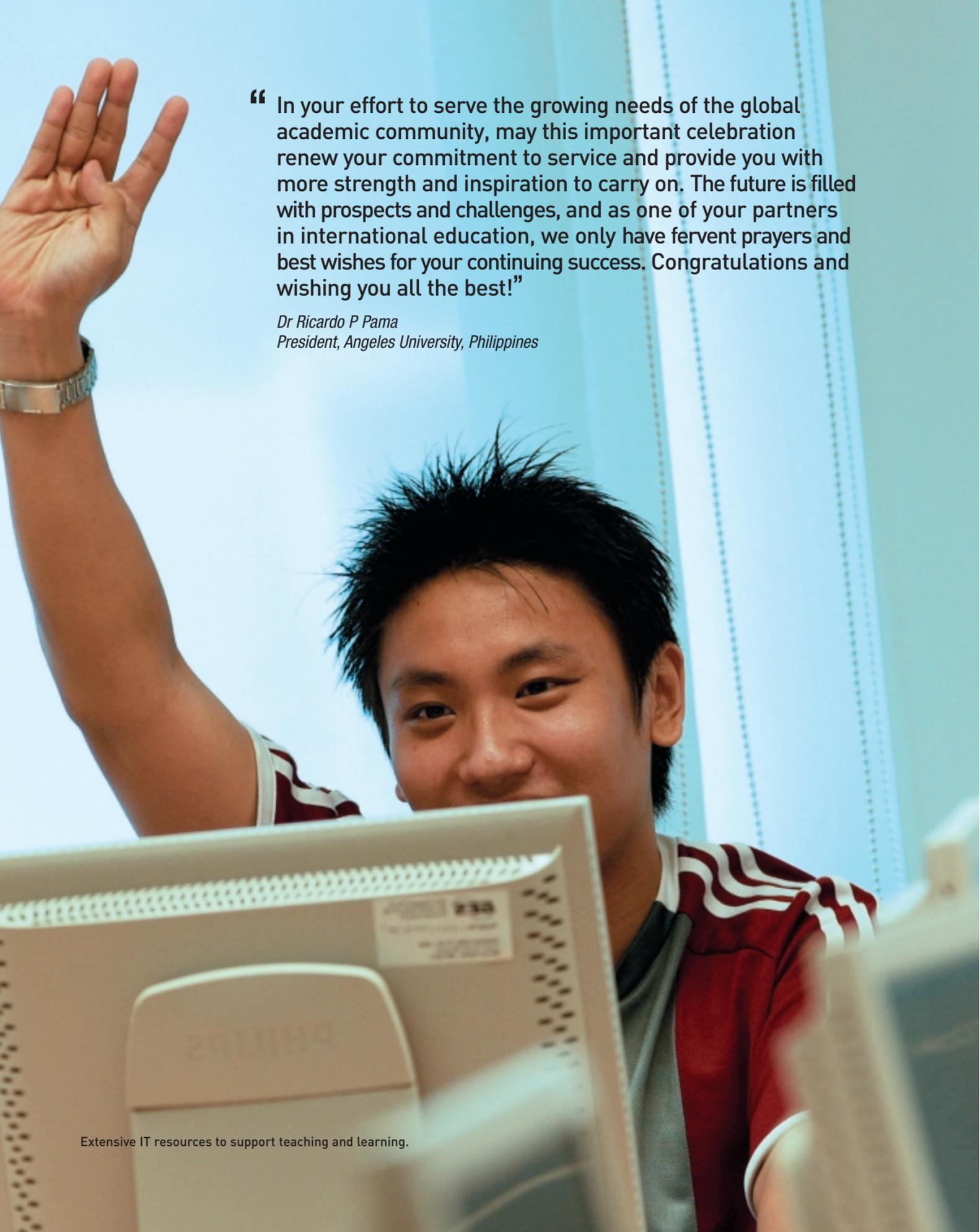
The part-time course required students to undergo an attachment with a professional firm. Every day, he would work from nine to five as a trainee valuer with a chartered surveyor firm for a measly \$75, and then attend lectures from 6pm to 10pm.

He described it as a physically and mentally exhaustive routine. But he stuck it out. Only four out of the initial 40 who enrolled graduated. Edmund Tie was one of them. He credits the baptism of fire for the drive he has today. "My overall Polytechnic experience instilled intrinsic qualities of sheer hard work, drive and determination to succeed," he said.

"In addition, the apprenticeship with the chartered surveyors firm provided me with a wealth of working experience over the four years which no college or university could provide in the same measure."

Today, Edmund is the Executive Chairman of DTZ Debenham Tie Leung (SEA) Pte Ltd, one of the more successful professional property consultancy firms with 193 offices in 46 countries worldwide. He also sits on the boards of several social services and arts groups, and has led many major charity drives, raising funds exceeding \$10 million mainly for the Community Chest. In recognition of that, he was awarded the Public Service Medal (PBM) in 2001.

To those who are considering their options after secondary school, he said, "I would recommend friends and family members to pursue a course at Singapore Polytechnic as I feel it will provide them with a much wider sense of entrepreneurship and drive to succeed no matter what the odds."



“ In your effort to serve the growing needs of the global academic community, may this important celebration renew your commitment to service and provide you with more strength and inspiration to carry on. The future is filled with prospects and challenges, and as one of your partners in international education, we only have fervent prayers and best wishes for your continuing success. Congratulations and wishing you all the best!”

*Dr Ricardo P Pama
President, Angeles University, Philippines*

Extensive IT resources to support teaching and learning.

While state-of-the-art facilities are being installed, older parts of the campus are being demolished to make way for newer structures under the Campus Redevelopment Programme. With the continuous building and rebuilding, change is not the only visible constant on Dover Road Campus since it opened in 1979. The bulldozer is the other.

Backed by a solid reputation, the Polytechnic has set its sights beyond Singapore. To reach out to overseas students in emerging markets such as China, India and Vietnam, Singapore Polytechnic International (SPI) was set up as an independent company.

It aims to create a global village with full-fee paying students from different countries intermingling with their Singaporean counterparts on campus, learning and working together, graduating alongside, and perhaps collaborating again in cross-border businesses in the future.

The Polytechnic that was started in 1954 to meet the needs of Singapore’s post-independence industrialisation programme is now looking to scale greater heights and to explore new territories.

At the same time, the pioneer of technical education in Singapore is visibly gearing itself for the demands of a 21st century learning environment.

It is constantly changing while on the move, fulfilling its mission of opening minds and shaping lives and aiming to make it great as a world-class institution.



A 50th MOMENT IN TIME



Decades from now, future Singapore Polytechnic staff and students will have the opportunity to get a glimpse of what life was like during the first 50 years of the institution. Thanks to a time capsule buried under the plot of green between the Administration Building and the Main Library.

Inside are items that are special to Singapore Polytechnic. The items were chosen based on extensive feedback from staff.

Marking the location of the capsule will be an eye-shaped sculpture, designed by lecturer Choo Keng Hui, to symbolise the Polytechnic’s vision for the next 50 years.

Another sculpture has the Earth in the shape of a diamond held in the hands of staff and students symbolising the Polytechnic’s vision of becoming a world-class institution.

Chairmen – Time Capsule Committee:
Capt Frederick J Francis
(Manager – Singapore Maritime Academy)
Mr Leong Wei Yean
(Corporate Support Officer – Human Resource)

2004

*General Elective,
Creative Reasoning Skills
and Innovation, Design
and Enterprise in Action
modules introduced*



Singapore Polytechnic turned 50. His Excellency, Mr S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore (second from right), launched the year-long celebrations on 13 February at the official opening of the new Convention Centre and Plaza

“ During its 50 years of operation, Singapore Polytechnic has prepared its students to ably cope with the demands of society and has fostered in these same students the ability to contribute to global development as well as Singapore's growth. The current students of Singapore Polytechnic are continuing this great tradition of achievement. I would like to praise you for your effort. Congratulations on the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of Singapore Polytechnic.”

*Nobutoshi Sezaki
Principal, Hiroshima Institute of Technology Polytechnic, Japan*

“ On behalf of Chancellor Birgenau and Executive Vice-Chancellor Gray, I wish to extend our congratulations on your 50th Anniversary. We at Berkeley value our close ties with our fellow Pacific Rim institutions. We wish you many more years of academic excellence! ”

*John Lie
Dean of International and Area Studies, University of California Berkeley, United States of America*

Multipurpose field at the centre of the campus is a hive of student activities throughout the year.

OUR GRADUATES' SUCCESS IN WORK AND IN LIFE IS OUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

Primered and prepared. Careful and inclined to many analogies. These attributes might describe someone who is the head of a corporation. But Mr Low Wong Fook, whom these attributes portray, is not just anybody. He heads an institution that has already proven itself to be good in the last 50 years.

"What I need to do is to bring Singapore Polytechnic to the next level – greatness," he stated. Since taking over the reins from his predecessor in 1996, Mr Low has set the Polytechnic on an uncharted course.

He has placed important emphasis on creativity, innovation and enterprise as well as formulated a new Education Model which will help set Singapore Polytechnic on the path to greatness. Resulting from this new Education Model is the introduction of the General Elective, Critical Reasoning Skills and Innovation, Design and Enterprise in Action Modules.

"In the past, our students are already of excellent stock for the potential employer. Our introduction of the General Elective Modules serves to expose them to varied disciplines. Together with honing their critical reasoning skills and giving them an opportunity to show their creative flair in projects, these modules will help make our students the crème de la crème of employees," said Mr Low.

Behind that personable and affable countenance is a man who is constantly in touch with the big picture without losing the operational nitty-gritty of running the Polytechnic.

On re-branding the Polytechnic, Mr Low peppered his take constantly with sayings and analogies. "Good is the enemy of great. When you're good at doing something well, you're tempted to continue on the same path. This will

prevent you from taking appropriate action to greatness," Mr Low explained.

"We need to collectively convince people to take a leap of faith that comes, of course, with risk. But without taking the risk to travel down a less trodden path, how will we become great?" he asked musingly.

To him, the basic tenet for producing graduates is to first know what the world of the future is going to be like. Simply producing graduates en masse for the market no longer works as there will be trouble should a misfit occur. "During the Industrial Revolution, we were mass producing everything. Today, the way to go is mass customisation," Mr Low said.

"The challenge is to mass produce yet customise in such a way that our graduates will face the job market with basic skills and an extra edge – thus our Diploma Plus." This value-added initiative allows students to undertake advanced programmes in various fields in addition to their diploma studies.

But lest you think Mr Low is given to just ponderous sayings and inspiring analogies, an attempt to throw him off his careful stance backfired as you ask about a typical day in his schedule at the Polytechnic. "A typical day for me is an atypical day," came the tongue-in-cheek retort.

As if to prove this point, he humorously invited a peek into his diary. True enough, it was packed choc-a-bloc with all manner of events, appointments and even meetings on issues that are seemingly unconnected with the Polytechnic.

But, as he explained, "Don't be fooled. Attending these provides me the opportunity to see where and how my staff and students can benefit in the form of new courses, drawing on others' experiences, tapping into these networks

to create potential partnerships and so on."

So what makes Singapore Polytechnic so good? "The people," came the unhesitating reply. Ever mindful of his staff and students, Mr Low stated in no uncertain terms that the defining quality of Singapore Polytechnic is the people. "Physical buildings, labs, offices, we can replicate any time and just as well. But the people factor is the old, new and future dynamic. We need to provide a conducive environment so that they can give of their best."

Mr Low believes that every student and staff has the potential to do great things. He motivates his people through experiential learning by exploring outside the comfort zone and discovering where they want to excel in.

Likewise, the real movers and shakers who guide, coach and inspire future leaders are encouraged to reach out for higher levels of competence in areas outside their expertise.

When asked if he thought youngsters today may not be hungry in the same way as others are in situations where bread and butter issues are crucial, Mr Low crafted his answer with typical care. "They may not be hungry in the conventional sense, but there are different manifestations of that hunger. We need to find creative ways to motivate and challenge them. So don't underestimate and write off what our youngsters can do."

Finally, Mr Low said with pride in his voice, "My proudest achievement is seeing how graduates have done well and become successful. It is seeing how the lessons learnt and the experiences at SP moulded them into what they are today."

With Mr Low Wong Fook at the helm, his finger firmly on the pulsating beat of the institution, staff and students are in for an exciting and rewarding journey ahead.



LOW WONG FOOK
PRINCIPAL (1996-)



TAN KAY YONG
VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE, GLAXOSMITHKLINE
CHAIRMAN, SP BOARD OF GOVERNORS (2000-)

TO BECOME THE INDISPUTABLE LEADER WE MUST NOT BE LIMITED IN OUR AMBITION

In 1977, a young graduate armed with his diploma in Mechanical Engineering from Singapore Polytechnic set out to carve his career by scaling corporate peaks. But he never imagined then, that more than two decades later, he would lead and guide the very same institution that had helped propelled him to his current position as Vice President of GlaxoSmithKline.

Mr Tan Kay Yong is Chairman of the Board of Governors. That Singapore Polytechnic has already produced successful graduates and more importantly, garnered a faithful following of talented students to join its diploma programmes was not lost on the Chairman. He attributed this to the obligation that the Polytechnic has in delivering a very high quality of polytechnic education.

“Over the years, (the Polytechnic) has ensured that it developed strong leadership and management. It has very high quality staff with a system of strong and good governance. It has stayed in close contact with industry and its alumni. Facilities, course structures and pedagogy are reviewed and updated to ensure continued relevance,” Mr Tan emphasised.

On re-branding the Polytechnic to take it from “good to great”, Mr Tan did not miss a heartbeat when he firmly stated, “From ‘Good to Great’ is more than re-branding. It is the continuous pursuit for excellence as we deliver on our core mission. Excellence is a journey, an exciting one.”

When gently nudged to provide a glimpse of the future other than re-branding for the Polytechnic, Mr Tan was quick to point out that the “good to great” aspiration is all encompassing and that delivering his intention of making Singapore Polytechnic the “indisputable leader in polytechnic education” would demand effort and support from all involved. This in itself is already deeply rewarding.

“We must not be limited in our ambition. But whether Singapore Polytechnic continues to be the number one polytechnic depends very much on all staff. Having visited all schools, I am very encouraged by the foresight and passion of our staff in delivering a world-class education.

Together, we can build a standard of education that will set us apart. This is what matters. We must strive to inspire our students to learn and to learn how to learn. We need to prepare our students well. We can only discharge this responsibility if we continue to invest in our staff,” he emphasised.

Of course, being and continuing to stay on top of the game does not mean advancing in the proverbial ivory tower of education. Shared Mr Tan, “We will work closely with government agencies, industry partners and other institutions of learning here and overseas. We are also very privileged to have a very strong and loyal alumni network. Our 125,000 alumni continue to provide us with support and guidance. We will build on these partnerships to help us build our future.”

For Mr Tan, Chairman of Singapore Polytechnic’s Board of Governors, nothing is more satisfying in his term than in sharing the 50th Anniversary Celebration with all staff.

Said the man who is ever so mindful of the staff at Singapore Polytechnic, “The 50th Anniversary marked a very important milestone for us. It marked the contribution and achievement of all staff over this period, from those who joined us during the pioneering days to new staff ready for the next lap of our journey.”

As he concluded, Mr Tan’s tone was resonate with absolute confidence. “Our 50th Anniversary also marked another phase in our strategic development with the clearly stated intent of expanding internationally. This augurs well for Singapore Polytechnic. I am hopeful that we will continue to grow in international reputation and stature.”



“ Our friendship and partnership that have been growing over the years represent a very important component of our international network of cooperation. I would like to wish Singapore Polytechnic continuous and successful development for the well-being of the country and its students, and I most certainly look forward to greater cooperation in the future.”

*Prof Dr h c D v Hoyningen-Huene
Rektor, Fachhochschule Mannheim-University of Applied Sciences, Germany*

“ On behalf of the staff, faculty and students of the California Maritime Academy, I extend our most hearty congratulations to Singapore Polytechnic on its 50th Anniversary. Please accept our best wishes for ‘fair winds and following seas’ as Singapore Polytechnic sails into the future.”

*Dr William B Eisenhardt
President, California Maritime Academy, United States of America*

Teaching Block 11 or more fondly known as Moberly Block is one of the oldest buildings on campus.

“ With over 100,000 alumni and a great history spanning 50 years, Singapore Polytechnic is a model institution for all countries in the region. I am sure the visionary institution will bring more glory for itself and Singapore over the next 50 years.”

*Prof S Sadagopan
Director, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore, India*

“ The University of Strathclyde in Glasgow extends most cordial greetings and warm congratulations to Singapore Polytechnic on its 50th Anniversary. We value our relationship with Singapore Polytechnic and look forward to a successful future together.”

*Prof Andrew Hamnett
Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom*

Scenic bio-streams serve as outdoor classroom for Landscape Architecture students.

“ We are very proud of Singapore Polytechnic as our eldest international partner institution. Singapore Polytechnic not only maintains its enviable reputation as a centre of academic excellence and for producing quality graduates, but it has also built a national and international reputation for its standard of research. As your partner institution, the Mongolian University of Science & Technology would like to wish the Principal Mr Low Wong Fook, all staff and students, warmest regards and all the best for the next 50 years on this most happy occasion.”

*Prof Altangerel Erdenebaatar
President, Mongolian University of Science & Technology, Mongolia*

“ I have fond memories of the canteens, lecture theatres and the wonderful time spent with my classmates and lecturers. Singapore Polytechnic has certainly come a long way. Keep the flag flying high and continue to be a 'Made-in-Singapore' icon in academia, both internationally and domestically.”

*Raymond Choo
SP Alumnus
Class of 1995*



Preparing students for the aerospace industry in the Aerospace Electronics Laboratory.

“ Allow me to convey our University's congratulations as you celebrate your 50th Anniversary as the first polytechnic in Singapore! Our best wishes for the next 50-year period.”

*Prof Dr Martin Stohrer
Rector, The Stuttgart University of Applied Sciences, Germany*



“ Jyväskylä Polytechnic congratulates Singapore Polytechnic on its 50th Anniversary and wishes it all the best for the future. We also look forward to continuing our fruitful cooperation.”

*Mauri Panhelainen
Rector, Jyväskylä Polytechnic, Finland*

Great experience for students
in and out of the classroom.