



PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

19 May 2009

NEW PEAKS OF EXCELLENCE IN THE TERTIARY LANDSCAPE *More Quality Higher Education Opportunities*

"Education is our best investment in Singapore's future"

- Quote from President's speech on 18 May 09

1. Singaporeans can look forward to more opportunities for quality higher education, as Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence, announced today the Ministry's focus on developing three new areas of excellence in the tertiary education sector:

- a) Singapore Institute of Applied Technology (SIAT)
- b) New University-Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Partnership
- c) Establishment of a New Medical School in Singapore

Singapore Institute of Applied Technology (SIAT)

2. The polytechnic sector is a key pillar in our tertiary education landscape, catering to more than 40% of each primary one cohort. Students are doing better at "O" level examinations and more are choosing the polytechnic pathway. They recognise that polytechnics prepare them well with industry ready skills to be highly employable and able to contribute significantly to our economy. MOE will continue to enhance the polytechnic pathway so that it remains an attractive option for our students and at the same time strengthen it so that it remains relevant to today's fast changing environment. To enhance polytechnic education, MOE will expand the existing polytechnic-Foreign Specialised Institute (poly-FSI) initiative so that there are more upgrading opportunities for polytechnic graduates to obtain industry-relevant and reputable degrees.

3. A new institute, namely the ***Singapore Institute of Applied Technology (SIAT)***, will be set up as a distinct entity within MOE which will be responsible to plan, manage and implement degree programmes offered by foreign universities in partnership with the 5 polytechnics. SIAT, as a dedicated entity within MOE, will be more responsive and nimble in working with the foreign universities.

4. SIAT will work with the foreign universities to offer degree courses from 2011 onwards. These degree courses will be mostly conducted in the polytechnic campuses. The foreign universities will award the degrees in their own names, no different in quality compared to their home campuses. SIAT targets to offer places for 2,000 full-time students and 1,500 part-time students yearly by 2015. The full-time courses are

expected to last for up to 2 years while the part-time courses can be expected to take up to 4 years.

5. Beyond the current niche degree programmes offered through the poly-FSI initiative, SIAT will offer more degree programmes in other disciplines such as Applied Sciences and Engineering, Digital Media, and Health Sciences – identified growth areas which will continue to offer promising jobs in our economy. More disciplines could be added later to meet economic and manpower needs. (Please see annex on background on the poly-FSI initiative.)

6. With SIAT, polytechnic graduates will be able to upgrade themselves through full-time and part-time courses without travelling overseas. The overall cost of attaining a degree will be lower as these programmes are conducted locally. The government will also provide subsidies for the foreign universities' degree programmes offered through SIAT.

7. In implementing SIAT, Mr S Iswaran, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education, will act as advisor to the taskforce appointed to look into expanding upgrading opportunities for polytechnic graduates. MOE's Deputy Secretary (Policy), Mr Loh Ngai Seng, will lead the taskforce.

The New University–Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Partnership

8. Singapore's New University, which will open its doors to students in 2011, will have the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as its partner.

9. The New University will be focused mainly on the disciplines of science, engineering, information systems and architecture. A core team of experienced professors from MIT will play the lead role in developing the curriculum using design to integrate all these disciplines and in the teaching undergraduate students. MIT will also kick-start the New University's research capability by developing relevant research programmes through their top-class faculty. Students of the New University will benefit from being taught by and interacting with experienced MIT faculty members.

10. The New University aims to be a high-quality research-intensive university. At steady state, it will have an undergraduate population of about 4,000 students and a significant number of postgraduate students. It will serve as a new engine of knowledge creation and talent attraction that will help boost Singapore's economic vibrancy.

11. MIT is renowned internationally for its excellent, rigorous undergraduate education and world-class research, as well as its spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. This would be one of MIT's most substantive collaborations on undergraduate education to date, and MOE welcomes their involvement in creating a vibrant and world-class university here. Singapore hopes that this partnership will lay the foundation to nurture world-class scientists and entrepreneurs and develop innovations and new products.

A Third Medical School in Singapore

12. Healthcare demands in Singapore are expected to increase with population growth and an ageing population. It is therefore timely to consider the possibility of establishing a third medical school to augment Singapore's future healthcare manpower

needs. A new medical school also provides the opportunity to raise overall quality standards in medical education and care in Singapore.

13. MOE and the Ministry of Health (MOH) have therefore asked the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) to submit a proposal on the establishment of a third medical school. NTU is well-placed to establish a new medical school having built up its biological and biomedical sciences base in recent years.

14. NTU has formed an Advisory Panel to advise them on their proposal for the Third Medical School. The panel is chaired by Dr Su Guaning, President, NTU and its members include experienced members from the medical fraternity such as Professor Lee Eng Hin (Executive Director, Biomedical Research Centre, A*STAR and former Dean of NUS Medical School), Professor Philip Choo, Chairman, Medical Board of Tan Tock Seng Hospital, and renowned scientists like Judith Swain and Edward Holmes.

FACTSHEET

Polytechnic–Foreign Specialised Institution (poly-FSI) Initiative

1. Since 2005, the Ministry of Education has encouraged the polytechnics to collaborate with foreign universities to offer degree programmes in niche areas which directly support Singapore's industry and economic development plans and where our polytechnics have developed strengths in.

2. Such tie-ups with foreign universities have uplifted the polytechnics' capabilities to provide an applied and practice-oriented route of learning at higher levels, translating into a more enriching learning experience for our polytechnic students.

3. The poly-FSI initiative has also provided polytechnic graduates with more opportunities to upgrade their qualifications in their area of ability and interest in Singapore. To date, six existing poly-FSI programmes offer about 300 places.

4. The existing poly-FSI programmes are:

Poly-FSI Programme	Niche Area
Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) with Wheelock College	Early Childhood Education
NP with University of Newcastle, UK and Singapore Polytechnic (SP)	Naval Architecture
Nanyang Polytechnic with Stirling University	Retail Marketing
SP with Massey University, New Zealand	Food Technology
NP with Chapman University, US	Film and TV
SP with the University of Manchester, UK	Optometry

5. The Committee on Expansion of the University Sector (CEUS) had recommended the expansion of the Poly-FSI initiative as a means to achieve the 30% Cohort Participation Rate (CPR) by 2015. MOE subsequently formed a taskforce led by its Deputy Secretary (Policy) Loh Ngai Seng, with polytechnic principals, representatives from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Economic Development Board (EDB) to study how this could be done more effectively via a new model that is both scalable and sustainable. The taskforce visited selected universities and specialised institutions in USA, UK and Australia in studying the feasibility of SIAT. These universities have expressed strong interest in working with SIAT to offer degree programmes in Singapore. The taskforce also held focus group discussions with polytechnic students, graduates and their parents, economic agencies and industry which agreed that SIAT was a viable upgrading option. The taskforce then recommended the establishment of SIAT to expand the Poly–FSI tie-up initiative.

**Taskforce on Expanding Upgrading Opportunities
for Polytechnic Graduates**

Advisor
SMS Iswaran

Chairperson

1. Mr Loh Ngai Seng
Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Education

Members

2. Mr Tan Chek Ming
Programme Director (Special Collaborations), Ministry of Education
3. Ms Tan Gee Keow
Director, Higher Education, Ministry of Education
4. Mr Jeffrey Wong
Director, Manpower Planning and Policy, Ministry of Manpower
5. Mr Tan Choon Shian
Assistant Managing Director, Economic Development Board
6. Mr Tan Hang Cheong
Principal, Singapore Polytechnic
7. Mr Chan Lee Mun
Principal and CEO, Nanyang Polytechnic

New University Steering Committee

Chairman

1. Mr Philip Ng
Chief Executive Officer, Far East Organization

Members

2. Prof Bertil Andersson
Provost, Nanyang Technological University
3. Mr Cavinder Bull
Director, Drew & Napier LLC
4. Prof Cheong Hee Kiat
President, SIM University
5. Mr Sam Goi Seng Hui
Executive Chairman, Tee Yih Jia Food Manufacturing Pte Ltd
6. Mr Philip Jeyaretnam
Partner, Rodyk & Davidson LLP
7. Mr Aubeck Kam
Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Manpower
8. Mr Ko Kheng Hwa
Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Development and Living Business Division
Keppel Corporation Ltd
9. Mr Loh Ngai Seng
Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Education
10. Mr Ong Peng Tsin
Chairman, Infocomm Investments Pte. Ltd.
11. Mr Charles Ormiston
Chairman, Bain & Company SE Asia Inc.
12. Mr Tai Lee Siang
Director, DP Architects
13. Mr Tan Chek Ming
Programme Director (Special Collaborations), Ministry of Education
14. Prof Tan Chin Tiong
Deputy President, Singapore Management University

15. Mrs Tan Ching Yee
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
16. Prof Tan Eng Chye
Provost, National University of Singapore
17. Mrs Josephine Teo
Assistant Secretary-General, NTUC

Advisory Panel for Third Medical School Proposal

Chairman

1. Dr Su Guaning
President, Nanyang Technological University

Members

2. Mr Loh Ngai Seng
Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Education
3. Prof K Satku
Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health
4. Prof Edward Holmes
Deputy Chairman, Translational and Clinical Sciences Group, Biomedical Research Council (BMRC), A*STAR and Executive Chairman, National Medical Research Council
5. Prof Lee Eng Hin
Executive Director, Biomedical Research Council (BMRC), A*STAR, and Director, Division of Graduate Medical Studies, NUS
6. Prof John Wong
Dean, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS
7. Assoc Prof Philip Choo
Chairman, Medical Board, Tan Tock Seng Hospital
8. Prof Judith Swain
Executive Director, Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences
9. Assoc Prof Goh Lee Gan
Head, Division of Family Medicine, National University Health System
10. Ms Lau Cheng Mun
Director, School of Health Sciences (Allied Health), Nanyang Polytechnic