

# CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT



Mr Tan Kay Yong  
Chairman

## OVERVIEW

There has never been a more challenging yet exhilarating time than now, for the polytechnics and their students.

The government is earnest in ensuring that enough places are available for those keen to go to university. Established names are setting up campuses or partnering local institutions to offer an array of courses. With plans now under way for a fourth university to be built, the air is filled with high expectations as much as it is with excitement and anticipation. Polytechnics are pushed to innovate and to be best in class.

The net result was a busy year for Singapore Polytechnic (SP).

Campus facilities were upgraded, and new study areas created. Changes to the curricular were made. Six new courses were introduced and R&D activities were accelerated. New degree programme tie-ups with local and overseas institutions gave SP students more course options for further study. New alliances with industry groups opened the doors for them to practise classroom theories in real life projects.

As a result, SP students were able to gain new learning experiences and a

broader world view, while immersed in a vibrant and fun environment conducive for effective learning.

Today, learning is no longer as simple as we know it in the past.

Governments and industries demand employees that can multi-task, are multi-talented and have multi-disciplinary skills. It means that polytechnics must produce a different breed of graduates.

To this end, your SP is constantly reinventing itself, not only to keep pace with change, but also to anticipate the emerging issues affecting higher education and employability. To do so, it has been able to draw on its experience of 54 years in polytechnic education, during which it has sent more than 140,000 to the universities and into the workforce.

While focused on student development, SP has not forgotten the need for staff and leadership development. Last year, I said we would implement a more disciplined and structured approach to attract and retain talent and build organisational capability. SP has since rolled out the Professional Development Framework as a tool to develop the full potential of its staff.

## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

All geared up for the challenges ahead, SP bid farewell to Mr Low Wong Fook, who retired on 31 December 2007 after 12 years as principal. Mr Low must be credited for steering SP to become the leader in polytechnic education today, and I thank him for his stewardship and support. In his place, I am pleased to welcome Tan Hang Cheong, who officially took over as principal on 1 January 2008.

I would also like to thank Deputy Principal (Academic) Mr Yeow Kian Peng, who is retiring, for his many contributions to SP.

## FOCUS ON STUDENTS

### Multiple Choices

Ever responsive to Singapore's economic needs and emerging industry trends, several new milestones were achieved. These included the new School of Communication, Arts and Social Sciences which opened its doors in April to the first batch of students in the Diploma in Applied Drama and Psychology. The school also introduced the Singapore Polytechnic Outstanding Talent (SPOT) Programme. SPOT is designed to challenge the polytechnic's brightest

students and groom them to be leaders of the future.

Five other new courses were also introduced - Clean Energy; Financial Informatics; Food Science and Technology; Human Resource Management with Psychology; and Resort Facilities Services and Management. They reinforced the polytechnic's position as a leader in offering industry-relevant courses.

SP students who aspire to further their education now have more options than before. The polytechnic's collaboration with foreign specialised institutions to offer degree programmes in niche areas, broadens their choices for university education. First off the block was the degree programme in Naval Architecture offered by Newcastle University, UK. In the pipeline are degree programmes in Food Technology and Optometry.

### More Vibrancy on Campus

Raising the fun quotient up a notch, SP students pitched in to organise the launch of Student Hub@Moberly, converted from an army barrack exclusively for their use. Its outdoor amphitheatre offered a focal point for concerts and other student performances. Graffiti "walls", a rock climbing wall, a café and sprawling gardens make Student Hub@Moberly a hit with students.

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Arts@SP, a showcase of student talents, and the multitude of activities held on campus added buzz to student life. SPICE Travel, a collaborative effort between the School of Business and a tour agency, opened on campus to provide student-related tours and activities.

These initiatives made such a big difference for its students, many of whom treat SP as their second home.

## **More Wins, More Prestige**

SP students also showed their prowess at local and international competitions, which were excellent platforms for learning and exposure.

At the WorldSkills 2007 competition, they did Singapore proud by clinching two golds, a bronze and a Medallion for Excellence. At the prestigious PTC Worldwide Design Challenge 2007, two students were awarded the Grand Prize (Asia Pacific) and the Creative Achievement Award. At the Singapore Robotic Games, SP students won two golds, three silvers and three bronzes. At the Singapore League of the Asia Pacific ICT Alliance Awards, they won first prize in the Tertiary Student category. They also won medals at the Microsoft Imagine Cup 2007.

Continuing the winning streak, SP students created Rainbow Rice,

beating 21 other products to win the Grand Winner Award at the Food Product Concept Competition organised by the Singapore Food Manufacturers' Association.

## **EXPANDING LINKAGES**

### **Local Industry Partnerships**

Collaboration with industry continued unabated during the year. A new Training and Research Centre for Islamic Finance was established by the School of Business and Glohex Groups in association with the Singapore Business Federation to ride on the global growth of the Islamic banking market.

Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) partnered with SingTel and Globe Wireless LLC to set up a \$0.5m Maritime Satellite Communication Centre called SatCom@SMA. The Academy went on to partner Teledata Marine Solutions to deliver Certificate of Competency courses via the internet.

The School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering entered into a joint venture with Lifeline Corporation to produce and market wheelchair controllers.

An agreement was reached between SP, SIM University, UK's Cranfield

University and ST Aerospace to jointly develop teaching and assessment materials and provide facilities for a degree programme in Aerospace Systems Engineering.

### **Global Footprint and International Linkages**

While reinventing itself to develop and produce graduates suitable for Singapore's current and future manpower needs, SP is steadily gaining a following abroad, both on the consultancy and recruitment fronts.

Its international marketing arm, Singapore Polytechnic International, saw its recruitment drive and partnerships with overseas organisations bearing fruit as it turned in its first profit since it was set up. The influx of different cultures and perspectives into SP helped to nurture a global mindset among students and staff. Looking ahead, SP will offer courses through the establishment of international learning centres.

It is imperative that the students and staff of SP are exposed to the issues and cultures outside Singapore. Its students actively participated in overseas attachments, community service expeditions, study trips and exchanges while staff stretched knowledge and skills through overseas sabbaticals, exchanges and

study tours. More than 160 students went on nine overseas community service expeditions to Cambodia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

New international links were forged, through agreements signed with institutions like Aarhus Maskinmesterskole of Denmark, University of Western Australia and Youngsan University of Korea. These created more opportunities for learning and sharing.

### **Caring for the Community**

Generous donations from organisations and individuals allowed 1,846 students or 13% of the student population at SP, to receive more than \$3 million in scholarships, bursaries, study grants, study loans and funds.

I am especially heartened by the enthusiasm of SP staff and students who responded to the cyclone disaster in Myanmar and the earthquake disaster in China.

The less privileged in Singapore were not forgotten. Donations were collected through events such as the River Raft Race and Flag Day, which raised \$146,000 towards the President's Challenge 2007. SP also partnered the Queenstown Rotary Club to raise \$39,000 for the Clementi Student Service Centre.

## **THE FUTURE**

### **Multiple Emphasis on R&D**

Substantial resources and funds have been allocated to cutting edge R&D activities. At the forefront of this effort are the Technology and Innovation Centres (TICs) which play a vital role in driving innovation to develop new products and processes for industry. The TICs' multi-disciplinary nature puts them in the position to serve as sources of information and technology to our business partners.

At the same time, the TICs enhance SP's capabilities while giving its students wider exposure. Plans for a seventh, the Advanced Materials Technology Centre, are under way to boost SP's capabilities in emerging technologies.

### **Continuous Education and Training**

Undergraduate training is but one of SP's missions. The government's new 10-year Continuing Education and Training master plan presents many opportunities for SP to contribute to adult education and training. With the expertise and experience of its staff, it is strongly positioned to be a leader in post-education. Future plans include the opening of an adult training academy for skills training and upgrading in niche areas.

### **The Challenge to Do Better**

SP has broadened its curriculum by offering General Elective Modules and providing integrated, multi-disciplinary learning. The academically stronger students are offered more choices in the Diploma-Plus programme. Special efforts are also taken to ensure those falling behind get extra help.

Your SP has done well but it will strive to do even better. The focus on the quality of its curricular and teaching cannot be compromised. It will continue to stay relevant to the industry and the needs of the economy. SP will provide its students an enriching learning experience and ensure that they are developed to their fullest potential.

On behalf of my fellow board members, I would like to thank the management and staff of SP for their unwavering support and commitment to what has been yet another rewarding and fulfilling year.



**MR TAN KAY YONG**

CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS