

New SIT campuses to be ready in mid-2014

By GWENDOLYN NG

POLYTECHNIC students looking to pursue a degree at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) can expect dedicated campuses in mid-2014.

Yesterday, SIT unveiled the designs of the campuses, to be constructed on the grounds of the five polytechnics: Singapore, Ngee Ann, Republic, Temasek and Nanyang polytechnics.

Currently, SIT students attend lessons in buildings on polytechnic campuses.

The new campuses will help the institute meet its target enrolment of around 2,000 students every year by 2015, up from its current 1,300 places.

During the unveiling ceremony for the campus designs at The Arts House, Minister of State for Education Lawrence Wong said SIT was set up in 2009 to create an "additional pathway" for polytechnic graduates to obtain a "publicly funded university degree".

It now offers 24 degree programmes with 10 international universities of high academic standing.

In keeping with SIT's practice-oriented focus, the new campuses will feature hands-on facil-

ities such as animation studios, a culinary kitchen and a training cafe.

A distinctive feature across the new campuses is the "generous allocation" of student-centric spaces such as well-ventilated common spaces and courtyards for students to mingle.

Mr Wong said the Ministry of Education (MOE) decided not to convert the polytechnics into universities because of lessons drawn from other developed countries.

He said: "Often, the graduates from converted polytechnics were not able to get the jobs they were hoping for, and some had to settle for salaries that were lower than what was offered to diploma holders.

"The conversion of polytechnics to universities resulted in a loss of institutional capabilities for vocational training, which several of these countries are now trying to rebuild and restore."

Instead, MOE embarked on a model which "preserves and leverages on the strengths of the polytechnic sector and combines it with the commitment and experience of overseas university partners to provide quality education".

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