Room for more graduates

Mindful of the risks, committee gives assurance that the economy will be able to cope

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SINGAPORE – With the Government increasing the number of university places, Senior Minister of State (Education and Information, Communications and the Arts) Lawrence Wong yesterday gave the assurance that the Republic’s economy has room for more graduates.

"Going forward, clearly, we can accommodate more university graduates," said Mr Wong.

In his speech at the National Day Rally on Sunday, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced that SIM University (UniSIM) — which currently offers only part-time programmes — will offer full-time degree programmes as part of the Republic's efforts to raise the annual university intake. The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) will also increase its number of places and award degrees in its own name.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday to elaborate on Mr Lee’s announcement, Mr Wong, who led the committee looking at university education beyond 2015, said: “We were very mindful of the risk of expanding too rapidly, and compromising quality as a result of over-expansion.”

Citing recent media reports of South Korea facing a glut of unemployed degree holders, Mr Wong added: “We know that we should not expand just for the sake of providing an opportunity to get a paper chase, this is not about getting a degree as a piece of paper (but building) skills workforce that can meet the needs of the economy.”

By 2020, as much as 50 per cent of each cohort will enter university.

This includes both full-time and part-time degree students.

In other words, the proportion of each cohort pursuing a publicly-funded full-time degree will go up from

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