SIT unveils designs of its five distributed campuses

By TIMOTHY LOH

THE Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) unveiled designs of its distributed campuses to the public for the first time at The Arts House yesterday.

SIT was established in 2009 and began taking in students the following year, in line with the government's plan to build up the tertiary sector and increase the percentage of students per cohort attending publicly funded universities to 30 per cent by 2015.

SIT is unique because it chose to adopt from the outset a distributed campus model, which is typical of pre-established universities seeking to expand under space constraints. An SIT building will be constructed within the grounds of each of the five polytechnics, and each SIT building will have its own distinctive design features.

Said Lawrence Wong, Minister of State (Defence and Education): "With such a design concept, SIT can leverage on the resources in the polytechnics, such as laboratory facilities or training equipment, as well as the existing industry links developed by the polytechnics and their faculty."

Despite concerns that such a model would make it difficult to foster a strong campus spirit, SIT president Tan Chin Tiong said he was "optimistic" about the success of the model, which he described as an "experimentation".

Prof Tan also emphasised SIT's practice-oriented, industry-focused pedagogy at the event yesterday.

"At SIT, we are very much focused on the industry needs. Basically, we look at the industry demand for all the programmes that we put together. So if the industry wants certain programmes, we will go out and look for potential partners and negotiate with them to come out to Singapore. If you look at all the degree programmes that we have thus far, they are all degree programmes that are very well articulated with the curriculum of polytechnics. These are also the programmes that the Singapore government needs more professionals in."

The five new campuses are slated to open in the middle of 2014. Until then, SIT students will have their classes in other parts of the polytechnic campuses or in external buildings. For example, lessons for current DigiPen Institute of Technology students are being held at the PIXEL Building in one-north.