

**WELCOME SPEECH BY PROFESSOR CHUA KEE CHAING, PRESIDENT,
SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, AT SIT 10TH ANNIVERSARY
GALA DINNER, ON THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 2024, 7:05 PM AT CONRAD
ORCHARD HOTEL.**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong

Minister for Education, Mr Chan Chun Sing

Minister for Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen

Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung

SIT Chairman, Mr Bill Chang

Industry and Community Partners, Donors, Distinguished Guests

Colleagues, SITizens

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 1. A very warm welcome to all of you tonight as we celebrate the Singapore Institute of Technology's 10th anniversary as an Autonomous University. All of you, in one way or another, have supported us on this journey and we are grateful that you have taken the time to commemorate this special occasion with us.**

SIT's Decade of Impact & Growth

- 2. 10 years ago, we embarked on a journey fuelled by a clear vision: to be a university of applied learning, dedicated to nurturing future-ready graduates able to contribute meaningfully to Singapore's growth and development.**

- 3. Over the past decade, SIT has grown significantly, achieved several milestones and positively impacted our students and industry partners. From admitting about 1,800 students in 2014, we now admit over 3,300, making us the Autonomous University with the third-largest full-time undergraduate student intake. The graduates we produce, our SITizens, are well-received by the industry. Graduate Employment Surveys over the last few years not only show that the overall employment rate has consistently exceeded 90%, one in two graduates received advanced job offers from their Integrated Work Study Programme (IWSP) companies.**

- 4. The IWSP is a signature of an SIT degree. It integrates meaningful work experience into the degree programme. Since the IWSP was launched in January 2015, close to 8,000 students have gone**

through the programme. From 11 partner companies in 2015, we have grown this number to 884 partner companies today. Over the years, some employers have even recognised IWSP as the first year of work, giving our SITizens second-year seniority upon joining the company after graduation. I am heartened that our graduates are strongly valued by employers. And their achievements are even more heart-warming when you consider the fact that about half of our students are the first in their families to attend university. SIT has certainly made university education more accessible and enhanced the social mobility of many.

5. Our donors have been instrumental in helping us make university education more accessible. They have established close to 1,000 donor funds at SIT over the past decade. These have enabled us to award over 9,100 scholarships, bursaries and study grants since 2014, which have helped alleviate financial burdens and enabled many talented students to pursue their education at SIT.
6. Amongst our esteemed donors present tonight are Ms. Carolyn Choo, CEO and Managing Director of Worldwide Hotels, Dr. Chua Thian Poh, Mr. Soo Ye Wah, Executive Chairman of Dou Yee

Enterprises, Mrs Wong Kwok Leong, as well as representatives of City Developments Limited, The Estate of Lim Doa Hin and The Ngee Ann Kongsi. We are deeply appreciative of their generosity and their belief in our mission.

Expanding Our Mission Beyond PET

- 7. In recent years, SIT's mission has expanded. We have moved beyond Pre-Employment Training to Continuing Education and Training. To do this, we continuously develop new educational pathways to better address the needs of our learners and the industry. Our latest educational innovation is the Competency-based Stackable Micro-credential (or CSM) pathway, which offers learners the flexibility to acquire in-demand skills through individual micro-credentials, which if the learner so wishes, can be stacked to a degree. This not only allows the learner to quickly apply their newly acquired skills to the workplace, but also attain higher education credentials.**

- 8. As with all of SIT's programmes, the curriculum for the CSM pathway is developed together with industry. Our latest collaboration is with Singtel on its Regional Sustainable Data**

Centre Academy, which will be launched in the middle of this year. Together with Nanyang Polytechnic, Singapore Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic and the Institute of Technical Education, we will train talent in new areas of data centre development such as sustainability and high-density Artificial Intelligence environments.

9. To stay relevant, our education is informed with the learnings and outputs from our applied research. Since ramping up research in 2020, we have inked more than 150 applied research-related agreements with industry partners. In the food-tech space for example, we have worked with food companies to leverage technology for Alternative Protein development and waste valorisation. The close nexus between our applied research and education strengthens our ability to deliver an industry-focused, applied learning education for our learners, and an impactful applied research approach for our industry partners.

New Home, New Horizons – Stronger Together in Punggol

10. As many of you know, we have been building our new campus in Punggol. We will be moving to our new home later this year. Our

Punggol campus will see the coming together of our current six locations. This convening of all our SITizens, academic clusters, and applied research and innovation centres, allows us to not only deepen multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching and learning, but to better provide a holistic education for our SITizens.

Stronger Ties within the SITizen Community

11. We also envision our Punggol campus to be a welcoming space for our alumni to further connect with us and forge lasting connections with fellow SITizens. One way we hope for our alumni to return is through our *'Learn for Life'* initiative launched last year. It allows SITizens to read one CET module for free, once every five years. From opportunities for upskilling and reskilling, to facilities such as a playing field, dance studios, and meaningful home-coming activities, reasons abound for alumni to come back home. Alumni are a key part of our SIT community. Our hope is for them to foster relationships with their juniors so that we can develop a supportive and collaborative learning community, especially in this era of lifelong learning.

Forging Stronger Ties with Industry

- 12. With our new campus situated in the exciting Punggol Digital District, SIT will also be plugged into a vibrant ecosystem for innovation and collaboration. We will capitalise on the real-world systems of our campus Living Labs and those of our partners to catalyse authentic learning experiences and applied research. Living Labs foster a dynamic learning environment where students can apply their knowledge to real-world challenges. They also provide a fertile ground for impactful research, allowing the University, industry, and government partners to jointly develop, test and deploy research ideas.**

- 13. Just this afternoon, we inked a Memorandum of Understanding with SBS Transit, which will see the Punggol Coast MRT station, which is at the doorstep of our Punggol campus become our latest Living Lab. The entire MRT station will be turned into a digital twin platform for students and academic staff to use as a learning and research facility to help address emerging challenges and leverage opportunities to drive innovation in the public transport industry. Beyond that, the public spaces in the MRT station will be event spaces where our students' performances and exhibitions can be held. All in, Punggol Coast MRT station promises to be a hive of activity, where innovation, creativity and passion thrive.**

Growing Partnerships and Innovation for the Future

14. In Punggol, we would also like to build a strong connection with the local community. One initiative in the works is the development of a model for engaged learning. Here, we intend to work with secondary schools in Punggol to scale up and grow beyond our annual Community Challenge to solve real-life problems using Science, Technology, Engineering and Math or STEM skills. Through hands-on activities, secondary school students will get the opportunity to hone their design thinking skills, apply their STEM skills, and witness the positive impact their work can have. Our SITizens, who work with and mentor the teens, also get to hone their leadership and facilitation skills, and reinforce their own learning. The challenge exemplifies our commitment to education that is grounded in the community.

15. Another initiative is to expand our Punggol community outreach. We are looking at leveraging the expertise of our academic clusters to become a knowledge hub for the Punggol region, by offering enriching and practical workshops and talks for the public. For example, our Health and Social Sciences cluster is planning to jointly host Allied Health talks with local

medical institutions and even establish public physiotherapy clinics. Our Business, Communication, and Design cluster will be organising financial literacy workshops to empower individuals and families.

Charting the course: Vision 2034

16. Looking ahead to the next decade, we have embarked on a comprehensive visioning exercise, both internally and with key external stakeholders like yourselves. This exercise aims to seek perspectives on how SIT can further contribute to Singapore's economy and society. We expect to conclude this exercise and launch our 2034 vision by the official opening of our Punggol campus next year.

17. As we stand here tonight, on the cusp of a new chapter, we reflect with immense gratitude for your unwavering support throughout our journey. This journey and its milestones have been captured in a commemorative book. "Journey to Punggol" chronicles our humble beginnings, our commitment to excellence, and the many individuals who have contributed to our success. We would like to present you with this book as a token of appreciation for being a part of our story.

18. Once again, I humbly thank each and every one of you for walking with us on this journey. We look forward to your continued support as we evolve to meet the changing needs of our learners, industry, and community, to become a premier university of applied learning. One that has individuals, industry and innovation at its core. A university that lives and breathes with industry and community and contributes to Singapore and Singaporeans.

19. Thank you.