Message by Chairman, NTU Board of Trustees

Change is the only constant in life. In recent times, with advances in communications, the pace of change has accelerated. Ideas that took years to filter from one part of the world to another now cross the globe in an instant. The world has shrunk and as a result almost every field of human endeavour has become more global. These changes have also affected academic institutions, including Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Increasingly our University must compete on a global scale, and already more than half of our faculty and twenty percent of our undergraduates hail from outside Singapore.

When the University, together with the Board of Trustees, launched NTU’s future strategic directions it was decided this would involve a review of the Master Plan for the physical development of the campus. The result is the Yunnan Garden Campus Master Plan, a document that will serve to align and facilitate NTU’s Vision and Mission to be a great global University founded on science and technology.

NTU aspires to nurture creative and entrepreneurial leaders through a broad education in diverse disciplines. Concurrently, the University wishes to foster a strong spirit of innovation, capable of bridging the gap between science and business, to bring ideas from research through to their full commercial potential. We also believe there are benefits in being a residential campus, where students, especially undergraduates, can build relationships that last a life time while making the transition to independent adulthood. In addition, NTU wants to be a prominent and engaging player in the wider community, rather than having a campus isolated from it, and to take advantage of the fact that among Universities in Singapore, NTU has an especially beautiful and highly regarded physical setting.

It is not expected the Master Plan will lead to a sudden surge in capital expenditure. Rather it is to serve as a guide so that each and every decision regarding new development, upgrading or maintaining the University’s physical infrastructure will head in the right direction. As time unfolds, these facilities will form a coherent whole that is both practical and physically attractive. The plan is a description of a journey rather than a destination. However, the integrity of the plan must be carefully considered in the course of its implementation.

Balancing the requirements of new facilities with respect for the broader heritage and environmental context of the campus has been a tremendous challenge for those working on the Master Plan. The master planning consultants have considered holistically the views of various stakeholders. They have focused on developing existing natural systems, terrains and water bodies in order to promote and enhance biodiversity within the campus, as well as to provide an environment conducive to the University community’s work and study requirements. This approach will raise awareness of the University’s substantial natural landscapes, which have never failed to draw praise from visitors and representatives of overseas Universities.

The future physical development of the University should reflect the fact that NTU has applied its own engineering and scientific skills towards nurturing a sustainable eco-campus. It should be a showcase for the contribution that engineering can make, not only to the University, but to the wider Singapore community and beyond.
As we embarked on the Master Plan review, we were very fortunate to have our fellow Board of Trustees member, Edmund Cheng, as chair of the Campus Planning Committee. He and his committee have played a critical role in the development of the Master Plan. Other Board members and the senior management of the University have also contributed a significant amount of time to reviewing and providing input to the consultants as the Master Plan has evolved. We are grateful for their commitment to NTU, and their substantial involvement in the formation of a blueprint that will guide the development of the University into the future.

Mr Koh Boon Hwee
Chairman, NTU Board of Trustees