NTU hopes to double number of S’porean PhD undergrads

SINGAPORE: Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University (NTU) hopes to double the percentage of Singaporean undergraduates pursing PhD programmes to about 40 per cent by 2015 — up from the current 15 to 20 per cent of the cohort.

And in a bid to propel itself to be a great university, NTU unveiled its five—year strategic blueprint — called NTU 2015.

The plan is for the university to make its mark globally in five areas — sustainability, healthcare, new media, best of East and West, and innovation.

In its five—year blueprint, NTU has been working on a number of cutting—edge research projects. For example, the study of artificial leaves which mimic nature to turn sunlight and water into a fuel source.

The aim is to generate electricity and power super—clean vehicles.

On new media, the Institute of Media Innovation is leading research into virtual humans. This means fashion designers can try out different designs and fabrics on various body types or even as a personal tutor.

NTU has said it will increase inter—disciplinary modules, as new knowledge surfaces when different disciplines work together.

"There’s going to be more interdisciplinary modules, I think about 30 per cent. It should be broadening interdisciplinary. You cannot only be in the old days be specialised in one area, then you can’t manage in modern society," said Professor Bertil Andersson, Provost and President—Designate of NTU.

Dr Andersson also hopes that by 2015, more Singaporean students will pursue PhD programmes.

"Much too few Singaporean young people are attracted to going into research and that must change, otherwise Singapore will always be dependent on foreign talent. It’s important that foreign talent is important coming to Singapore. But there must be more Singaporeans."

NTU said it will provide seed funding of up to S$100 million from its own resources for the various projects and supplement the amount from external source.