Nanyang Technological University (NTU) will be transformed into a self-contained mini-city, or what it calls a "Univer-City with a soul", by 2025.

When its Yunnan Garden Campus Master Plan is realised, the 200ha campus which is the largest in Singapore will have numerous informal meeting points dotting its green landscape to encourage cross-faculty and industry interaction.

The campus master plan will be carried out in three phases, with each phase lasting about five years.

Professor Bertil Andersson, president-designate and provost of NTU, said that inter-disciplinary interaction is "something that is becoming increasingly important as new knowledge comes from the overlaps between disciplines".

He announced this yesterday at a press conference held at the Administration Building in NTU.

The university currently has about 33,000 students and 3,000 faculty and researchers from over 70 countries.

Inter-disciplinary interaction is one of the key tenets of the master plan. One of the ways it hopes to achieve this is through a Campus Centre, which will become the heart of NTU. The centre will house a pedestrian promenade lined with restaurants, cafes, retail outlets, and even a cinema, said Prof Andersson. He added that the goal is to achieve an atmosphere like that in Holland Village, which is lined with cafes, restaurants and retail outlets.

Works on the first stage of the Campus Centre will commence in 2015 and is expected to be completed in 2018. An Interdisciplinary Research Building is also expected to be ready by 2014. When completed, it will drive cross-disciplinary collaboration among research staff in NTU and its institutional partners.

It will be located near the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences Building at Nanyang Link.

A Learning Hub will also be built for all schools to use and it will house about 70 "Classrooms of Tomorrow" to facilitate discussions among students.

Giant interactive screens will replace whiteboards and students will be seated in groups of six, which benefits lecturers in their teaching. The hub is expected to be ready within the next two years.

NTU president Su Guaning said: "The Master Plan...acknowledges our need to adapt to changing pedagogical requirements."

New ponds are also in the pipeline to allow NTU to reuse rainwater for the irrigation of its flora. Covered walkways and cycling lanes will also be integrated with the green environment to encourage walking or cycling.

Prof Andersson also raised the possibility of a light-rail system in 10 years' time to help people commute to the university more conveniently.

The master plan was developed by the university and a team of consultants from Australian firm...
Guida Moseley Brown Architects. Discussions began in 2008 and planning involved meetings with hundred of members of the NTU community.

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