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NTU students, staff to take part in more community activities involving residents



NTU faculty staff and students will be going to participate in more community and social activities with residents in the nearby areas. CNA file photo

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SINGAPORE — Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) faculty staff and students will be getting out of their campus at the western end of the island to participate in more community and social activities with residents in the nearby areas.

The university, which announced this at the NTU-South West Community Development Council (CDC) networking session on Thursday (July 27), said it will be working with community partners to help address issues and challenges faced by the residents.

NTU is located within the South West CDC, which includes areas such as Jurong, Choa Chu Kang and West Coast.

Tapping on the university's research capabilities, NTU's engineering students are helping to design a safe and light ramp to help wheelchair-bound residents in Boon Lay access their homes on the ground floor, for instance.

The students are also developing a device to detect falls, for the benefit of elderly residents living alone.

On the last Friday of every month, NTU's professors will hold public talks to share about their research topics, such as trends affecting the society.

The series of public talks kicked off on Thursday, with Professor Kerry Sieh sharing his views on the issue of sustainability in the region in the face of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and climate change. About 100 people, including senior grassroots leaders, staff from People's Association, attended the talk.

Other public events will also be held to showcase the university's research projects.

The university's College of Professional and Continuing Education and the South West CDC will also collaborate in developing programmes for the professionals, managers, executives and technicians, including co-developing industry specific courses for them to transit through jobs and upgrade their skills.

Nearby residents can also visit certain facilities in the university, such as its jogging track, or participate in their open house.

NTU President Bertil Andersson said the university cannot be seen as a closed area and it is important that it has interaction with the community and people living around it.

"It's important now that we stop and interact more with each other (and) I think we can do better," he said.

"Our decision to ramp up our engagement activities in our 'neighbourhood' is aimed at better serving the needs of those around us by leveraging NTU's resources, expertise and research capabilities," added Mr Andersson.

Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who was the guest-of-honour at the event, said the NTU initiative was meaningful in many different ways.

"The most important role that NTU can play ... in the community will have to do with developing communities of learning, which naturally tap on the main strengths of universities, not just as repositories of knowledge but as a catalyst of learning outside the universities," he said.