Nanyang Business School to be housed in Asia’s biggest wooden building

Singapore

NANYANG Technological University (NTU) has unveiled an ambitious five-year plan, under which Asia’s largest wooden building – to be the new home for the Nanyang Business School – will be built on its campus.

University president Subra Suresh, in unveiling what he called “moonshot” projects to propel NTU’s next phase of growth, also announced a drive to hire hundreds of staff.

Addressing more than 2,000 staff at a university townhall meeting on Monday, he described the six-storey building as “our most ambitious sustainable construction project to date”.

When it is completed in 2021, the S$180 million building will be Asia’s largest wooden building at 40,000 gross square metres.

“Ninety-five per cent of our buildings are already certified Green Mark Platinum; we are seeking to be the greenest university campus in the world,”

Designed by RSP Architects Planners Engineers, the firm behind Changi Airport Terminal 4, the building will be built using technology known as Mass-Engineered Timber.

The material for this building will be taken from renewable forests and pre-fabricated for installation on site, which makes it less polluting and less labour-intensive than conventional construction methods.

In line with this push to be pro-environment, NTU will also stop issuing plastic bags free of charge from Oct 1. Proceeds from the sale of plastic bags at retail and food outlets will be channelled to the university’s assistance fund for students.

NTU plans to reduce energy, water and waste intensity by 35 per cent in 2021, and by 50 per cent by 2025, from 2011 levels.

Prof Suresh also outlined a project to double the solar energy harnessed to power NTU to 9.9 mega-watts by 2019. This will supply between seven and 10 per cent of the university’s electricity needs.

NTU will also invest in new schemes to attract talent in hundreds of positions to fuel its growth as a leading global research university, he said.

From this year, NTU will support 350 new two-year post-doctoral positions for researchers.

It also plans to recruit about 300 faculty members and create up to 100 new named professorships. The target is to increase named professorships available at NTU 10-fold over the next five years.

New mechanisms to support PhD scholarships and undergraduate internships have also been identified, as NTU renewed its commitment to support the recruitment of top undergraduates through scholarships and bursaries.

“No deserving Singaporean student will be denied a world-class education at NTU because of financial or other impediments,” Prof Suresh said.