SPEECH

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WELCOME ADDRESS BY PROF LIM MONG KING, DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (NTU) AND DEAN, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, NTU, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF DISCOVER ENGINEERING @ NTU ON 09 MARCH 2005

Guest of Honour, Mr. Tan Pheng Hock, President and CEO, Singapore Technologies Engineering

Distinguished guests

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

I bid you a warm welcome to the opening of the CoE Technology Week organized by the NTU College of Engineering.
Conceptualized in 2002, the CoE Technology Week was evolved from the highly successful E3 Technology week. Its aim was to promote joint research collaborations among the Engineering Schools in the University, Industry and Research Institutions. It also serves as a platform for our students and staff to showcase their research and final year projects to the public. Most importantly, by featuring the applications of engineering in our daily life, we hope to stoke students’ interests in engineering and technological research.

On campus, the University has continued to create opportunities to expose students to research. For one, the Industrial Attachment programme was revamped with more options, and allowed students inclined to R & D to spend a semester doing research projects on or off campus supervised by NTU professors and industrial sponsors.

In August 2004, the ‘Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus’ program or URECA in short, was launched to further foster research culture among the able undergraduates in the University. Students are given the opportunity to learn the ‘makings’ of a researcher through pursuing appropriate independent research and immersing in the research problem for a reasonable duration.

These initiatives and others set out to enable students to appreciate research better, help groom research talents and enliven research culture within NTU. We want to inspire students to take further steps to pursue their ideas, and motivate them to embark on research careers after they graduate.
It has been said that research is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. R&D is much about constantly seeking alternative solutions to a problem or mystery. Allow me to share an anecdote on Canon's revolutionary minicopier. Canon’s revolutionary minicopier was based on the premise that the photosensitive copier drum (which is the source of 90% of maintenance problems), had to be disposable. Hence, it would have to be inexpensive and easy to produce. The breakthrough came one day when the task force leader Hiroshi Tanaka ordered out for some beer. He held up a beer can and asked how the can could be made so inexpensively. The team continued this line of questioning --- how a copier drum is and is not like a beer can, and eventually manufactured a low cost aluminum copier drum. By 1987, only five years after the introduction of the drum model, 74% of Canon’s revenues came from its business machines division.

Hard work alone is not sufficient to sustain a scientific career. Two other qualities are needed - interest and passion. The research training students receive in NTU will contribute to build up traits needed for the long and exciting journey in research.

In Singapore’s new economic landscape, research and development has become an important engine of growth. Industry realizes how vital R&D is to their growth. Universities, with the availability of the brightest and best minds, render a natural breeding ground for new technological developments.

NTU, being a University for Industry has continued to build strong links with industry and businesses and take on the role of transferring technological know-how. A number of Research Centres on campus are jointly set up with industry partners. These include the ST-NTU Intelligent Systems Centre, Thales@NTU, Temasek Laboratories with DSTA and NTU-SGI Centre for Graphics & Imaging Technology, to name a few.
This year, I am encouraged by the good turnout of quality research projects as well as interesting topics for the focus seminars. The theme: Discover Engineering @ NTU is appropriately exciting given that we have for the first time gone farther to reach out to the public by participating in the Career Exhibition at Suntec City. Some of our best projects were exhibited there. They showcased NTU’s cutting-edge innovation and highlight real life engineering applications.

This Sunday, NTU will be hosting a 1-day Open House called “L.I.F.E. @ NTU” (Learning is fun and exciting @ NTU) for prospective students. The Open House will project campus life in a fiesta-style setting. NTU Schools and their academic programmes as well as our student support services and student activities will be showcased. Of mention, CoE Tech Week “Discover Engineering @NTU” will be featured as part of the Open House activities. With the crowd of students and parents here on campus, research teams should make good the opportunity to show, tell and inspire just how creative, challenging and entrepreneurial Engineering is, as a field of study and research. I would like to invite all of you present here this morning, to also join us at the Open House.

In conclusion, I would like to record my deep appreciation to Mr Tan Pheng Hock, President and CEO of ST Engineering for his strong support towards the University and for taking time to grace the CoE Technology Week opening.

I would also like to thank the Organizing Committee for their hard work in putting together this event. I wish the research teams all the very best and look forward to seeing more robust research and commercialization of your innovation. To all participants, thank you for your warm support and may you have a fruitful time at the event.
Thank you.

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