

New SIT campus coming up in Ngee Ann Poly

By **MATTHIAS CHEW**

A ROOM filled with educational toys and knee-high tables and chairs is where some undergraduates of Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) will go for lessons.

The simulated preschool classroom is being built in Clementi for students of early childhood education to put theory into practice.

It is one of the new features of an eight-storey building coming up on the grounds of Ngee Ann Polytechnic. Its floor area of about 15,000 sq m will also be dotted with classrooms, design studios and three lecture halls.

A ground-breaking ceremony for the building was held yesterday. It is the second of SIT's five satellite campuses, all of which will be built within polytechnics.

The first is at Temasek Polytechnic in Tampines. Like the Tampines campus, the Clementi one will be ready in mid-2014, and its final cost is still being worked out, said an SIT spokesman.

The SIT, set up by the Education Ministry in 2009, partners 10 overseas universities to offer 24 degree programmes for polytechnic graduates, which range from game design to nursing.

It enrolled its first group of 500 students in 2010 and is ex-

pected to enrol 2,000 annually by 2015.

Currently, its 1,500 students use the facilities of polytechnics or partner institutions. By mid-2014, they will have their own buildings at the polytechnics.

SIT was identified by a government-appointed committee last month as a "possible platform" for a fifth, practice-oriented university.

Yesterday, its president Tan Chin Tiong noted that with its departments covering student life, academic affairs and career services, the institute has structures comparable to those at universities.

In three years, it has put in place infrastructure and an organisational structure to "do bigger things, to do more", he told The Straits Times.

"We are preparing to be more of a player than just an aggregator," he added, stressing that SIT aims to do more than just run courses offered by other universities.

Professor Tan, who was seconded from Singapore Management University, will step down in February.

He said: "In three years I've put together all these pieces and we are where we want to be. So the job is done from my perspective."

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(From left) Mr Ng Cher Pong, deputy chairman of the Singapore Institute of Technology Board of Trustees; Mr Tang Kin Fei, chairman of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Council; and Professor Tan Chin Tiong, president of the Singapore Institute of Technology, viewing a model of the institute's new Clementi campus at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. ST PHOTO: MARIEL VICTORIA MOK