

Govt trying out various platforms to reach out: Chuan-Jin

JOY FANG
joyfangz@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE – While the Government’s approach is to simplify information and provide as much information as possible to the people, several challenges stand in its way of getting its messages across, said Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin.

People do not read all the materials available and different segments of the populace may have contending views on the extent of details they want, he said, citing how there are some who want more details instead of information that is dumbed down.

“The challenge today is that with the Internet, there is a lot more information, but it also means it’s very difficult to figure out what you want to read. In fact, one could argue that a lot of people are also not reading a lot of the materials that are put up,” said Mr Tan, who was speaking at Singapore Management University’s Career and Internship Fair yesterday. “The problem today is that you have a lot of contending spaces for your time and attention.”

Despite these challenges, Mr Tan acknowledged that the Government could do better in its outreach efforts and said it was trying out different



platforms and formats as different people relate to information in different ways. However, developing these materials for different the platforms and formats takes time, he noted.

“I don’t think we expect every single one of us to understand every single thing completely but, at the very least, the material needs to be out there (and) the communication channels need to be open,” he added.

The evolution and expansion of me-

Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin speaking to student leaders at SMU Career and Internship Fair yesterday.

PHOTO: OOI BOON KEONG

diums for exchange pose another challenge, he said. While channels such as Facebook and other platforms have made it easier for discourse to develop, Mr Tan said government leaders were still learning to deal with the situation, including trying to figure out how to carve out constructive spaces where people can debate and discuss “civilly and constructively”.

Mr Tan made these remarks in a speech entitled Perspectives On Lead-

ership, which was attended by 180 students. He also outlined what he felt marked a good leader, including the ability to gain people’s trust, having the ability to engage, being capable of providing clarity and setting a nurturing climate.

During a dialogue segment, a student asked him to what extent academic excellence was better than possessing good leadership qualities. In response, Mr Tan said the two need not be mutually exclusive choices. Students can do their best in school and, at the same time, develop who they are and the abilities they are good at. “There is no reason that as you’re trying your best to do well in school, you should neglect your own development as an individual,” he said.

Grades are necessary as they provide employers a certain gauge of one’s level of competency, he said. “It’s not a proxy for everything, but at least you’ve got a certain baseline ... Of course, pursuit of that at the expense of everything else is a different thing altogether. So, let’s not get away with the idea that it’s not important to do as best as you can,” he said. At the end of the day, grades are “just a marker at that certain stage of your life, before other things are clearly discernible”, he added.