

MOE supportive of local talent in academia: Indranee

By Alvina Soh | Posted: 07 March 2013 20:49 hrs



Senior Minister of State for Law and Education Indranee Rajah

SINGAPORE: More than 1 in 2 tenured faculty members at the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and the Singapore Management University are Singaporeans, while 1 in 5 tenured faculty members at the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) are Singaporeans.

For non-tenured faculty members, about half of them in NUS, NTU, and SMU are Singaporeans.

Senior Minister of State for Education Indranee Rajah shared these figures in Parliament on Thursday.

She was responding to a question from Nominated MP Eugene Tan who asked if the government has any specific plans to develop and nurture more Singapore citizen faculty members in the universities.

Assistant Professor Tan said he was disappointed by the low figures, pointing out that the majority of tenured and non-tenured faculty members teaching in universities here are not Singaporeans.

He said: "I am very concerned about the tenure track faculty because the majority are not Singaporeans. So going forward, you are going to have tenured faculty in our universities where the proportion of Singaporeans would be even lower.

"So at the moment it is 1 in 2 for most of the universities. But I think going forward, given the lower numbers in the tenure track scheme, that would mean that there could be problems ahead when it comes to tenured faculty.

"I think we need to have a more concerted effort to develop local talent. And I certainly hope that my call here is not for deferential or preferential treatment, but rather a level playing field."



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In response, Ms Indranee agreed that a strong Singaporean core should be developed in the area of academia.

She said: "I hear the call to encourage the universities to have more Singaporeans on their tenure and other tracks. Indeed, that is the position of the Ministry of Education.

"The universities are, as the professor has indicated, autonomous so they do have a large degree of autonomy in the way they recruit and in the way they structure.

"But that said, the ministry is strongly supportive and encouraging of such universities in getting more Singaporeans on board for all their tracks and we will certainly encourage them to do so."

- CNA/al