

TAKING CHANCES AND FINDING SUCCESS

SMU a risk that paid off, says Heng

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SINGAPORE – The courage to do something is not only about taking risks. It is also about individuals taking on a challenge to create something “truly meaningful” for themselves, their community and country, Education Minister Heng Swee Keat said yesterday.

Speaking at the Singapore Management University’s (SMU) 10th commencement ceremony — which saw the largest graduating cohort since its inception in 2000, Mr Heng tackled the question of why graduates should take chances by relating how the Government had gone about deciding whether to set up the university 15 years ago.

As a civil servant working on high-

er education matters then, he recalled the “serious concerns” of starting a new tertiary institute without any track record.

However, President Tony Tan, who was then Deputy Prime Minister, had a vision to set up a third university fundamentally different from the two existing ones — National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University.

“It was not just a question of laying the bricks for a new university,” Mr Heng said. “It was a question of whether our students were prepared to take chances, and whether our economy would stay vibrant enough to give this new university, and its graduates, a good chance of success.”

The Government stayed the course despite the Asian financial crisis and recession in 2001. In the end, “the

dare paid off” and SMU went on to produce well-qualified graduates, said the minister.

While over nine in 10 of SMU graduates (91.7 per cent) clinched jobs last year, Mr Heng felt that the success “came from other people who also dared”. This included business owners and investors, among others, who had the courage to build their businesses and create meaningful jobs for Singaporeans, he added.

Calling on SMU graduates “to maintain this virtuous cycle”, he said: “With the right leadership, in the right spirit, and with a strong supporting environment, you can succeed — and you can create something truly special. Daring is not just about taking a risk for its own sake. It is taking on a challenge to create something truly meaningful for yourself, your community and your country.

“And success depends not just on your own effort, but on the contributions of many others who share the kindred spirit.”

Two individuals were also conferred honorary degrees yesterday by the university. Former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Law, in recognition of his con-

* NTU EMPLOYMENT RATE ‘UP SLIGHTLY’

● Almost seven in 10 Nanyang Technological University (NTU) graduates this year secured jobs before their graduation despite the uncertain global economic climate, according to a preliminary survey conducted by the university last month.

An NTU spokesperson said this was “slightly higher” compared to the employment rate last year.

Yesterday was the first of six days for more than 9,500 NTU students to receive their scrolls.

The spokesperson added that, among the graduating batch, accountancy and business double-degree graduates performed consistently well.

About nine in 10 of them were offered employment before graduation and the top 10 per cent of the cohort drew an average salary of S\$8,254, he said. The university also witnessed a new record in class giving, with about 87 per cent of the Class of 2013 donating — surpassing last year’s 82 per cent. **NG JING YNG**



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Mr Heng Swee Keat
EDUCATION MINISTER

tributions to the development of the legal sector in Singapore, while Dr John Seely Brown received an Honorary Doctorate of Information Systems, in recognition of his outstanding record as a scientist, scholar and innovator in the area of information and communications technology.