



Speech by Mr Yeo Li Pheow, Principal/CEO of Republic Polytechnic, at the first session of the fifth graduation ceremony at the Republic Cultural Centre on 11 May 2010 at 9.30 am

Guest of Honour, Mr S Iswaran, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry of Education,

Mr Richard Seow, Chairman, Board of Governors,

Members of the Board of Governors,

Distinguished guests,

Graduands,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I welcome all of you—graduands, parents, faculty members, staff and our Guest of Honour—to Republic Polytechnic's 2010 graduation ceremony.

This morning's ceremony marks a major milestone in our students' journey to successful careers. Republic Polytechnic is proud to have facilitated this. As students, you came as individuals with diverse backgrounds. Now, as graduates you will move on to chart different paths, I applaud your success!

Today, as graduates of RP, I count on you to make RP proud. I count on you to use your training at RP to be innovative, entrepreneurial and cultured professionals.

A ROBUST CURRICULUM

Over the past three years, not only have your facilitators & teachers imparted to you knowledge and skills but more importantly, through Problem-based Learning you have learnt how to be independent learners. You have learnt how to solve realistic work problems by collaborating in teams. You have learnt how to communicate your ideas and to be more rigorous in your thought process. And, many of you have gained valuable experience through industry-relevant final-year projects and internships stints with companies.

Problem-based Learning (or PBL) is a distinctive feature of Republic Polytechnic's education system. Through the "One Day One Problem" approach, RP students become more confident, more self-directed and more creative.

As graduates from Republic Polytechnic, you benefitted from a curriculum that is both relevant and robust. While core skills and foundational knowledge are essential building blocks for any education, at Republic Polytechnic we do our best to nurture well-rounded students by expanding the scope beyond the specifics of your field of study.

This is why all our diploma programmes incorporate holistic learning that include modules in language, culture, enterprise skills, personal development, communications, service learning, adventure learning and many others. All these help to complement the learning in your specialised field of study, ensuring that you are well-equipped for further education or the workforce.

WORK-READY GRADUATES

At Republic Polytechnic, our mission is to 'prepare our students for a dynamic world in partnership with stakeholders'. Therefore, our diploma programmes must be attuned to the needs of industry so as to enhance the employability of our graduates.

To understand the needs of the industry, and to tailor our programmes to meet those needs, we have processes to consult industry as well as to engage industry through projects and services. We also have a process to gather feedback from employers on our graduates' performance at the workplace. These feedback enable RP to better understand the needs of employers and provides valuable information for us to fine-tune our curriculum to nurture graduates who will go on to excel.

One of our strategies to prepare work-ready graduates is through internship programmes. We have introduced this in 2008 and will be ramping up very quickly so that every RP student has an opportunity during their 3rd Year to go and spend several weeks at the workplace. Our internship opportunities give our students first-hand experience of the work environment.

Over the years, we have received positive feedback from industry players about our student interns and graduates. Such feedback serves as endorsement that we are on the right track, and motivates my team and I to continue to work to exceed expectations.

All these are made possible because RP students participate in external events where they are able to apply what they have learned, and gain out-of-classroom and international experiences. Such programs include competitions, symposiums and international events. Examples of accolades won by RP students include winning top prizes in underwater robotics at the Singapore Robotic Games in January this year and representing Singapore as a Bayer Young Environmental Envoy at a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held in New Zealand in May 2009.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Innovation lies at the heart of much of what we do at RP, and we place significant emphasis on the research carried out by our staff and students. Over the past years, RP regularly sought educational partnerships with renowned universities to collaborate in research and knowledge exchange. Some examples are Rochester Institute of Technology, Australia National University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Massachusetts and others.

Many of you who aspire to, or who will embark on a university education, I applaud you as you join your many seniors who are currently pursuing degrees in renowned universities such as NTU, NUS, SMU and overseas universities. You probably know some of them - , Lafina Loke who graduated with a Diploma in Integrated Events Management from the School of Hospitality in 2009 is studying in Gllion Institute of Higher Learning, Switzerland; Lam Zhao Yang, who graduated from the School of Information and Communications Technology in 2009 is studying at the Singapore Management University. Several other are on scholarship, pursuing their PhDs as well.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that at RP, we strive to refine and evolve our programmes to provide our students with an industry-relevant education that prepares them equally well for entering the workforce or pursuing further studies.

We have been making good progress in three important areas:

1. We have made the curriculum more robust to ensure all students learn & benefit from their education.
2. We have introduced and will ramp up industry internships so that graduates are work-ready the moment they finish their education at RP.
3. We are actively tying up with local & overseas universities so that RP graduates receive advanced standing when they pursue further education.

I want to encourage you, our graduates as you move ahead in your career, to continue to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in your fields, and to employ the best practices that you have learned whilst at RP.

I look forward to each one of you being a torch-bearer for Republic Polytechnic as you leave this institution.

You are about to either continue your education or join the industry where market dynamics are constantly and rapidly shifting.

I am confident that you are ready to face the dynamic world.

May I now ask you to join me in thanking your parents, your facilitators and the RP community for their unstinting support and nurturing guidance. We are all very proud of you!

It leaves me to thank our Guest of Honour, Mr Iswaran, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education, for being here with us this morning.

Thank you, Minister.