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**ADDRESS BY RADM(NS) LUI TUCK YEW, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND THE ARTS AT THE MOU SIGNING CEREMONY FOR Ngee ANN POLYTECHNIC AND CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY TO JOINTLY OFFER A DEGREE IN CREATIVE PRODUCING UNDER THE POLY-FSI COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK, ON 23 JUNE 2008, 9AM AT Ngee ANN POLYTECHNIC**

Mr Tan Hup Foi, Chairman of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Council;

Mr Chia Mia Chiang, Principal, Ngee Ann Polytechnic;

Professor Robert Bassett, Dean of the Lawrence and Kristina Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Chapman University;

Mr Kenneth Tan, Chief Operating Officer, Media Development Authority of Singapore and Director of the Singapore Film Commission;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to be here today to witness the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Chapman University to jointly offer the degree in Creative Producing under the Polytechnic and Foreign Specialised Institution (or Poly-FSI) collaboration framework. I congratulate colleagues from Chapman University and Ngee Ann Polytechnic for successfully forging this partnership. This collaboration is the fifth Poly-FSI degree tie-up since Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced in

2005 that our polytechnics will be linking up with FSIs to run degree programmes in niche areas.

2. A total of 11 niche areas were identified and the polytechnics have been actively pursuing degree tie-ups in these areas. I commend Ngee Ann Polytechnic for taking the lead and forging the first two degree tie-ups under the Polytechnic-FSI framework. The first tie-up was with Wheelock College, USA, for a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education, and the second with Newcastle University, UK, in collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic, for a Bachelor degree in Naval Architecture. The first programme is already underway, with 63 students in its inaugural intake, and the second programme will begin this September.

### **Creating a diverse university landscape**

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3. Ngee Ann Polytechnic's new degree in Creative Producing will no doubt add to the diversity of our tertiary education landscape and help meet the increasing demand for highly-skilled professionals in our film and media industry.

4. As many of you are aware, the Ministry of Education intends to increase the number of publicly-funded university places to cater to 30% of each cohort of local students by 2015. The Poly-FSI collaboration framework is an integral part of this expansion plan. In particular, the programmes under the Poly-FSI framework will create a more diverse tertiary education landscape and offer additional opportunities for our polytechnic students to attain undergraduate degree qualifications in the science and technology, as well as the service and creative industries. The Poly-FSI collaboration framework will also help to raise our polytechnics' capabilities and expertise. Going forward, more students from our polytechnics will enjoy the opportunity to upgrade themselves through such collaborations in Singapore at fees that are highly subsidized.

#### **Meeting the manpower needs of the film & media industry**

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5. The Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) was established in 2003 to champion the development of a vibrant media marketplace in Singapore. Under its Media 21 blueprint, MDA's vision is to transform Singapore into a Global Media City, where media services and projects are created, developed, traded and distributed to the international market. With this degree tie-up with Chapman University in

Creative Producing, we can look forward to more home-grown professional talents who will help transform Singapore into the envisaged Global Media City.

6. Offering a degree programme in Creative Producing is a strategic and timely move. It will enhance the continued growth and development of Singapore's film and media industry. In all, the size of the media sector contributed S\$4.9 billion value-added (VA) and S\$18.2 billion revenue to the economy in 2005, employing 53,000 people<sup>1</sup>. MDA is currently developing an updated national blueprint in consultation with industry stakeholders and advisors. This blueprint, Singapore Media Fusion (SMF 2015), aims to increase the direct economic contribution of Singapore's media sector significantly and create 10,000 new jobs.

7. We have been successful in attracting more overseas companies to set up operations in Singapore. Our local companies in the industry, on their own or in collaboration with such overseas companies, will also see more opportunities for partnerships to create and export films and TV productions. For example, RGM Entertainment, which is headquartered in Singapore, launched an S\$80 million fund in 2006 to produce six international feature films. These include *The Girl in the*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Joint news release by EDB, MDA and IDA in April 2008.

*Park*, featuring Hollywood stars Sigourney Weaver and Kate Bosworth. The film was co-produced by Oak3 Films, a local company whose founders, I understand, are from the pioneer batch of Ngee Ann graduates from the Film, Sound and Video diploma course.

8. Recently, Ashok Amritraj, one of the most successful producers in Hollywood today, set up Hyde Park Asia in Singapore to produce feature films with funding of about S\$75 million. Last October, Upside Down Entertainment, a partnership between Singapore's Upside Down Concepts and the US multi-E Emmy nominee Quixotic Media Group, announced a US\$10 million deal with financing partner Cinema Solutions, Inc. to fund two feature motion pictures for the international market. I understand Ngee Ann alumni are also among the founders of Upside Down Concepts. Home-grown filmmaker Jack Neo has also established a S\$10 million Raffles China Media Fund to produce movie projects for distribution in China over the next three years. These are only some examples of international players setting up shop in Singapore and working with local partners on products for the international market.

## **Chapman University - A partner of choice**

9. Ngee Ann Polytechnic has chosen an excellent partner in Chapman University. The University is a highly-regarded institution in the United States of America, offering a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programmes. In particular, it has achieved excellence in the area of film and television production. Chapman University has established a dominant presence on the international film festival circuit such as the Cannes Film Festival, the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival in France, the Sundance Film Festival and Telluride Film Festival. Chapman University has produced many prominent leaders in the film and television production industry in the United States, and I look forward to more of such talent graduating from this Poly-FSI programme in Singapore!

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10. This degree in Creative Producing will not only create more choices locally for our diploma graduates who aspire to pursue higher qualifications; it will also serve as a media and cultural exchange platform for students from both institutions. It will enable students and faculty from both institutions to share their knowledge and experience, and to facilitate business and co-production opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

11. My congratulations again to both parties for sealing this promising partnership, and I look forward to exciting developments and growth in the film and media industry.

12. Thank you.

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