

Academic Matters

Part-time programme accredited by professional body and realigned with BSc (Building) programme

The [Bachelor of Building \(Construction Management and Economics\)](#) programme has been accredited by the Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers (SISV) for a five-year period. The accreditation covers all the cohorts of the programme.

Offered on a part-time basis to polytechnic diploma holders, it has also been realigned with the [B.Sc.\(Building\) programme](#). Thus, with effect from August 2004, the latter programme will be offered in both full-time and part-time modes. The benefits of this realignment are that there will be less ambiguity in the department's undergraduate programmes as the students will take the same programme with the same curricular structure and obtain the same degree. As the part-time and full-time students will study together, they can mutually gain from their different strengths, while learning from each other to make up for their different weaknesses.

More overseas postings for practical training

The Department has a [Practical Training Scheme \(PTS\)](#) which aims to allow students to gain industry experience through its arrangement of suitable placements for Third Year B.Sc.(Building) students, including with overseas organisations. This year, the Department was able to arrange for 11 overseas placements, 8 in China and 3 in Mauritius, compared to only 4 overseas attachments last year, including one to China. The PTS, which is being conducted from 5 May to 5 July 2004, involves 55 students attached to local companies, and 14 students working on various research projects in the Department.

Pioneer batch of KCL-NUS MSc Construction Law and Arbitration students to embark on study visit to London

The first cohort of students on the joint [KCL-NUS MSc in Construction Law and Arbitration programme](#) has completed the first year. All 26 students are looking forward to the London Study Visit, which will take place from 20 June to 9 July 2004. The students will attend Dissertation Day on 26 June 2004 with their KCL counterparts on the London programme, when they will be discussing their dissertation topics. The joint programme students will attend classes with the London students and participate in the annual King's Construction Law Conference and visit some construction sites and legal chambers. There will also be lighter moments on their three-week schedule, which will include interesting activities and events such as walking tours of London and the KCCLA Summer Party: An Architectural Tour of the River Thames by boat.

Research

CTBP clinches grant to conduct studies on energy

The [Centre for Total Building Performance \(CTBP\)](#) has received two grants from the EU Commission through its ASEAN project office to undertake research projects. The projects approved are entitled "Development of a Business Model for Building Energy Performance Services in the ASEAN Region" and "Development of a Comprehensive Database for Building Energy Performance Benchmarking in the ASEAN Region". The grant amounts are Euros 200,000 and Euros 199,996 respectively. This will underpin the department's research direction in the Energy and Sustainability Unit.

Air-conditioning invention granted US patent

Assoc Profs Chandra Sekhar, Tham Kwok Wai and David Cheong, and Dr Wong Nyuk Hien were granted a US patent for their invention, which is a newly developed air-conditioning and mechanical ventilation (ACMV) system with two variable air volume (VAV) systems for cooling and dehumidifying fresh outside air and recycled air independently. As a proof of concept, a prototype was developed in 2002 in the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Laboratory of the Department which has demonstrated significantly enhanced IAQ and energy savings of about 15%.

The patent, US6,698,219 B2: Energy-efficient (VAV) System with Zonal Ventilation Control, was granted in March 2004.

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Department to conduct research with HDB and JTC

Efforts to collaborate with the Housing and Development Board (HDB) and Jurong Town Corporation (JTC) paid off, in the form of two research collaboration agreements signed with HDB, and in-principle approval for two projects with JTC. HDB will be financing about 70% of the total value of the projects (about \$186,000) whereas JTC will be bearing 100% of the project costs. The two projects with HDB are on "Development of environmental assessment criteria and protocols for residential and commercial development" and "Natural ventilation of HDB hawkker centres and its impact on thermal comfort".

Three other projects which commenced in the second quarter of the year include "Project management practices adopted by international consultants and contractors when operating in China"; "Developing generic scheduling strategies for construction projects"; and "Impact of indoor environment on perceived air quality, sick building syndrome symptoms, work performance and productivity", which is a multi-disciplinary research project involving the Faculty of Medicine.

Department steps up efforts to establish international links - visits to US and Chinese universities



Building students initiate humanitarian project

A team of NUS students went to Kolkata, India from 26 May to 13 June 2004 on a project known as [Project Starfish](#), which was initiated by a group of final year B.Sc.(Building) students. The work involved the construction of a communal hall, and participation in the Rainbow Project, which deals with the teaching of street children. Working under the umbrella of the Singapore International Foundation (SIF), the group of 23-strong NUS undergraduates was formed by the Building and Estate Management Society (BEMS), SDE, to undertake a humanitarian mission to Kolkata. The project involves a village in the Diamond Harbour Region, where the villagers had identified the need to build a community hall for the coordinators from Child In Need Institute (CINI). The students will be assisted by skilled bricklayers and supervised by qualified technical personnel.

A "down under" experience for year-3 students

A group of 12 third-year Building students, led by Dr Evelyn Teo, made an educational trip to Australia in May 2004. The trip had been tabled as one of the activities of the Quantity Surveying Committee formed by the students and was supported by the Department. The group visited Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane and the Gold Coast from 18 to 28 May 2004. The aims were to expose the students to a different culture of learning (by visiting University of New South Wales and Queensland University of Technology), and to broaden their horizons and help them to establish links through visiting construction sites, construction firms and the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors. ([more>](#))

Students gain international exposure through MTI programme

The Asian Business Fellowship Programme (ABF) is an initiative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) that supports the training of Singaporeans or Permanent Residents in acquiring in-depth expertise, business operational knowledge and links in engaging China, India and the Asian region. The processing of the ABF is similar to that of a scholarship programme. Applicants will have to undergo a selection process conducted by MTI and the respective host companies. Upon confirmation, the trainee will be based in the host company for 1.5 or 2 years. MTI also allocates an allowance budget for the trainees, which covers all necessary expenses, including accommodation.



Assoc Profs Tham Kwok Wai and Chandra Sekhar visited Pennsylvania State University in the USA between 6 and 7 May 2004 to explore the feasibility of a Student Exchange programme for the BSc (Building) students and mutually beneficial areas for research collaboration.

([more>](#))

Assoc Prof Tham (left) with Professor Richard Behr of Penn State University.



(Clockwise from left) Assoc Prof Tham Kwok Wai, Professor Cheong Hin Fatt, Dean of SDE, Professor George Ofori and Tsinghua University's Professor Zhao Rongyi.

Between 28 March and 3 April 2004, the Head of Department, Professor George Ofori, and Deputy Head for Research, Assoc Prof Tham Kwok Wai, visited China to recruit graduate students. They were part of a group from the School of Design and Environment (SDE) on a trip to present graduate research degree opportunities to Masters and final year undergraduate students in selected Chinese universities. The group comprised the SDE Dean, the three Department Heads and Deputy Heads (Research). The universities visited include Tsinghua University, Tianjin University, Tianjin University of Technology, Zhejiang University and Tongji University.

([more>](#))

Faculty staff invited to participate in overseas research

Dr Evelyn Teo was invited to take part in the research funded by the Construction Industry Institute Hong Kong. The project titled "The feasibility of establishing construction standards for Hong Kong" has a total project value of HK\$536,370. The research aimed to explore the feasibility of establishing construction standards for Hong Kong and to set the strategic direction for the construction industry. The main objective is to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of setting up an independent statutory Hong Kong Standards Agency to approve all construction materials and equipment for local consumption and application. This is a large-scale project of national status and it is proposed to investigate and



Two Building students, Chong Wai Yi and Agnes Tan, were awarded the ABF for Undergraduate Internship in China. Read about their experiences...

[\(more>\)](#)

Alumni Matters

Seminar on Strategic Facilities Management

[BEMA](#) organised a half-day seminar titled "Strategic Facilities Management" on 12 May 2004. Sponsored by CB Richard Ellis, it was attended by some 90 participants. The speakers were Mr Tay It Tuan, Executive Director of Asset Services at CB Richard Ellis Singapore, and Mr David Lum Siew Chong, Managing Director of CPG Facilities Management Pte Ltd. [\(more>\)](#)

compare four regions: United States, Australia, Singapore and P.R. China.



Dr Evelyn Teo (centre) flanked by her collaborators during her trip to Hong Kong to witness the signing of the contract for the research.

Another faculty member, Dr Wong Nyuk Hien, was invited to be a key international collaborator of a major research project proposal entitled "Bioclimatic (thermal and luminous) signature of live-in residential units" initiated by the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The other collaborators include Professor Peter Tregenza of Sheffield University and Professor Baruch Givoni of University of California LA.

Joint Executive Programme in Project Management

In a joint collaboration between the University of Moratuwa (UOM), Sri Lanka, and the Department, an intensive two-week executive programme in Project Management was conducted from 9 to 20 February 2004 in Singapore, for a group of 7 senior executives representing various key organisations in Sri Lanka. The programme was a combination of classroom lectures, case studies, and technical site visits to some of the largest development projects in Singapore, with the teaching faculty comprising academic staff from both NUS and UOM. [\(more>\)](#)



The group of senior executives from Sri Lanka who came on the first programme with the Department's faculty staff.

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