



SUSS president Cheong Hee Kiat (above) said the university is in discussions with the Ministry of Education about a new campus, although its location has not been decided. It is now operating on rented premises (right) in Clementi. PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG, SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



Looking for a home of its own to fashion new type of campus

The Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) is looking for a new home that will bring its students and staff under one roof.

Its president, Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, said it is in discussions with the Ministry of Education about a new campus, although its location has not been decided.

“This would be a chance for us to fashion a new type of campus,” he told *The Straits Times*, in a recent update on the university’s plans as it marks its 15th anniversary this year.

Since 2005, SUSS has been operating on rented premises at the Singa-

pore Institute of Management (SIM) site in Clementi.

It rents Block C and partial spaces in Blocks A and B from SIM, as well as some spaces in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, which are used for lecturers and other staff.

Prof Cheong said: “We have been renting for 15 years... Any university would like to have a place that students can belong to.”

Over the years, SUSS has expanded its full-time offerings – it now has nine such degree courses, up from three in 2014.

Its latest full-time intake for the

2020 academic year is between 850 and 900, up from 580 in 2017.

It has 13,000 part-time students, including graduate students.

Instead of having a large sprawling campus, the idea is to make use of a reasonable amount of space in an efficient and cost-effective way, said Prof Cheong.

“We want to be mobile, agile and provide sufficient facilities for our students in a thoughtful way,” he said, adding that having large spaces to maintain could

drain resources and may push up the cost of education.

The aim is for SUSS, as a social sciences institution, to make learning as accessible as possible to people, said Prof Cheong.

“We are quite a different university, and we are proud of that,” he said. SUSS will continue to focus on closing the gaps in society, he said, and working with social service organisations to help them do better in management and operations.

Applied research is also another

key emphasis.

“We let others do all the esoteric stuff, but we want to do applied research that can be applied in sectors or nationally,” said Prof Cheong.

Going forward, the university hopes to also raise its standing globally by joining regional consortiums that are aligned with its strengths.

For instance, since 2017, SUSS has been a member of The Talloires Network, an international association of institutions focused on strengthening the civic roles and social re-

sponsibilities of higher education.

SUSS is also keen to explore joining organisations such as the Asean University Network to boost job and networking opportunities for students and help faculty members learn from overseas conferences.

Through these tie-ups, SUSS also hopes to “establish our reputation and get people to know what sort of university we are”, Prof Cheong said.

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