



For more information, contact:

Kate Hoagland  
Ash Institute  
617-495-4347

[kate\\_hoagland@ksg.harvard.edu](mailto:kate_hoagland@ksg.harvard.edu)

Lia Davis  
IBM Media Relations  
202-515-5499

[lia.p.davis@us.ibm.com](mailto:lia.p.davis@us.ibm.com)

Sabrina Loi  
Institute of Technical Education  
65 9669 1692

[Sabrina\\_Loi@ite.edu.sg](mailto:Sabrina_Loi@ite.edu.sg)

## **SINGAPORE'S INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION ANNOUNCED AS WINNER OF IBM INNOVATIONS AWARD IN TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT**

***Harvard University's Ash Institute and IBM Honor Contributions to Vocational and  
Technical Education***

**Cambridge, Mass., – September 25, 2007** – The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government today announced Singapore's Institute of Technical Education (ITE) as the winner of the (US) \$100,000 IBM Innovations Award in Transforming Government. Selected by an international panel of experts, the Institute of Technical Education was recognized as a model program in improving vocational and technical education due to its measurable successes, collaborative and innovative practices, scope and potential global replication.

"We are deeply honored to be recognized as the winner of the IBM Innovations Award in Transforming Government," said Bruce Poh, director and CEO of the Institute of Technical Education. "The transformation of vocational and technical education in Singapore is a goal that the whole organization and its stakeholders believe in passionately. Throughout this process, we have remained steadfast and focused in our desire to transform the lives of our students for the better, by providing them with relevant technical and social skill sets that will best prepare them for high-paying jobs and further education."

Under its 10-year reform plan launched in 1995, ITE reinvented itself from an inadequate last resort for underachieving students into a prestigious post-secondary institution aligned with Singapore's broader labor and economic development initiatives. Widely credited as a contributing

factor in Singapore's high youth employment rate, the Institute provides the lowest academic performers, representing 25 percent of each secondary school graduating class, with a viable alternative to traditional academic pursuits.

Prior to ITE's formation as a post-secondary institution in 1992, student attrition was nearly 40 percent. Those students successful enough to graduate were often ill-prepared for the workplace, equipped with only basic technical skill sets. Determined to reshape ITE's public perception and to enhance the caliber and delivery of its technical curriculum, the ITE board of governors and senior management team worked hand-in-hand with Singapore's Ministry of Education, industry experts and community leaders. As a result, student enrollment numbers have doubled and the program reports a 33 percent increase in graduation rates. Over the past decade, more than 90 percent of ITE graduates have secured skilled industry employment and have cited increased monthly wage earnings despite international challenges like the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s.

"IBM is deeply committed to innovation and collaboration – for our business, our clients and the communities in which we live and work," said Todd Ramsey, general manager of IBM Global Government and Education. "Innovation is measured not by the number of new ideas, but by positive impact that new ideas have on people. The innovative reforms implemented by the Singapore Institute of Technical Education have clearly demonstrated dramatic improvements in classroom performance and student competitiveness for higher paying jobs. The best practices can be used by educators and communities throughout the world."

The ITE Transformation Plan was launched in the following three strategic phases focused on improving its overall marketplace reception and optimizing the program's location and curriculum for learning:

- **Phase I (1995-1999):** During the initial phase, ITE launched an innovative semester-based credit training initiative to better support students with course evaluation and selection. The Institute collaborated with international brand experts to develop new avenues for repositioning the Institute with outside stakeholders and students.
- **Phase II (2000-2004):** In the second phase, outside industry experts worked with ITE leadership to revamp curriculum and promote higher learning standards among students and teaching staff. Irrelevant courses were replaced with learner-centric practical classes addressing the latest innovations in high technology. Additional teachers with practical expertise in the new curriculum's innovative technology focus were recruited to join the

teaching staff. Specialty schools in the areas of Applied and Health Sciences, Business and Services, Engineering and Information-Communications Technology were launched to host more than 50 pre-employment programs.

- **Phase III (2005-2009):** Designed to further elevate the status and brand image of ITE throughout Singapore, the Institute leadership is currently consolidating its 11 campuses into three larger colleges with state-of-the-art laboratories and technical facilities. ITE College East was completed in 2005, and two additional colleges are slated for opening in 2010 and 2012. Throughout the reform plan, international business and technology industry partners continue to play a valuable role assisting with curriculum development, equipment donations and train-the-trainer programs. ITE fosters a newfound holistic approach to learning, integrating extra-curricular sports, arts and community activities into the technical-focused curriculum to ensure that all students have a holistic 'hands-on, minds-on and hearts-on' education.

“Singapore’s Institute of Technical Education has not only improved the lives of its students, it has created a highly sustainable model for transforming poorly performing educational institutions worldwide,” said Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in American Government Program at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. “We are pleased to honor the Institute’s achievements and commend the outstanding dedication of multiple administrations of ITE leadership in collaboration with an international portfolio of technology and business partners. ITE’s contributions extend far past the school room and have a direct impact on youth employment rates, community safety and the Singapore economy.”

“We would like to thank our leadership in government, successive boards of governors, management and staff of ITE for believing in the worthiness of this cause and pursuing this transformation process with passion and dedication,” Mr. Poh said. “We are humbled by the award, and would like to thank IBM and the Ash Institute of Harvard University for the recognition.”

Additional information on IBM can be accessed by visiting [www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com).

#### **About The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation**

The Roy and Lila Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, publications, leadership training, global network and awards program – developed in collaboration with a diverse, engaged community of scholars and practitioners - the Ash Institute fosters creative and effective government problem-solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. The Ford Foundation is a founding donor of the Ash Institute. Additional information about The Ash

Institute is available at [www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu](http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu). Organizations are encouraged to apply to the 2008 Innovations in American Government Awards by October 15, 2007 at [www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu](http://www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu).

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