

Award for SUTD ad campaign on women's feats

By PEARL LEE

WHO invented the electric water heater? A woman did.

Highlighting such little-known facts is part of an advertising campaign by the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) to get girls into engineering.

The campaign last week won the university the MARKies award, organised by local magazine Marketing, for having the best idea for a female audience.

Mr Patrick Low, founding partner of ad agency Goodfellas, conceptualised the campaign, which celebrates the little-known achievements of women, such as the electric water heater. It was invented in

1917 by Ida Forbes.

The campaign also highlighted the invention of the signal flare by Martha Coston in 1859.

He said the origins of such devices would surprise many.

"The nature of these inventions symbolises the understated role of women in the field of technology and design, and also highlights their strong, silent disposition to constantly strive to improve the lives of others."

The school's senior director of marketing and communications, Ms Corinna Choong, said: "SUTD seeks to offer a diverse and enriching learning experience, and an important aspect of this is a balanced male and female cohort ratio.



A poster in an SUTD ad campaign to get girls into engineering.

PHOTO: SUTD AND GOODFELLAS

"We are delighted our efforts to reach out to them through advertisements highlighting women's contributions have worked, as female students make up 40 per cent of our student population. This is one of the highest ratios internationally among engineering schools."

Last week, the university,

which opened its doors last year, welcomed 283 students for its second intake.

Apart from the advertising campaign, which began last November, the university also conducts presentations at junior colleges and polytechnics, and runs a workshop to introduce female students to the design and engineering courses at SUTD.

Ms Lisa Tjide, a second-year student specialising in engineering at the university, said she had always had more male classmates than female ones in junior college, because she took subjects such as physics and mathematics.

"But in SUTD, there are quite a lot of girls; I think the school has been quite successful in attracting female students," said the 21-year-old.

Debunking the myth that men make better engineers, she added: "I do see girls doing well in school and having a lot of passion for engineering. That is the most important thing, to have passion."

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