Alumni idea to woo foreign students pays off

BY AMELIA TAN

THE proof of the pudding is in the eating, thinks the Singapore Institute of Management Global Education (SIM GE).

So, to attract international students to enrol in its programmes, it relies on those who have had the pudding — its alumni.

Referrals by student recruiters have been so successful that foreign students now make up one-quarter of the school’s 12,000 full-time students.

Last night, for the second year in a row, SIM GE was recognised by the Singapore Tourism Board for its efforts in marketing itself to international students. It took home the award for the “Best International Marketing Effort by a Private Educational Institution” at the annual Singapore Education Awards ceremony, held last night at Raffles Hotel.

The awards recognise educational institutions and individuals who have succeeded in attracting foreign students, moving Singapore closer to its goal of becoming a “global schoolhouse”.

Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan, who was the guest of honour, said Singapore was becoming a popular study destination for international students, whose numbers rose from 86,000 in 2007 to 97,000 last year.

Responding to questions about the impact of the Private Education Bill to be introduced in Parliament later this year, he said weaker players should take the opportunity to improve themselves and invest in areas such as curriculum development.

Mr Lee added: “Quantitative growth is good in numbers but we should really focus on qualitative growth. We want students that come here to receive good quality education so that when they go back, they have something to be proud of.”

SIM GE is one of SIM’s three arms, and offers undergraduate and graduate programmes with partner universities overseas.

Eighteen organisations and individuals were given awards last night.

Among the other winners were Singapore Management University, which was named “Best Host for International Students Studying in Singapore - Schools”, and Ms Boey Suit Yim, a Temasek Polytechnic staff member, who won the “Friend of International Students” award for her efforts in hosting and assimilating students from overseas.