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SMU students Ling Kai Tsi and Melissa Chia with a journal and cards that will be used in the Pathfinders programme.
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SMU launching self-development programme

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From next year, students at Singapore Management University (SMU) will be able to go through a new self-development programme called Pathfinders.

The programme will encourage students to reflect on skills and learning points they have acquired over the course of their undergraduate programme through non-academic activities, such as community service or internships. It will also help them develop their emotional intelligence and better understand their intrinsic motivations and interests.

It was made possible by a \$5 million donation to SMU from Mr Kuok Khoon Ean, a member of its first board of trustees, SMU announced at the opening ceremony of its new academic year yesterday. He is the chairman of investment holding company Kuok (Singapore).

The donation will also be used to launch a scholarship, the SMU International Scholarships. It is open to students from South Asia and South-east Asia, and two undergraduates will be awarded the scholarship each year.

SMU dean of students Paulin Straughan said a pilot of the Pathfinders programme will start running with about 200 students when the new semester begins this month, and will aim to reach 600 students next year.

SMU's School of Information Systems has also introduced a revised curriculum that is more flexible and has more diverse offerings to meet the demands of the future economy. Students will be able to choose to specialise in six different tracks, including new areas of growth like artificial intelligence, compared with just three or four tracks previously.

A new interdisciplinary major in Smart City Management and Technology will also start running this year, with 46 students enrolled in the first cohort.

Mr Ling Kai Tsi, 24, a fourth-year undergraduate at SMU, said he is interested in signing up for Pathfinders.

Joining some activities that share the same framework as the programme helped him to discover that he was passionate about creating social impact, and motivated him to look for opportunities in the field.

"It recognises that there are learning opportunities outside of the classroom, and also helps students be more reflective about what they have learnt (in their non-academic life)," he said.

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