

Mapletree awards SMU S\$3m for new real estate programme

Singapore

STARTING from August, the Singapore Management University (SMU) will offer a course specialising in real estate investment and finance.

The Mapletree Real Estate Programme, as it is called, was announced on Friday and is the result of a gift of S\$3 million from Mapletree Investments. With a one-to-one matching grant from the government, the total of S\$6 million will go towards the setting up of a professorship, awards, grants and speaker events supported by Mapletree.

In a joint statement, SMU and Mapletree said the programme will equip students with the knowledge and cross-disciplinary skills to navigate the growing real estate sector in Singapore and around the world.

SMU will offer a new real estate track to all its undergraduates who are majoring in finance or

economics, with the aim of developing a pipeline of talent to fuel the sector's manpower needs.

SMU also said it recently set up an 11-member Advisory Board – comprising leaders in the fields of real estate, tax, investment and finance, and law – for the Real Estate Programme. The board is chaired by Mapletree's group chief financial officer Wong Mun Hoong, and co-chaired by SMU's dean of Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Gerard George.

"We are delighted to co-create a real estate finance specialisation with industry partners, which caters to the industry's talent needs," said Prof George.

Mr Hiew noted that education is one of the four key pillars of Mapletree's corporate social responsibility programme, and the aim is to provide students with the skill-sets that are essential for global real estate companies.

"It is our wish that this Real Es-

tate Track at SMU will groom a new generation of practitioners who will meet the demands of professionally-managed real estate companies focusing on international investments and development opportunities," he said.

SMU provost Lily Kong described the partnership as an "affirmation" of the research excellence of the university as it strengthens the effort to generate thought leadership around real estate investment and finance.

Meanwhile, SMU's Finance professor Francis Koh from the Lee Kong Chian School of Business was named the first Mapletree Professor of Real Estate.

He will work closely with the advisory board and industry leaders to develop and implement the Real Estate Track, as well as lead real estate researches. He will also deliver the inaugural Mapletree Lecture in Real Estate slated for the last quarter of 2018.