

City space for SMU students to live, learn



Residents of Prinsep apartments also urged to take part in community service projects

\$690-
\$880

Range of rental fees that students pay at Prinsep Street Residences a month, including utility charges, depending on the type of room.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

I get to interact with students from five to six nationalities in my apartment. I never knew as a local student that I could get an international experience.



FIRST-YEAR STUDENT CHANG WEN YEE

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

Singapore Management University (SMU) undergraduates have a new space to call home on campus – the Prinsep Street Residences (PSR).

The 5,000 sq m living facility in the heart of the city has housed 255 students since August after it underwent a \$10 million facelift.

The three blocks of four-storey apartments along Prinsep Street – former Singapore Improvement Trust buildings – used to house mainly foreign students from SMU.

But the university has converted them into an area not just for living but also learning, with a multi-purpose lounge and rooms for projects, meetings and seminars.

There are 23 apartments, most of which house 10 to 12 students each, and come with a common living room. About 400 students had applied to stay at the residences, which were officially opened yesterday by Ms Denise Phua, Mayor of Central Singapore District.

Residential living and learning is a concept which has taken off among several local universities.

Students who live at PSR are strongly encouraged to take up or initiate projects that will benefit society. About 70 students have already joined community service projects.

Second-year student Esther Chong, 20, is part of a team working on a project to help women with low incomes use skills like sewing to earn more through home-based businesses.

Students also attend workshops, sharing sessions by industry guests and talks on mentoring and career.

Professor Paulin Straughan, dean of students at SMU, said students must learn teamwork, adding: "Real-world problems, very seldom, can be solved by an individual."

Students pay rental fees of around \$690 to \$880 a month, including utility charges, depending on the type of room.

They come from all six SMU schools, with two-thirds being freshmen. Around half the residents are Singaporeans with the rest coming from overseas.

The living fees for 10 of the students have also been sponsored by Frank by OCBC – a financial literacy programme. This is part of the

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The Singapore Management University spent \$10 million to refurbish former Singapore Improvement Trust buildings in Prinsep Street into student apartments with common living rooms, a multi-purpose lounge and rooms for projects, meetings and seminars.
ST PHOTO:
SYAZA NISRINA

SMU's partnership with the bank, which will also fund students' projects on sustainability.

Third-year student Jessica Lee, 21, said: "I've always heard about hostel life and been curious, so

when SMU redid the place and brought in the element of co-learning, I thought why not?"

First-year student Chang Wen Yee, 19, added: "I get to interact with students from five to six na-

tionalties in my apartment.

"I never knew as a local student that I could get an international experience."

ateng@sph.com.sg

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