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Headline: New sustainability major for SMU undergraduates

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This DBS-SMU Sustainability Initiative will also fund research fellowships, scholarships, study missions and a talent development programme.

SINGAPORE – Singapore Management University (SMU) undergraduates will soon be able to take up a course in sustainable business practices and work on projects with social enterprises, under a new initiative between the university and DBS Bank.

The DBS-SMU Sustainability Initiative, launched on Tuesday (Feb 12) will see the bank committing more than \$1 million to support academics, businesses and students in tackling sustainability issues.

This includes research fellowships, annual undergraduate scholarships, an annual business study mission as well as a talent enterprise development programme.

Two DBS Sustainability Scholarships will be offered to third-year students who have declared Sustainability as a Second Major in the upcoming academic year, which will begin in August. The major, which will be offered by SMU Lee Kong Chian School of Business, will equip students with “knowledge and skills to implement sustainable practices in businesses that lead to long-term, measurable impact”, said SMU and DBS in a statement.

Professor Gerard George, Dean of SMU Lee Kong Chian School of Business noted: “Increasingly, businesses have embraced sustainability as part of their strategic goals. Many companies consider a sustainability strategy necessary to be competitive today and in the future.”

The DBS-SMU Talent Enterprise Development programme will pair students with a keen interest in sustainability projects with up to 10 social enterprises.

These social enterprises include events company Adrenalin, healthy snack subscription Boxgreen and organic waste recycling company UglyGood.

Each project team will have two SMU undergraduates, and they are expected to embark on their projects from May to July this year, over the summer holidays.

During the programme, they will have opportunities to develop media campaigns and improve processes in the enterprise.

“While students can gain first-hand experience with the inner workings of a social enterprise, they’ll also be lending us their talent and creativity,” said Mr Jeremy Lee, UglyGood’s director of business development.

“We hope that such an experience would inspire them to become changemakers in their own right.”

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Meanwhile the DBS Sustainability Fellowship aims to attract and retain scholars in sustainability research, and the annual DBS Sustainability Business Study Mission, will allow SMU students to visit regional centres of excellence in sustainability.

Both programmes will also start in the upcoming academic year.

DBS Singapore country head Shee Tse Koon said: "In many ways, Singapore is well-placed to become a model city for sustainable development and our hope is that this partnership will cultivate a thriving pool of talent and businesses."