

Corporate Connections



How can a school work with local corporations to create initiatives that don't just involve financial support, but also offer meaningful opportunities for faculty to conduct research and for students to gain experience? At Singapore Management University, it's all about building relationships.

"I don't start from the perspective of generating massive endowments," says

Gerard George, dean of SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business. "I start by asking, 'What resources can the community provide that will then allow me to better serve the community? How can the university and the community deploy resources, offer more opportunities, and engage better?' The money is a component, but what's more important is that the student has the experience of engaging with the company."

Thus, whenever he approaches corporations to propose a relationship, he always considers how he can

both create and receive value from the collaboration. He believes it's essential for the school to respond quickly to a company's challenges.

"It's very easy for universities to say to corporations, 'Let's do a project together!'" he notes. "But universities move slowly, so the project might not be addressed for six months, and by that time the problem is no longer important or it's already been solved. So I organize the school so that our faculty can plug and play very easily." In return, he also strives to have many