



## **UOB sets up scholarship with SMU to deepen the data skillsets of tomorrow's workforce**

**Singapore, 29 November 2018** – United Overseas Bank (UOB) has set up a scholarship with Singapore Management University (SMU) to deepen the data skillsets among Singapore's pipeline of talent. This is to prepare them for the increasingly significant role data plays in driving informed business decisions and strategies for organisations.

This is the first full-tuition scholarship in Singapore to support top students in an accounting and data analytics tertiary programme.

The UOB and SMU's scholars will undergo SMU's Master of Science in Accounting (Data and Analytics), or MSA, programme without worrying about its financial costs. In addition, they will also be able to deepen their skills and expertise through a 12-week internship programme at UOB.

Mr Richard Lowe, Chief Data Officer, UOB, said, "At UOB, we are committed to developing the skillsets needed to succeed in the digital economy. The UOB-SMU MSA Scholarship is one way in which we can help spur higher learning in the area of data and analytics – something that is vital in our data-driven and interconnected world."

SMU is the first and only tertiary institution in Asia to offer further specialist study in data and analytics through its MSA programme. SMU's MSA programme, which may be completed full-time or part-time, is designed for professionals who are interested in developing expertise in applying data technology into their domain knowledge to solve business problems, especially in the finance and accounting sectors.

Dean, School of Accountancy and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Accounting Cheng Qiang

said, “We are grateful to receive UOB’s support for two of our best students with this scholarship and for their recognition of the value of our MSA programme not only to its students but, through them, to the financial sector as a whole.

“The MSA programme is the first specialised Master programme in accounting data and analytics in Asia. Unlike other postgraduate analytics programmes, the MSA’s data and analytics track goes deep into the application of data technology in the accounting and finance domain. Armed with the knowledge of machine learning and data analytics, our graduates will be better equipped to bring value to their workplaces, from banks and audit firms to technology companies.”

### **Inaugural UOB-SMU MSA scholarship awarded to two recipients**

The UOB-SMU MSA scholarship has been awarded to two enterprising students in the MSA programme. Twenty-nine year-old David Djapri and 22 year-old Zhang Tongtong were selected to be first two recipients of the scholarship as they had achieved outstanding academic results. Messrs Djapri and Zhang also impressed the scholarship panel with their entrepreneurial spirit and passion and drive to contribute to the finance and accounting industry.

More information on the recipients of the 2018 UOB-SMU MSA scholarship can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

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### **About the SMU MSA programme**

The MSA programme is the first Master's degree programme in Asia specialising in accounting data and analytics. It provides a pathway for accounting graduates and business professionals to work and thrive in functions with accounting data and analytics applications, whether in a regional or global business environment.

The MSA programme comprises 12 courses taught over two years on a part-time basis or over one year on a full-time basis, commencing in August. It combines the practical use of the latest analytics technology and data sets, as well as real-world experience using actual company cases and innovative teaching pedagogy such as the SMU-X. This knowledge of how and where to apply technological expertise in authentic settings will enable our graduates to perform the higher-level tasks that are increasingly expected of accountants.

For more details, please refer to <http://accountancy.smu.edu.sg/master-accounting>

### **About the SMU School of Accountancy**

Established in 2001, the School of Accountancy (SoA) is the second largest school in the Singapore Management University. SoA began with a cohort of 90 Bachelor of Accountancy (BAcc) students and eight faculty. The BAcc programme became the first American-styled broad-based accountancy programme in Singapore, with a curriculum that met the accreditation requirements of the major accounting regulatory bodies. Currently, SoA has a faculty of close to 50 and offers the distinctive programmes; the Bachelor of Accountancy, Master of Professional Accounting, Master of Science in Accounting (Data & Analytics), Master of Science in CFO Leadership, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Accounting, and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) in Accounting and Finance. These programmes are designed in line with the development of Singapore as a leading global hub for accounting services and professionals for the Asia Pacific.

SoA aims to develop versatile accounting professionals and business leaders through holistic education, thought leadership and collaboration with businesses and society. The SoA faculty comes with strong credentials in research, teaching and industry practice and the SoA community shares a sense of professionalism, personal integrity, social responsibility, as well as an aspiration for exemplary leadership in the field of accounting. SoA's programmes are accredited by various reputable professional bodies and are internationally recognised.

In 2011, SMU became the youngest institution to be accredited by the AACSB International for its business and accountancy programmes across both undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum. The SMU Bachelor of Accountancy (BAcc) is also accredited by the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA), Singapore Accountancy Commission (SAC), the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA), the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), the Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ), CPA Australia, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), the Institute of Certified Management Accountants (ICMA) and the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA).

In 2017, SoA received international recognition for its research strength after it was ranked third in the world for archival research in all accounting areas in the Brigham Young University (BYU) accounting research rankings. The

achievement is a strong testament to the commitment of SMU faculty towards developing high quality accounting research and the conducive environment in SMU, which has facilitated their research productivity.

<http://accountancy.smu.edu.sg/>

### **About Singapore Management University**

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning

Home to over 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community.

[www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

### **About United Overseas Bank**

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia with a global network of more than 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. UOB is rated among the world's top banks: Aa1 by Moody's and AA- by Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings respectively. In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as branches and representative offices across the region.

Over more than eight decades, generations of UOB employees have carried through the entrepreneurial spirit, the focus on long-term value creation and an unwavering commitment to do what is right for our customers and our colleagues.

We believe in being a responsible financial services provider and we are committed to making a difference in the lives of our stakeholders and in the communities in which we operate. Just as we are dedicated to helping our customers manage their finances wisely and to grow their businesses, UOB is steadfast in our support of social development, particularly in the areas of art, children and education.

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## Appendix 1

### Profile of UOB-SMU MSA Scholarship recipient – David Djapri

David Djapri is currently a full-time student of the Master of Science in Accounting (Data & Analytics) programme. David joined Ernst & Young LLP in Singapore as a Manager in 2015. During his tenure at Ernst & Young LLP from 2015 to 2018, he was responsible for providing audit remediation services, accounting assistance, finance integration and diagnostic services for listed companies across the world. Prior to his career in Ernst & Young LLP, he worked in the Agopian and Baboghli Accountancy Corp in the US, where he was in charge of tax and compliance function as part of the public accounting role. David graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Economics from the University of California, Irvine in 2010.

#### **1. Why did you choose to enrol in MSA?**

I chose to enrol in MSA as I felt the finance and accounting function is transforming. Accountants are known as record-keepers but the future finance function will require more than following accounting and tax standards. With the data that is stored in finance functions, accountants can help decision makers in an organisation through data analytics. The MSA programme is a comprehensive programme with a good mix of programming, accounting and finance topics, which makes it a relevant course for accountants who are looking to embrace data analytics.

#### **2. What do you think of the programme so far? How is it beneficial to your personal and professional development?**

Being the pioneer batch of the MSA programme has a special meaning to me as it shows that SMU has the foresight to anticipate the needs of accounting professionals and how they can upskill themselves.

The programme so far has been quite challenging for someone without a programming background like myself. Having said that, it is an essential part of data analytics in understanding and applying programming codes to analyse data. The friends and contacts that I have made in the programme will also contribute to my professional development.

#### **3. How do you feel about receiving the UOB-SMU MSA Scholarship and how will impact your life and studies?**

To be recognised by SMU and UOB alike is a great honour. The support that UOB gives me including the internship opportunity with UOB's data office management team will complement my current accounting experience.

#### **4. What are the challenges that you faced throughout the programme and how did you overcome it?**

I graduated from my undergrad studies a little more than 8 years ago, so it took some time for me to re-adjust my schedule and mindset being back to that of a student. I actually learned to become a student again through working with my current classmates and they spurred me on to have an open mind and learn as much as I can in this short year that I will be in the MSA programme.

#### **6. What are your career plans after graduating?**

I plan to use my current accounting and processes domain knowledge, together with the data analytics skills to make a difference and help companies achieve their strategic goals.

## Appendix 2

### Profile of UOB-SMU MSA Scholarship recipient – Zhang Tongtong

Zhang Tongtong is currently a full-time student of the Master of Science in Accounting (Data & Analytics) programme. Zhang Tongtong graduated with a Bachelor of Management from the Renmin University of China in 2018. During her undergraduate studies, Tongtong received the National Endeavor Scholarship in 2016 and 2017 and Second Prize of University Scholarship in 2015. As a member of the Public Relation Department of the Student Union in Renmin University of China, she was responsible for soliciting sponsorships for events and activities.

#### **1. Why did you enrol in MSA?**

I enrolled in MSA because through the programme, I can learn about how data analytics can be applied to the accounting domain. The course is designed to enhance our accounting, programming and statistical knowledge. As there is an increase in demand for professionals who know big data and artificial intelligence, this will allow me to be well prepared when I enter the workforce in the future.

#### **2. What do you think of the programme so far? How is it beneficial to your personal and professional development?**

I think that the programme exceeds my expectations. The course develops our critical thinking skills. Through the classes, we learned that there are so many different ways to approach a problem or an assignment. It really opens my mind on how we can understand and solve problems by using different methods.

In the past, I knew almost nothing about data & analytics. But after this term, I am able to pick up programming and coding, which is very interesting. It helps us visualize data and gain insights of them.

The programme is very enriching, and this will be very beneficial to my future career. I think that after I graduate, I will be better equipped for future challenges in the industry. AI, machine learning and cloud will be prevalent in the industry, and currently, I am eager to learn and be more prepared for the changes to come. My skill sets will enable me to stand out from my peers in the future.

#### **3. How do you feel about receiving the UOB-SMU MSA Scholarship and how will impact your life and studies?**

I am very excited about receiving the scholarship. I would like to thank and appreciate the efforts of Professor Wang Jiwei, the programme director of MSA, to start this insightful programme and bring about this scholarship opportunity. And of course, I would also like to thank UOB for providing this scholarship to help me develop my potential, and my career.

As for the impact of the scholarship, first of all, it can relieve my financial burden. More importantly, I will have the chance to work in the data management office in UOB to apply what I have learnt in SMU. The scholarship also makes me more confident as it is a recognition to my commitment to the programme, and my passion to make a positive contribution to the industry. I will keep working hard to achieve my aspirations – by always improving myself and leading the future changes in the industry. In school, I am currently part of our class committee and I help with the school outreach activity as an SMU ambassador. I will continue to be dedicated in my roles as student, class committee and SMU ambassador to create value to the class and to school.

**4. What are the challenges that you faced throughout the programme and how did you overcome it?**

The first challenge I faced was adapting to the environment of a new country. SMU offered international students a workshop where I can learn more about the language, the culture and the Singapore working environment. And that can be overcome over time. The more challenging task is to understand the lessons and perform well in school. Because I don't have much foundation in accounting and programming, I have to work extra hard to do well in class. I try to spend more time to revise my homework, and consult my classmates and the professors when I need clarifications.

**5. What are your career plans after graduating?**

As part of the offer of the scholarship, I will join the data management office in UOB where I want to learn as much as possible during the first one or two years after graduation. Hopefully, in three to five years after graduation, I could be a manager in the area of financial-related data analytics. By then, I hope I can be more skilled and experienced, with the abilities to contribute more to the company in the future.