



Press Release

SMU will officially launch SMU-X curriculum in Academic Year 2015-16

SMU-X Initiative aims to bring about a mindset change through innovative curriculum and unconventional learning facilities

Singapore, 23 April 2015, Thursday – After three-and-a-half years of study and conceptualisation, Singapore Management University (SMU) will launch its new SMU-X Initiative in the forthcoming Academic Year (AY) 2015-16, which begins in August. Key to this milestone is the introduction of a suite of new SMU-X courses following a six-month pilot.

The University, which celebrates its 15th anniversary this year, is known for doing things differently. Besides offering an American style of education done in small, interactive seminar groups, it is also the first to introduce compulsory community service and internship, as well as broader admission criteria. The SMU-X Initiative, a paradigm shift which focuses on learning (as opposed to teaching), contributes towards the University's 2025 vision of being a leader in transformative education, and reflects SMU's commitment to stay ahead of innovative pedagogy by pushing the boundaries and venturing into new ways of bridging theory and practice.

"The new-concept SMU-X Initiative aims to bring about a mindset change. We strive to do this by introducing innovative, fresh curriculum that is multi-disciplinary and hands-on, and providing unconventional, flexible spaces for 24/7 use that meet the usage patterns and behaviours of the millennial student. It gets SMU members – faculty and students alike – to collaborate and step out of their silos, by encouraging group effort in solving complex issues. Leveraging on our position as a university in the city, SMU-X can also bring us closer to our community and the industry," said SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer.

"This is a milestone for the University as we turn 15 this year. The implementation and realisation of SMU-X will continue to evolve. Therefore, 'X' stands for many things: eXperimentation, eXperiential, eXcitement, cross-interaction, collaboration and the unknown," he added.

Fresh, innovative curriculum

All SMU-X courses are characterised by four principles: (i) inter-disciplinary content and activities, (ii) project-based learning via an actual problem/issue faced by an organisation, (iii) active student-mentoring by faculty and industry, and (iv) three-way learning by faculty, student and client, characterised by a tripartite sharing forum at the end of the course. In other words, for the undergraduates, every SMU-X course will combine academic with experiential learning through the heavy use of projects to challenge and inspire them to use their disciplinary knowledge and skills in tackling multi-disciplinary, real issues faced by the partner organisations.

The University will introduce six SMU-X courses in the coming Term 1 of AY2015-16 (August to November 2015):

1. Intelligent Accounting Function
2. Internal Audit
3. Global Migration and Human Society
4. Public Policy Taskforce
5. Special Projects with International Organisations
6. The Science of Happiness

(Please refer to Annexes for course outlines).

The SMU-X courses, which are all 15 weeks in duration, are listed with SMU's six schools – accountancy, business, economics, information systems, law and social sciences. They provide credit towards the undergraduate degree courses and will be made available to all undergraduates. With 50 places available for each course, up to 300 students will be able to participate in this latest learning pedagogy in the coming school term.

Explaining how SMU-X came about, Professor Pang Yang Hoong, SMU's Vice Provost (Undergraduate), and Dean of School of Accountancy, said, "SMU-X is a ground-up initiative driven by faculty who are passionate about promoting inter-disciplinary learning that is coupled with strong industry relevance. SMU-X not only promotes greater connection across School boundaries, it also benefits research and exposes students to more opportunities."

"By deep diving into current and actual problems and constraints, SMU-X courses can accelerate our students' learning to go beyond hypothetical classroom exercises. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the partner organisations who have worked with us in the pilot phase. We are grateful for their confidence and trust in our experimental pedagogical approach, and hope that our students' work has brought value to their organisations. We look forward to working with more corporate, non-profit and government-sector organisations," Professor Pang added.

Experimental SMU-X facility

To keep up with the learning behaviours of today's youths, and having studied similar models overseas as well as conducted focus group discussions and surveys with SMU students, the University has developed prototype SMU-X spaces in its city campus. SMU-X facilities are characterised by collaborative learning spaces that facilitate the coming together of individuals and groups around an identified project and/or issue, fitted with technology to facilitate interactive discussions and presentations. These are opened 24/7 to allow 'after-work hours' meetings and include living spaces (including resting and eating spaces) for students who may need to stay and work together for the duration of projects. Research Institutes, Centres or Initiatives can also be grouped and located within or in the vicinity so that the community will be encouraged to tap on their expertise.

Currently, these SMU-X prototype spaces are located in the SMU Labs building as well as at the SMU Li Ka Shing Library Learning Commons area. Having gained the valuable experience, the University intends to create more of such spaces around the campus to provide the rich environment for the SMU-X concept to flourish.

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Enclosure: Course Outlines

- Annex A – Managing Process Improvement (also a pilot course in Jan 2015)
- Annex B – Public Policy Taskforce (also a pilot course in Jan 2015)
- Annex C – Global Migration and Human Society
- Annex D – Intelligent Accounting Function
- Annex E – Internal Audit
- Annex F – Science of Happiness
- Annex G – Special Projects with International Organisations

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 produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 8,800 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, 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 interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

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