

Publication: The Straits Times

Date: 06 March 2017

Headline: Developing all-rounders with an SMU edge

Developing all-rounders with an SMU edge

PUBLISHED MAR 6, 2017, 4:00 AM SGT



An SMU business study mission to Scandinavia included a visit to Ikea. PHOTO: SMU
PHOTO: SMU

The SMU journey emphasises holistic growth with 'heart' and 'soft' skills not to be undermined. At Singapore Management University (SMU), excellence goes beyond good grades and 'hard' skills.

The transformative education experience moulds students into well-rounded individuals with not just 'hard' skills for the job but also 'heart' and 'soft' skills such as empathy, who can make meaningful impact on society. These create the SMU edge that sets its students apart, increasing their employability and generating global-ready citizens.

OPEN YOUR MIND

The enriching journey for the 'Different U' starts in Year 1. Opportunities abound for a fulfilling student life outside the classroom.

SMU's distinctive 'Finishing Touch' career preparation programme — the first such programme among local autonomous universities — helps undergraduates develop and focus on career goals progressively throughout their four-year course of study. This increases their employability and readiness to enter the working world.

Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction.

Publication: The Straits Times

Date: 06 March 2017

Headline: Developing all-rounders with an SMU edge

All freshmen are required to complete two career planning and self-discovery workshops, before proceeding to five career skills workshops in their second year. Students need to complete all seven workshops in order to graduate, and the programme is regularly updated.

SMU LifeLessons is a structured programme that complements the academic curriculum. It is the first programme in Singapore's tertiary sector that looks at values-based education. Students set goals for themselves and are given journals to document and reflect on their experiences after participating in activities.

This encourages and develops students' capacity for self-reflection so that they uncover personal values and purpose, develop maturity and grow in non-academic areas during and beyond their time at SMU. It also maximises students' out-of-classroom learning experiences in student activities such as community service, internships, student exchange programmes, sports clubs, arts groups and special interest groups.

Students can look forward to developing their interests and leadership skills through SMU's 120 co-curricular activity (CCA) choices, at both recreational and competitive levels. From arts and culture, sports and adventure, to leadership, special interests and community service, CCAs help make student life more vibrant, diverse, active and balanced.

The university's biggest annual arts festival, SMU Arts Festival, was held on campus and in several downtown venues in September last year. Attracting over 6,000 attendees, the 14-day festival featured close to 700 SMU students and alumni from over 20 SMU arts CCA clubs in over 30 events.

SMU also excels in sports. Last year, two SMU Sailing teams took first and second places in the 19th Western Circuit Sailing Regatta's IRC B category; SMU Windsurfing won the Inter-Tertiary Windsurfing Cup for the second year running.

Exemplary undergraduates hone their skills in external relations as University representatives under SMU Ambassadorial Corps. These student Ambassadors engage and host distinguished SMU guests at important functions.

Serving the underprivileged and needy is one of the key mindsets that SMU aims to inculcate, and the university provides many ways for students to pay it forward. One of the university's signature community outreach events, SMU Challenge, held its annual Walk for Good walkathon in collaboration with the Central Singapore Community Development Council last July.

EXPERIENCE THE WORLD



SMU's renowned percussion band SMU Samba Masala performed as the only invited Asian guest band in Europe's Samba festivals in July 2016. PHOTO: SMU

100 per cent of SMU students have the opportunity to gain overseas exposure. SMU students are encouraged by the university to embrace diversity and inclusion, and go on a wide range of global student programmes with a unique internationalisation approach, to become global citizens.

Nearly 90 per cent of graduates have seized these opportunities, going on international student exchange, study missions, summer programmes, capstone courses; or other forms of overseas exposure such as internships, competitions, community service projects, academic activities, CCAs, and business cultural study trips.

SMU students can take more than 10 pass/fail modules that count towards graduation with the first four types of overseas programmes above. All these overseas programmes help students become more globally connected, building international networks and cultural understanding.

SMU alumnus Yap Hsien Liang, who graduated with Bachelor of Accountancy with a double degree in Business Management (Finance), says his global experience at Cambridge and Wharton was a highlight during his SMU years.

"My time in Cambridge and Wharton was nothing but phenomenal. Not only did I get a chance to experience two top-tier education systems and learn from some esteemed professors, I also got to embark on fun-filled adventures around Europe and America where I was exposed to different cultures and societies," says Mr Yap, who is currently working in a global financial firm.

Publication: The Straits Times

Date: 06 March 2017

Headline: Developing all-rounders with an SMU edge

SMU students are also encouraged to take part in both global and local competitions to increase experiential learning, and tackle challenges practically by applying academic knowledge.

SMU is particularly proud of its School of Law (SOL) mooting teams, which have impressive international records. They have reached 36 international championship finals and won 17 since the school's inception in 2007. SOL also reached the championship final on its international debut in 11 moots and won six. This is thanks to a structured moot training programme rolled out in 2009, and strong support from alumni and the legal fraternity.

CULTIVATING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

As a graduation requirement, SMU students put in at least 80 hours of community service each.

On average, graduates of the past three cohorts recorded more than 140 hours each. In total, SMU students have clocked 2.5 million hours (or 285 years) of community service in 17 countries.

Under the guidance and mentorship of the SMU Centre for Social Responsibility, more than 5,600 undergraduates dedicated their time to helping local and overseas communities in 2015.

The university was the inaugural winner in the "Educational Institution" category of the Singapore President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards last year.

Every SMU undergraduate also has to take a course on Ethics and Social Responsibility. This imparts basic principles of professional ethics in various academic disciplines and teaches students to be sensitive to ethical issues.

Social sciences undergraduate Nur Dini Haziqah Binte Mohd Sukri, who is majoring in Politics, Law and Economics (PLE), feels that the out-of-classroom experiences such as community service and internships "provide a fulfilling and wholesome university experience that does not solely revolve around academia".

"The various welfare programmes and career consultation opportunities that SMU prepares for its students ensure that everyone's current and future well-being is really being taken care of," she adds.

CAREER-READY ALL-ROUNDERS

Internships are a major component of the SMU experience, as they offer insights to actual working life, an experiential foundation to career choices, and opportunities to build valuable business networks.

Before students enter the workforce, they have to complete a minimum 10-week internship to gain real-world exposure and valuable industry experience.

The SMU Internship Programme encourages students to explore and experience the working world, and to integrate classroom theory and personal skills with relevant work experience.

The average SMU student completes between two to six internships, and many are talent-spotted and offered jobs by host companies before graduation.

Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction.

Publication: The Straits Times

Date: 06 March 2017

Headline: Developing all-rounders with an SMU edge

According to the latest annual Joint Graduate Employment Survey (GES) conducted by Singapore's five autonomous universities, more than 78.2 per cent of SMU students did two or more internships. Among the 2016 cohort of SMU graduates who received job offers, one in four landed full-time employment through internships.

Internships can be done during the academic year or summer and winter breaks. The internships can be structured or customised, local or overseas, part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid.

SMU business graduate Ho Yan Yan completed three internships as she felt it was important to experience different real-world work environments, which would help decisions on career paths. As a result of the internships, Ms Ho landed her first full-time job in a government-related organisation before graduation.

She says: "SMU's strong focus on preparing students for the workplace, be it through encouraging us to embark on internships or to work on real-life industry projects, helped me transition smoothly to working life."

Visit <https://admissions.smu.edu.sg/programmes> for more information.