

# New scholarship for retiring SAF regulars



(From left) Major Goh Chong Tong, Colonel Lim Seng Hock, Major Velayuthum Vijaya, Lieutenant-Colonel Lai Chyh Jau and Lieutenant-Colonel Chua Thiam Beng received the "Warriors Scholarship" from SMU yesterday. ST PHOTO: AZIZ HUSSIN

## SMU to sponsor up to 20 bond-free postgraduate scholarships each year

By LEE JIAN XUAN

RETIRING military personnel are getting a "no strings attached" chance to start a new career, thanks to a bond-free "Warriors Scholarship" from the Singapore Management University (SMU).

Launched yesterday, the scheme is the brainchild of SMU's dean of postgraduate professional programmes, Dr Philip Zerrillo, who suggested it to university president Arnaud De Meyer eight months ago.

Dr De Meyer told a 100-strong audience at the scholarship ceremony yesterday: "These national service personnel have played an important role in ensuring peace and stability, an important role which is often taken for granted.

I didn't need much convincing."

To accommodate the first five recipients - all in their late 40s - SMU expedited administration so they could start this month.

Four of them are taking up a new master's programme to learn about collaboration between government, business and civil society, while the other is doing a master's in business administration.

The SMU will sponsor up to 20 bond-free postgraduate scholarships annually for the next three years, at an estimated cost of \$1 million a year. Applicants can enrol for 18 of 20 programmes.

The scholarship is open to SAF service personnel with at least 10 years of service.

About 100 to 200 regulars - in their mid- to late 40s - retire

from the SAF every year, according to the Defence Ministry, and eight in 10 take an average of six months to land a new job. Most become supervisors, managers or directors in defence manufacturers, banks and security firms. Others set up their own businesses.

They are often valued for their leadership skills, ability to handle complex tasks and people management, said Chief of Defence Force Ng Chee Meng at the ceremony.

Thanking the SMU in his speech, he said: "It symbolises public recognition of the sacrifices by our servicemen and women. SAF personnel will have much to offer as they have a wealth of practical experience and leadership skills honed in training, operations, planning and policy roles."

Recipient Lieutenant-Colonel Chua Thiam Beng, 47, who has spent 29 years in the SAF, said: "I hope to find the same kind of fulfilment that I did in the army."

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