

Local unis team up to offer dual degree

SMU, SUTD tap strengths to offer engineering and management course

By AMELIA TENG

FOR the first time, two local universities are coming together to offer a dual-degree undergraduate programme.

The four-year course in technology and management offered by the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and the Singapore Management University (SMU) will take in its first batch of up to 45 Singaporean students in May.

The programme, catering to academically strong students with an interest in business and engineering, is the first such tie-up between any of Singapore's six local universities.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) offer double-degree courses but not

with each other. These are offered across faculties or with overseas institutions instead.

The latest collaboration shows that universities "can also work together to complement each other's strengths" besides competing for the best faculty and students, said SMU president Arnoud De Meyer as he announced the new offering yesterday.

Unlike comprehensive universities like NUS and NTU, the newer SMU and SUTD are more specialised and can complement each other, say academics.

SUTD president Thomas Magnanti said the dual-degree tie-up "makes a lot of sense" as SMU is strong in business, while SUTD is good at engineering and design.

"NUS and NTU have their own engineering schools... so for them to partner with us would

cause competition internally," he said.

Students in the SMU-SUTD course will be taught in an integrated and interdisciplinary way.

Said Professor Magnanti: "If you're going to be a techno-grounded leader in today's world and do design and technology, you have to find a way to understand the world of commerce. You have to understand commercialisation."

From their first year, students will study on both universities' campuses and be taught by faculty from both sides.

They can graduate with two degrees - a bachelor of business management from SMU and a bachelor of engineering from SUTD, with a specialisation in areas such as information systems technology and design.

They have to take 50 to 53 courses, including up to six co-developed by the universities.

Students will also be required to do a four-month internship



SUTD president Thomas Magnanti (left) with SMU president Arnoud De Meyer at the announcement of the new collaboration yesterday. Professor De Meyer is holding a cap signifying a pact signed by the two varsities in 2011 to work together in educational matters. ST PHOTO: SEAH KWANG PENG

and 80 hours of community service, as well as go on overseas exchanges. They will stay at an SUTD hostel in the first year.

All students will be offered scholarships to cover their tuition fees, as well as allowances for overseas internships and community service projects.

Mr Saw Xun Yi, 21, who has secured an offer to study at SUTD, is keen on the new course.

"It's really great that SMU and SUTD are collaborating. SUTD by itself is very design-centric and it's better for prospective engi-

neers to know how the economic system works," he said. Both also teach in a more hands-on and interactive way, he added.

Applications for the course are open until April 1. Those short-listed will be interviewed by faculty from both universities.

The dual-degree course is part of an agreement between SMU and SUTD to collaborate in educational matters. Students from SUTD have been taking courses taught by SMU professors since January, among other things.

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