

Double benefits

SMU undergraduate Yap Hsien Liang develops his technical skills and broadens his thinking through his studies

by ahmad osman

SINGAPORE Management University (SMU) undergraduate Yap Hsien Liang is pursuing two bachelor's degrees in accountancy and business management.

He is in the Lee Kong Chian Scholars Programme and will complete the degrees in four years.

There is no bond attached to the programme, which is worth about \$60,000 and covers tuition fees and allowances for books, a laptop and three overseas trips.

Mr Yap is acquiring knowledge about the success drivers for businesses and skills, including the ability to put up good presentations and work in teams with tight deadlines.

He joined SMU in 2012 and will graduate in 2016 after completing a minimum of 80 hours of community services and at least one internship lasting 10 weeks.

The requirements will help him to achieve his aim of a career in management consulting.

Community projects

Mr Yap, 23, enjoyed international exposure in the first year at SMU when he served in community projects in Thailand and the Philippines.

He was also an exchange student at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

He worked with his SMU teammates to finalise plans for their Nok Hook 4 project in Thailand within a semester.

For a month in December 2012, they taught English at several schools in the Khon Khaen region, and worked with teachers to develop a curriculum for English and prepare a leadership workshop for Thai students.

"Personally, I grew a lot from the experience of working with different people.

"I learnt how to listen to the diverse views of people and how to

build consensus when there are differing opinions," he says.

He also worked with a Project Ligaya school in the Philippines to teach English, mathematics and health education.

Last year, he was at the University of Cambridge for about two months. His most valuable experience was derived from the Cambridge multi-disciplinary course on Crime and Criminal Justice.

Befriending people from various cultures and with different ways of thinking are the most memorable Cambridge memories for him.

He learnt to look at problems from different perspectives and understand the nuances between different groups of people.

He also participated in Project Kindle to improve the interpersonal and communication skills, resilience, perseverance and confidence of abused and neglected children in Sunbeam Place in Singapore.

Finding a good fit

The Lee Kong Chian Scholars Programme is for first year full-time SMU undergraduates pursuing two bachelor's degrees. One of the degrees must be the degree in business management.

Applicants must have outstanding A-level results or outstanding Polytechnic Grade Point Average, strong leadership and communications skills, and active participation in co-curricular activities and community services.

Mr Yap says: "The programme is a fantastic opportunity for young Singaporeans because it develops the scholars into well-rounded individuals.

"Beyond the technical skills gained from double degrees, you get lots of overseas exposure through the exchange programmes, business study trips and community service projects."



The Lee Kong Chian Scholars Programme develops scholars into well-rounded individuals, says Mr Yap. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG