

Stint at Louis Vuitton store part of SMU learning

By PEARL LEE

MR GAURAV Narwani, 24, went to the Louis Vuitton store at Marina Bay Sands (MBS) once a week for the last 12 weeks.

But the Singapore Management University (SMU) student was not there to shop for branded goods. He was working on a school assignment.

He was helping the outlet to work on a staff roster that could lead to an increase in sales, as part of a managing process improvement module.

The module is one of two pilots of the university's latest learning experience, called SMU-X. It allows students to help clients solve real-world problems with guidance from faculty members.

Mr Gaurav, a third-year finance and operation management student, said: "Our goal was to match the number of staff at the MBS outlet to the foot flow."

He added that a good match of staff to customers will lead to an increase in sales.

At a press conference yesterday, faculty members and students shared their thoughts on the re-



SMU students (above, from left) Gaurav Narwani, Joel Chua Yong Sheng, Gianluca Merola, Amanda Chua Xin Hui and Toh Le Qi presenting their project. (Below) The new SMU Labs, with rooms for small groups to meet, is open round the clock. PHOTOS: MIKE LEE FOR THE STRAITS TIMES



cently concluded pilot, which gave a glimpse of the new teaching and learning style that SMU wants to champion.

Mr Tan Gan Hup, associate director in the president's office who set up SMU-X, said the concept focuses on teamwork.

"Traditionally, universities are very good at (working in) silos... but things have changed. We need people to work together," he said.

The new SMU Labs, which is where the MPH building in Stamford Road used to be, was refurbished to encourage collaboration. The space is open round the clock and has rooms for small groups to meet.

From August, SMU will offer six modules, ranging from public policy management to global migration and human security, taught in this new way.

Already, Mr Gaurav, who will graduate next year, is keen to take another SMU-X module.

The courses involve firms, and their challenges in the real world. After changes are made, the results are immediate, he said.

✉ leepearl@sph.com.sg