

Needy SMU students can gain Access to full tuition-fee aid

CLASSACT

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SMU PRESIDENT
PROFESSOR ARNOUD DE MEYER

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The Singapore Management University (SMU) will offer new grants and scholarships to ensure that the tuition fees of its financially needy Singaporean undergraduates are fully covered throughout their four years there.

The new initiative, called SMU Access, is supported by an \$8 million seed fund from local charity Quantedge Foundation, the university announced yesterday.

Eligibility for the SMU Access grant component is based solely on students' household economic circumstances, such as per capita income and housing type.

The SMU Access scholarship component, called the Quantedge Foundation Scholarship, will be given to about 20 to 25 financially needy students with strong academic potential – conditional on them maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least three out of four each year.

There is no cap on the total number of beneficiaries for the

grant component. Both awards are bond-free and will benefit all eligible Singaporean students joining the university from August.

Although SMU already has several bursaries for financially needy undergraduates, none offers full coverage of tuition fees.

SMU Access will be sustained with the help of government grants, SMU funds and gifts from external donors.

Recipients of the SMU Access grant and scholarship will receive up to \$12,500 – depending on their

course, and whether they are in receipt of other scholarships, bursaries or grants. If they are, SMU Access will cover the shortfall.

Said Quantedge Foundation board member Suhaimi Zainul-Abidin: "We are happy to partner and support SMU in its mission to guarantee financial aid to Singaporean students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds."

As Singapore progresses, it is vital for society to continue providing equal access to quality higher education for everyone, he added.

Said Mr Suhaimi: "Giving these students blanket assurance of full financial aid can go a long way towards this end. This will certainly lighten the burden on their families, improve education outcomes and enhance social mobility."

SMU president Arnaud De Meyer said: "This initiative essentially guarantees that every SMU student who is eligible, regardless of GPA levels, will not have to eschew a university education for financial reasons."

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