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Mr Eugene Low (centre) from the School of Information Systems (SIS), was accompanied by his wife Irene Yap (left), 44 and daughter Daphne Low (right), 18, at the SMU Commencement 2015 held at Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre on 15 Jul 2015. At 45 years old, Mr Low received his first degree. Photo: Ooi Boon Keong

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SINGAPORE — While his fellow graduates go about planning their graduation trips and applying for jobs, Mr Eugene Low Foo Mun is looking forward to spending more time with his wife and two teenage daughters, and to contribute more to his full-time job at Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

Currently a senior military expert in SAF's Imagery Support group, the 45-year-old is the oldest person to be awarded a Bachelor's degree in the Singapore Management University's history.

The School of Information Systems graduate was among the more than 2,300 who donned graduation gowns today (July 15) at SMU's 12th Commencement, held at Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre. This is SMU's largest batch of graduates since its inception in 2000 as Singapore's first public-funded autonomous university.

When Mr Low joined SMU in 2011, his highest qualification was a Diploma in Engineering Informatics from Nanyang Polytechnic that he obtained in 2007, but the long break from academia did not intimidate him.

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Instead, he was grateful for the opportunity to enter university on a SAF scholarship, as he had always wanted to obtain a degree.

Mr Low's four years as a full-time undergraduate saw him juggling presentations, classes and projects during the semester and resuming his work duties whenever he had a long semester break.

Speaking on the challenges he faced as an older undergraduate, Mr Low said he initially felt a bit awkward trying to engage the younger generation.

"However, working with them has provided me with a different perspective; it's now easier for me to see things through their lens. My work also requires me to deal with the younger generation, and I find that I have more things in common with my daughters now," he added.

In his speech at the commencement ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, who was the guest-of-honour, urged graduates to look beyond themselves and to contribute to society.

"As you look for your first job, or start your own venture, I hope you will look for something more, beyond your first pay-check. Look for a sense of mission and purpose in the work that you do," said Mr Teo.