

*With the Sports Hub's opening, SMU, University of Oregon tie-up aims to prepare students for a career in the sector*

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**SINGAPORE** – The rapid growth of the sports industry in Singapore has prompted the Singapore Management University to open up pathways for those who may be interested in a career in the field.

For starters, yesterday, the Singapore Management University (SMU) penned a five-year agreement with the University of Oregon (UO) in the United States for an international student-exchange programme to enable students from both institutions to learn from the academic and sporting cultures of the two countries.

It will also look to offer more sports-related courses in future.

The recent opening of the Singapore Sports Hub is expected to speed up the development of the sports industry in Singapore, which the government has estimated to be worth S\$2 billion by next year. The Sports Hub, which is open to the public this weekend, is also expected to open up 20,000 jobs.

With UO's Warsaw Sports Marketing Centre offering specialised courses in sports management and marketing, SMU exchange students will have the opportunity to study the best practices of the mature sports business market in the US, with possibilities of internships with renowned sports organisations such as Nike and ESPN.

Applications for the student-exchange programme open next February, with two students from SMU and OU heading to each other's campuses for an academic year starting in August.

**APPLICATION FOR THE SCHEME STARTS NEXT FEBRUARY**

# SMU moves to fill future need for sports-related courses



The opening of the Sports Hub is expected to lead to a growing demand for professionals who are trained in the organisation and administration of sporting events. PHOTO: DON WONG

Mr Ong Siow Heng, SMU's dean of students, said students from the university are starting to take an interest in careers in the sports industry and the sector may become the next most popular among students.

"Most of our students enter the banking and finance sector after graduation and this may change," said Mr Ong, a UO alumnus.

"Singapore is still quite new to the organisation and administration of sporting events and we want to expose our students to training in these areas, which we foresee will be (part of) the next boom industry here."

● In a June 4 update, the Economic Development Board said the Singapore Sports Hub is expected to play a major role in contributing to the Government's vision of a S\$2 billion sports industry by next year, along with the employment of 20,000 people in sports-related jobs.

Mr Richard Seow, Chairman of Sport Singapore who is also a UO alumnus, witnessed the signing of the agreement and pointed to SportsHub Pte Ltd (SHPL), operator of the Sports Hub, as an "exciting employer".

Mr Ong revealed that SMU might look into offering more sports-related courses to add to its two current electives, Principles of Coaching in Sports, and Introduction to Sports Management.

Noting also that the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) had set up an office in Singapore ahead of Octo-

ber's WTA Finals at the Sports Hub, Mr Ong added: "(The WTA) is open to student internships. There are also many sports marketing companies and agencies in Singapore and more are expected to set up offices here."

Currently, Nanyang Technological University is the only local university to offer a sports-related degree programme — Sports Science and Management.

Next month, SIM University will take in its first batch of 30 students for its Bachelor of Sports and Physical Education programme, which is more than four times oversubscribed.