

PROF GEORGE ALSO HOPES TO BETTER INTEGRATE BUSINESS SCHOOL WITH THE COMMUNITY

Incoming SMU dean aims to turn S'pore into 'entrepreneurial destination'

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SINGAPORE – Online healthy-snack delivery company Graze — based in the United Kingdom — rapidly expanded its business over the past five years and has, thus far, raked in about £50 million (about S\$102 million) in revenue.

Yet, Graze is among a handful of companies that are looking to grow even further under Imperial College Business School's ELITE programme — sponsored by the London Stock Exchange — which develops and supports ambitious private companies through their next stage of growth.

This is the kind of programme that the incoming dean of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at the Singapore Management University (SMU) hopes to introduce when he starts his

five-year term on Jan 1 next year.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Professor Gerard George, who is academic director of the ELITE programme and is completing his stint as deputy dean of Imperial College Business School in London, said he aims to turn Singapore into an “entrepreneurial destination” and build an ecosystem of entrepreneurs — something the region lacks.

With his sights set on making the Lee Kong Chian School of Business one of the world's top 20 business schools — it is currently ranked 52 on the UT Dallas Top 100 Business School Research Rankings — Prof George, 43, said: “What I bring to the table, my thinking, would be to help create an innovative and entrepreneurial mindset — thinking about opportunities, how do you actually take that forward.”

Apart from focusing his efforts on practical research that helps solve problems among businesses, for instance, Prof George also hopes to better integrate the school with the community, such as through projects or internships with businesses or working with government agencies and social enterprises.

He cited an example of how the UK programme has benefited students at Imperial College, where within six weeks, the case studies of companies under the ELITE programme would have been written and could be discussed in classrooms.

SMU provost and deputy president of academic affairs, Prof Rajendra K Srivastava, who was present at the press conference, noted that while Singapore invests heavily in science and technology, it does not invest enough to take the results of research



Prof Gerard George chose SMU because its faculty members are 'incredibly global in perspective' and have very strong intellectual curiosity.

PHOTO: DON WONG

in this sector into the market. This is one area where he hopes the business school and Prof George will be able to take the lead.

Prof George said he had chosen SMU because its faculty members are “incredibly global in perspective” and have very strong intellectual curiosity.

“The strength has to be the people who teach or create the learning environment, (coming) from different perspectives, and they are very, very good,” he said.

The school's outgoing dean, Prof Howard Thomas, will stay on with SMU as a distinguished professor of strategic management and management education.