

Contributions to community say more than academic transcripts: Heng Swee Keat

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Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat (file pic)

SINGAPORE: Education Minister Heng Swee Keat has lauded Singapore Management University (SMU) for producing not just good students and workers, but also responsible citizens with a passion to serve their communities.

Mr Heng told an audience of 2,122 graduates at SMU's convocation ceremony on Thursday that contributions to the community say more than academic transcripts.

SMU students are required to do 80 hours of community service before graduation, and Mr Heng said this has become SMU's badge of honour.

"It is not just about you contributing to others. Each gift of your time and talents changes you too... By doing so, I hope you have also gained a deeper appreciation of the complexities of real life and have nurtured a spirit of perseverance in the face of adversity," Mr Heng said.

This is SMU's 10th and largest graduating batch since the university's inception in 2000.



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Mr Heng said students at SMU have learnt that they should dare to take chances as an entrepreneur, leader and individual.

He had this advice for the graduates: "Daring is not just about taking a risk for its own sake. It is taking on a challenge to create something truly meaningful for yourself, your community and your country."

Mr Heng related his own experience 15 years ago when he and his colleagues faced the question of why take a chance, even before SMU came into being.

Mr Heng said he was working in the Education Ministry on higher education issues when President Tony Tan Keng Yam, who was then-deputy prime minister, had a vision to set up a third university that is fundamentally different from the two existing ones – National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University.