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BG Lim (right) and Prof Zerrillo signing the SAF-SMU MoU, which will allow qualified SAF personnel to pursue master degrees in four programmes at SMU. (Photo by: Kenneth Lin)

Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) personnel can look forward to even more opportunities to further their education and enhance their career prospects, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the SAF and Singapore Management University (SMU), in support of the SAF's Continuing Education (CE) Master's Programme.

The MoU was co-signed by Commandant SAFTI Military Institute Brigadier-General (BG) Benedict Lim and SMU's Dean of Postgraduate Professional Programmes Professor (Prof) Phillip C. Zerrillo, at SMU Administrative Building on 25 Nov.

This is the SAF's latest education-related MoU, which seeks to encourage SAF personnel to enhance their careers through continuous learning.

In his opening address, BG Lim said: "This partnership with SMU underscores MINDEF and the SAF's continued investment in continuing education of our people, and will complement existing developmental opportunities available within the SAF."

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With the signing of the SAF-SMU MoU, qualified SAF personnel will be able to pursue the following SMU Master's programmes:

- Master of Information Technology in Business - Analytics;
- Master of Tri-Sector Collaboration;
- Master of Science in Communication Management; and
- Master of Science in Innovation.

SAF personnel who have completed the Goh Keng Swee (GKS) Command and Staff Course (CSC) or CSC (Executive) will be eligible for the postgraduate programmes under the SAF CE Master's Sponsorship Scheme. SMU will also recognise course credits from modules taught at the Goh Keng Swee Command and Staff College.

Elaborating on the SAF-SMU Collaboration, Prof Zerrillo explained: "The university, being part of Singapore, is happy to support the people that are going through the military. Through discussions with the military, we found that some of the programmes we had to offer were appealing in terms of the skill sets that people were going to need in the advancement of their careers. We identified these (four) as the most appropriate programmes for the military graduates."

BG Lim added: "The SAF believes strongly in continuing education. (While) our courses do a lot to prepare them well in the professional sense i.e. in vocational and leadership skills, we cannot forget the academic front. (Thus), it's only natural that we partnered SMU. We believe that SMU has very good pedagogy and curriculum, and they will be able to enhance the offerings to the officer in the CSC."

This SAF-SMU MoU comes on the back of the SMU Warriors Scholarship, which was established on 14 Jan to enable retiring SAF personnel to pursue postgraduate degrees.

As for the ways in which SAF graduate students can add to SMU's classroom culture, Prof Zerrillo noted: "Looking at the students in the Warriors Scholarship programme, they are a very disciplined, senior group with some 30 years of military service. They bring something that is very hard for us to recreate in our programmes."

He added: "These (students) will be closer (in terms of age and career) to their classmates. They will bring a different discipline and background because of what they have studied, as well as their commitments and obligations."