

Publication: ST Online

Date: 24 October 2025

Headline: SMU students, alumni and staff go the distance to raise funds for bursary

SMU students, alumni and staff go the distance to raise funds for bursary

The TL;DR: Since 2020, the annual Smoo challenge has brought together Singapore Management University (SMU) alumni, faculty and students to raise money for SMU's bursary fund by walking, cycling and running. The 2025 edition has raised more than \$530,000, which will support over 55 study awards.



SINGAPORE – Ms Chua Jia En tore a ligament in her leg during a floorball competition in August 2024 and her immediate concern was about the financial impact of her injury on her family.

“It was a very emotional period for me because I had just got physically injured, but I still had to worry about money,” Ms Chua, 22, said. “I don’t have insurance, so my family was very stressed about the surgery costs.”

The third-year Singapore Management University (SMU) business student, who comes from a single-parent household, relies on a combination of her father’s savings and financial assistance from her university and the government to support herself.

In the end, her surgery and rehabilitation were subsidised by MediFund, a financial assistance scheme that helps needy Singapore citizens who cannot pay their medical bills.

Her school fees for the academic year were covered by her government-funded Higher Education Bursary, which she has received since entering university, and the SMU Bursary Fund, which she was awarded for the 2024/2025 academic year.

Publication: ST Online

Date: 24 October 2025

Headline: SMU students, alumni and staff go the distance to raise funds for bursary

Every year since 2020, the SMU community comes together for students like Ms Chua through the Smoo Challenge, a virtual race named after the university's lion mascot that raises funds for the SMU Bursary Fund.

Ms Chua said: "Because my bursaries cover my school fees, it meant that I didn't have to worry about my school fees when I got injured. (The bursaries) have been a big pillar of support for me."



The 2025 Smoo Challenge took place from Sept 12 to 21 and saw more than 1,200 participants raising over \$530,000 – and surpassing the initial target of \$500,000 – for over 55 study awards.

Participants ran, cycled and walked in their own time as part of the event. Distance travelled was not tied to fund-raising – funds were instead raised via registration fees and individual donations.

Participants took part as individuals or in teams. One such team was Team Justice League, a group formed in 2022 composed of students, alumni and faculty members from SMU's Yong Pung How School of Law who raised over \$40,000 in 2025.

Publication: ST Online

Date: 24 October 2025

Headline: SMU students, alumni and staff go the distance to raise funds for bursary

Dr Lee Pey Woan, the current dean of Yong Pung How School of Law, established the group in order to foster connection and school spirit within SMU's law school.

She said: "I saw Team Justice League as an opportunity to champion empathy and service, values that are central to both the legal profession and SMU's mission."

Mr Samuel Yap, a fourth-year law student at SMU and a Team Justice League member, said: "Generally, I like to exercise, so I move a lot as is. I thought it'd be nice for me to put that distance towards a good cause."



Mr Yap covered over 106km running and playing Frisbee for the 2025 Smoo Challenge.

The 24-year-old said: "It might seem like a lot, but I had professors who clocked more than double my distance. Every time I would look at the leaderboard, I would be motivated to run more."

He added: "I think it's something everyone can take part in. It's a very easy way to contribute to a good cause."