



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

SMU Goes Hybrid with Giving: Hybrid Fundraiser Unites 1,250 Alumni, Faculty, Staff and Students in Campus-Wide Challenge

SMOO Challenge 2025 sees alumni, staff, faculty, and students race toward S\$500K goal

Singapore, 12 September 2025 – Philanthropy gets a bold new form this September, as Singapore Management University (SMU) unveils SMOO Challenge 2025, a hybrid fundraiser where participants will **walk, run or cycle over 25,000 kilometres to raise S\$500,000** in support of advancing social mobility and widening access to education.

The dual-format campaign runs from 12 to 21 September, beginning with an on-campus carnival-style flag-off before transitioning into a 10-day virtual race. It blends festivity, fitness and philanthropy in one of SMU's most inclusive giving campaigns to date.

Personal Stories Power a Collective Cause

At the heart of SMOO Challenge are deeply personal journeys of transformation and purpose.

One such story is **Ashley Liew, a national marathoner** and SMU alumnus who once struggled with obesity and self-esteem issues. He now runs with purpose:

"I was once overweight, with low self-esteem and little exercise. Through determination, perseverance, and community support—especially from SMU—I became a national marathoner with a 2h32m12s personal best, shed 24kg, and completed 46 marathons to date," said Ashley Liew who will run 100km over 10 days. Support his cause [here](#).

Another is **Chua Jia En**, a third-year student who received timely support from the [SMU Bursary Fund](#).

"It was a crucial support during my ACL recovery. Balancing recovery with schoolwork was extremely challenging. I was able to focus on recovery, regain my strength and stay on track academically. This experience taught me the value of resilience, and I'm excited to play for the school team again."

These stories are just a few among the **350 ambassadors** fuelling the campaign, each mobilising their own networks to raise funds and awareness.

Other standout ambassador stories include:

- [Associate Provost \(PGP Education\) Themis Suwardy](#), celebrating **25 years at SMU**, aiming to raise **S\$25,000**.
- [Ben Toh](#), one of Singapore's top Vivino wine reviewers, offering a **private wine tasting** from his personal collection to his top 10 donors.

- [Sam Wu](#), staff member, using his **50th birthday to raise S\$5,000** in lieu of gifts.
- [Team Justice League](#), consisting of Yong Pung How School of Law alumni, students, staff, and faculty, **reunited for the second year running to raise \$32,500**.

Now in its fourth edition, the Challenge coincides with SMU's 25th anniversary and represents the evolution of philanthropy in higher education. Participants not only raise funds, but also build campaigns, craft stories, and engage supporters via social media and personal networks, reflecting SMU's experiential learning model.

"Small steps, taken together can make a real difference! That's what I love about the SMOO Challenge – it brings our community together in motion and in mission," said **Professor Lily Kong, President of SMU**, who will also be clocking her own distance. She reflects on how this multi-generational movement unites participants in purpose and camaraderie. *"As I look back on past SMOO Challenges, I'm reminded of the many moments we've shared — stepping up for a cause and sharing good cheer along the way."*

As part of her personal commitment, Professor Kong launched a President's Challenge to raise funds for 25 study awards in commemoration of SMU's 25th anniversary.

Participants will log their distances via fitness apps, with leaderboards, live updates and donor stories hosted [here](#).

SMOO Challenge by the Numbers

Since its launch in 2020, SMOO Challenge has:

- Raised over S\$1.5 million
- Engaged 3,370+ participants
- Supported over 170 students with bursaries and aid

This year, all eight **SMU schools** are fielding teams in a symbolic show of unity, from law to social sciences, business to information systems.

About SMOO Challenge

25 years ago, SMU started as an idea — a bold vision to redefine the education landscape. Today, that vision lives on in every student, every alumnus, every dreamer who dares to push beyond limits. That's what the SMOO Challenge is about. It's not just a race or a ride. It's a journey fuelled by heart, by purpose, by the belief that we go further when we go together.

Every mile you run, every pedal you push — it all adds up. Not just in distance, but in impact. SMOO Challenge funds study awards, supports financially disadvantaged students, and opens doors for those who dream big, just like we did 25 years ago. <https://smoochallenge2025.42campaign.io/>

About SMU

A premier university in Asia, SMU is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative, and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 13,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises eight schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School

of Law, School of Social Sciences, College of Integrative Studies, and College of Graduate Research Studies. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with its schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government, and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

Media contact

Jean Lim

Senior Assistant Director, Corporate Communications

SMU Office of Corporate Communications & Marketing

E: jeanlim@smu.edu.sg