

Dynamics of global business

An internship during her MBA programme at SMU leads Dr Alice Chu to a new career with her dream company

Janice Goh

AN INTERNSHIP elective course in the Singapore Management University (SMU) Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme landed PhD holder Dr Alice Chu (right) a job in her dream company.

During the 10-week internship at an operating company of Johnson & Johnson (J & J) Medical Singapore, she worked in the strategic marketing department on the development of a launch plan for new products.

Subsequently, she submitted a job application and was admitted into one of J & J's leadership development programmes.

The internship was one reason why she had chosen to enrol in the full-time SMU MBA programme in January last year.

Dr Chu, who will join the health economics and market access team of J & J's medical devices and diagnostics business unit next month, says: "The internship was important to me because this was where I could get my foot in the door with a company that I would love to join."

The 37-year-old also preferred a short programme because she wanted to enter the workforce quickly.

She says: "The 12-month programme is fast-paced and organised for efficiency."

The core courses provide the foundation to business and the programme emphasises soft skills to produce well-rounded business leaders.

For example, she says, leadership and ethics, which may be considered electives in other programmes, are core courses in the SMU MBA, adding to the integrity of the programme.

She adds: "As you begin to manage people, interpersonal skills become even more important. Having great ideas and being able to solve complex problems do not help if you cannot communicate and motivate people to believe in your ideas. In our work groups in class, all of these skills are tested."



PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

In addition, she says students can choose their electives based on their interests. Besides marketing and human resources electives, she also opted for the international trip elective to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, where she learnt about the success stories of leading companies there.

"It was one of the best experiences of my MBA programme, which also strengthened the bond with my classmates," she says, adding that they came from a range of disciplines and nationalities.

Dr Chu, who is an American Chinese,

holds a PhD in molecular and biochemical nutrition.

Pursuing an MBA had been on her mind since 2005, when she was convinced that she was not a "lab or research person" and preferred something more fast-paced, for example, business.

Almost two years ago, she came to Singapore when her husband accepted a job offer here.

He told her to check out the SMU MBA programme, which he said was modelled after his alma mater, the Wharton School in the United States.

So she attended an information

session at SMU and was very impressed with the professor who gave a short lecture on negotiations and with the professionalism of the staff and other professors.

The favourable first impression not only held, but also became stronger. She says: "We had practice professors and lecturers who have worked all over the world, but have extensive experience and knowledge of the Asian environment."

"They provided real-world examples of the trials and tribulations they had encountered and anecdotes and words of wisdom that are not found in textbooks."

PROGRAMME The SMU Master of Business Administration

BEST SUITED FOR Working professionals, with at least two years' full-time work experience, leadership experience and potential, proven academic ability and demonstrated community impact. Other requirements include GMAT, essays, recommendation forms, resumé transcripts and TOEFL or IELTS (for applicants whose degrees were not taught in English).

DURATION 12-months (full-time) or 18-month (part-time, with optional internship). Core classes are held during the day (full time) or evenings (part-time) during the first 10 months. Electives are held on weekday evenings and weekends. For details, e-mail mba@smu.edu.sg or visit: www.smu.edu.sg/MBA

TUITION FEES Approximately \$57,000 (full-time) or \$59,000 (part-time), inclusive of GST and course materials and books.

APPLICATION DEADLINE
 Part-time: Feb 29 for July 2012 intake
 Full-time: May 31 for Jan 2013 intake

PROFILE OF MBA CLASS OF 2012

Class Size: 60
 Average Age: 30 years
 Average Work Experience: 6 years
 International Students: 58 per cent
 Women: 52 per cent
 Mean GMAT: 649

She also benefited from the school's career coaches, who provided her with one-on-one advice on fixing her resumé.

She says: "My 12-month journey provided a solid education into the dynamics of the global business environment. Most importantly, I gained 38 close friends, who have shown me their talents, strengths, and personalities."