


30-6-2011

Oral History Interview with Howard Hunter: Conceptualising SMU

Howard HUNTER

Singapore Management University, howardhunter@smu.edu.sg

Follow this and additional works at: http://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/smu_oh

 Part of the [Asian Studies Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

Citation

HUNTER, Howard. Oral History Interview with Howard Hunter: Conceptualising SMU. (2011). 15. Oral History Collection.

Available at: http://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/smu_oh/12

This Transcript is brought to you for free and open access by the University Heritage at Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University. For more information, please email libIR@smu.edu.sg.

Singapore Management University

Li Ka Shing Library

Conceptualising SMU: The People and Ideas behind the SMU Story

Interviewee: Howard Hunter

Interviewer: Patricia Meyer

Date: 30th June 2011

Location: Singapore Management University, Li Ka Shing Library Recording Studio

Note to Reader:

This is an abridged version of the original interview. Please contact Li Ka Shing Library at libIR@smu.edu.sg for access to the full version of the transcript and/or audio recording.

Users of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of the spoken word and reflects the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. SMU does not exercise editorial control on the contents of the interview. We advise users to refer to the audio recording for the accurate/ authorised version of the interview.

Patricia Meyer: Today's Thursday, 30th of June 2011. I'm Pat Meyer. Today I'll be speaking with Professor Howard Hunter, who's affectionately known as Woody to the SMU community. Professor Hunter served as the third president of Singapore Management University from 2004 to 2010 and is now a member of SMU's law faculty. This interview is taking place in the Li Ka Shing Library recording studio at SMU and its part of the "Conceptualising SMU" oral history project.

Today we'd like to ask you about your recollections and your perspectives on your time as President of SMU. I'd like to start by asking you to step back and tell us about your career up to the point when you had your first contact with SMU.

Howard Hunter: My first contact with SMU of any kind came about ten years ago. At that time I was provost at Emory University in Atlanta, and I was a member of the Emory faculty for 28 years before coming to Singapore, and served 12 years as dean of the law school, and then for a couple of years as interim provost during a transition period. And while I was provost I was approached about coming here to Singapore.

Ron [Ron Frank] sent me an email and asked if I could come over and spend about a week consulting with him and other members of the SMU faculty about several matters, one of which was about the possibility of creating a law school. And so I came in August of 2002 and spent ten days here.

I must say that I came away from a week of meetings within SMU and with leaders of the legal profession convinced that it would be a long time before there would be a second law school in Singapore because then, it did not seem that there was a great deal of support for the concept within the leadership of the profession at that moment, although there was some discussion about the possibility of postgraduate studies in law and some specialisations in that area. But I wrote a report for Ron and others about how the law faculty could develop and things it could do, and I remember Ron saying, "If we don't have a law school we will have the best law department of any business school in the world." About 10, 11 months later Heidrick & Struggles, the executive search firm, contacted me and said, would you be interested in being considered to be president of SMU. And this was kind of a bolt out of the blue. But having been here and having seen what was going on and then being presented with the opportunity to be on the ground floor of the development of a new institution, it was very attractive, plus Susan [Susan Hunter] and I both had interests in Asia. So the opportunity to be in Asia, and with a new university, and with all of the ideas behind SMU was really quite attractive.

By the first part of 2004 it had all been sorted out and agreed upon that I would come to begin on September 1st 2004.

Patricia Meyer: Can you describe what were your major responsibilities that you saw at that time?

Howard Hunter: Okay, well there were several. One, SMU was a real experiment in terms of the curriculum for Singapore and the whole approach and style to it. And one of the responsibilities as president was to make sure that the integrity of that experiment was maintained, that we didn't just sort of fall off into one pattern or another because faculty were accustomed to the way they used to do things or the way it was done where they were [prior to SMU]. So maintaining the integrity of that concept was very important.

Second was recruiting people. Now I am the president, I'm not going to be out recruiting assistant professors for all the different disciplines. But had to make sure that the deans had in place the processes and the funding to be able to do so and do so effectively and well. And to maintain an identity that was Singaporean but to make sure that we recruited people from all over the world to come in to the faculty, rather than just looking locally. Not that one should be negative about anything local but rather, as the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education said at that time, "We don't want the universities just churning their faculties around amongst themselves. We want you to bring fresh talent in from overseas, if you can." Some who may be Singaporeans who'd gotten their PhDs there.

So faculty recruitment, maintaining the integrity of the experiment itself, and attracting the best possible students for SMU. You know we were still a start-up, and two very fine, distinguished, older universities, so we were in pretty heavy competition with them to get good students. And then behind all this is something that presidents always have to worry about and that is long-term financial stability. We had a lot of start-up money and that's all well and good, but the president has to look 15, 20 years in the future to make sure that the foundation is there for financial stability, long-term, not just next year.

Patricia Meyer: And as you were assessing the university when you arrived, what were your ideas for how it might grow and develop?

Howard Hunter: Well, I wanted to make sure that we had opportunities for both the students and faculty to interact with leading universities in other parts of the world. One of the goals we set early on was to have ultimately, ultimately to achieve a situation in which every student would have an opportunity for substantial overseas experience. Either a semester abroad or internship overseas or community service overseas or something of that sort. We haven't quite gotten to the one hundred percent mark yet but we're way ahead of most universities in the world in providing those kinds of opportunities for students. And that was because Singapore—while a wealthy, interesting place itself full of interesting people with a lot of intellectual firepower—is still a small place. And for Singapore to be successful it has to reach out and be connected with the rest of the world and bring the world here and connect with the world. And students can only really do that well if they've had some actual experience in another culture, another place. And it also brings fresh ideas and perspectives. So that was, that was something that was terrifically important and still is, and we had good people working on that, and I thank Isabelle Malique who directs the exchange programme. We have now about two hundred exchange programmes for students around the world.

Patricia Meyer: I'd like to ask about a few specific events during your presidency. Shortly after you arrived, in January the following year, there was a 15 percent hike in tuition fees and that increase, the size of that increase took many people by surprise. How did you work with the students?

Howard And there was a considerable amount of push back from current students and concern

Hunter: from the admissions office in particular about prospective students and how this would play in the heartlands and everywhere. And without going through all the details, I'll say that this was an instance in which student government in particular was extremely important. There were some leaders of the student association who were very mature, thoughtful, young men and women. Ford Lai was then the president of student government and there were several others involved. And they came forward with two or three proposals about the way this could be implemented over some period of time that would not be so disruptive. And they were very good ones, and they were consistent; one of them was consistent with what we'd done at Emory, which was to have a flat tuition for an entering class. So if you came in the first year and your fees were X dollars, they would be X the whole time you were a student. For the ones who came after, they might be X plus N but you knew exactly what it was going to be.

And what we did was in a sense grandfather in existing students, and then implement the 15 percent increase in stages over time, and also introduce the flat fee notion so that a freshman would know my fees are four times X and that's not going to change. That's remained constant over time. And we really can credit the students' association for being deeply involved in that, and it established as a result what has since turned in to be an excellent working relationship between the students' association and the administration through successive student leaders. So it was very positive in the long run, [although] it was a little painful at the time.

Patricia Meyer: SMU was founded as a publicly funded autonomous university. Can you just explain what that means and how do you balance those two aspects?

Howard Hunter: SMU, Singapore Management University, is a private limited company incorporated under the laws of Singapore as a non-profit private limited company with an independent board of trustees. We have a contract with the Ministry of Education for funding. That contract is in the form of a performance agreement where we agree that we will accomplish certain things. Some of them are very straightforward. We'll be of a certain size, we'll take students et cetera. Some of them very specific these are redone every five years. Some are permanent performance issues; some are five-year performance things. And in return for our agreeing to do those things, we get funding from the Government, both capitation grants for undergraduate students and research funding for faculty research and then a separate set of funds for postgraduate students who are doing PhDs.

No other country in the world has that form of organisation for universities. And in the case of SMU it was purely an experiment to see how this would work. It worked so well for us that in 2006, both NUS and NTU were reorganised into the same legal structure. And SUTD, the fourth university, same way. So all four universities are now legally the same kinds of entities. And again, there's no other place in the world with that kind of structure. If you're a state university in the United States, you are a public body; you're not a private one.

Patricia Meyer: Could you just share a few examples of how SMU has benefitted from its autonomous status? What has it been able to do?

Howard Hunter: We've been able to experiment and try different things and without having to ask permission. We have a lot of flexibility in terms of budgets. To some extent we're bound by what the capitation grants or research grants are for. But to a large extent we have a pot of money that comes from a variety of funding sources and the administration together with the trustees can decide how we allocate it. So we may allocate more in this direction one time and more in that direction another time. And I'll compare this say with the United States state universities with which I'm most familiar. Most of their budgeting is line item so when the legislature approves a budget for the university of such and such a state, that means if you've got a million dollars in this line for library acquisitions, and you only need \$700,000, you can't take the excess \$300,000 and use it to buy equipment for the medical laboratories because that's taking it from one line to another.

We have that flexibility. We can make reasonable decisions about how you allocate and deal with budgets and that's a very important thing. We also have a lot of flexibility on internal curriculum development. Now if we're going to start a new school or go off in some new direction, we have to present a case to the Ministry of Education after trustee approval, and explain why we want to do that and get the okay. But otherwise we operate really quite independently.

Patricia Meyer: That leads into my next question which is about the law school. You started to tell us some about that, so how did the plans for the law school evolve?

Howard Hunter: We kept talking about the possibility of a second law school. I say we, I would raise it with the minister and the perm sec [permanent secretary]. The president has more dealing with the permanent secretary than anybody else within a ministry. And it's an issue that just kept surfacing again. And I can't remember which year it was but I think it was 2006, the Government created a committee called the Third Committee on the Supply of Lawyers. Now the Government's always doing committees to study different possibilities for Singapore's development. And there had already been two committees that had looked at the legal profession and now this is the third one.

And this committee held hearings, they did research, they talked to a lot of people et cetera, and determined that Singapore did not have enough lawyers. Now why Singapore did not have enough lawyers, two reasons. One, domestically it's a fairly small legal market, five million people on the island. You only need a certain number of people to do estate's work, or matrimonial, or something like that, or automobile accidents. And it had only been the one law school for a long time. But Singapore has been focussing for a long time on being a major centre for banking, finance, corporate development, major research by pharmaceuticals, regional headquarters for MNCs [multinational corporations], all that sort of thing. Those are businesses that have great needs for lawyers of a certain quality, well trained, can handle that sort of thing. And there are a number of foreign law firms who had set up branch offices here really to attend to those needs.

The second thing that was kind of interesting in the legal profession's home planning was the idea that Singapore should become a resource place for law for the region, to

encourage businesses that were operating in Southeast Asia or other parts of Asia to choose Singapore law as the governing law because it's very well developed, it's stable, it's part of the Commonwealth system. You can come to court here, and you can get a fair hearing, and you know you can, and it will be expeditious, and you can trust the system and all that.

And secondly, to be a place for the resolution of disputes, arbitration, mediation and litigation. But to do that you have to have a certain critical mass of quality lawyers. And the Third Committee said we don't have enough. And there are three ways, three things we can, we recommend be done to deal with this situation. One, was to increase by a certain amount the intake at NUS. Second, was to create a second law school. And there the idea was competition is good in business, should be good in universities too. And SMU by that time had shown that it was successful. And three, to liberalise some of the rules on the admission of foreign-trained lawyers to practice in Singapore. Complicated series of rules on that which I won't go into but that's been implemented.

And so that was 2006 and then I got a call from the ministry, from the permanent secretary saying, "When can you launch your law school?" (laughter) And so we really got on a fast track then and there was appointed a curriculum working group to help design and develop the curriculum for the new SMU law school. So we launched it, first students came in 2007. I've never seen a law school get off the ground quite so quickly.

Patricia Meyer: Why was the Juris Doctor added?

Howard Hunter: Further demand. There was room within the profession to add some more graduates. We take roughly 30 into the JD programme so if you take the 120 and 30 we have about 150 annually that can go out. And the other was to provide an opportunity for people who had, who wanted to go into law, but who had studied something else or done something else, to have that opportunity here within Singapore, and not have to go to the UK or Australia or US or somewhere.

Patricia Meyer: I want to ask you about something quite different now. As president you appeared in several ad campaigns and you were Mr August along with your bike in 2007. What was that like? And any stories from those experiences?

Howard Hunter: The other thing that Alan insisted on, which we have kept to this day, is that everybody who appears in an SMU ad is an SMU person. A real, honest to goodness student, faculty member, administrator, advisory board [member], trustee, or parent. No models, nobody from the outside, just us. And that's incredibly effective as an advertising technique. And obviously it worked in terms of getting the number of applicants who we've gotten in and very good ones.

Well, the calendar was a very interesting project that Alan and the others undertook. You know it was a charity thing, and the proceeds from the sale of those calendars went to a programme at KK Hospital [Kandang Kerbau Women's and Children's Hospital] for cancer

children. I forgot what the total was, but it was more than \$50,000 that we netted out of that project, and were able to turn over to this children's fund at KK Hospital. But the people who were selected, obviously Alan had some interest in who was selected and stuff and what they looked like, but they were also representative in many ways of the mixture of people at SMU.

Patricia Meyer: I'd like to ask you about your thoughts on undergraduate education here at SMU. What do you see as key features of SMU's undergraduate education and why are they important?

Howard Hunter: The other thing I noticed very soon, very early on, was that students who would be these bashful, shy, innocent ones coming in, within about three, four months were talkative, questioning, engaged, involved, not all of them, but most of them. And that had to reflect to some extent the experience they were having in the classroom. This is not a situation where you can put off your homework to the end of the term, or just write a paper, or just study for some big exam. You've got to be prepared everyday that you go to class, which is more like going to work. When you go to work you don't get to put it off for three months and just read a magazine while you're at work. And having to speak in class, having to be responsive, having to be engaged, having to do these group projects and so forth, really does make a difference in the maturation of eighteen-, nineteen- and twenty-year-olds. And it's amazing to see how they blossom. These flowers here are fake [refers to artificial flowers in the recording studio], I know that, but in a real amaryllis, you can see, you can almost see it blossom over a short period of time, and that's what you see with the students who come in and experience this kind of intense exposure.

And there's a lot of experiential learning that goes on. It may vary from subject to subject but there's still a lot of that. I also think that there are two components to undergraduate education here that have proven themselves to be really important. One is the internship, the other is the community service project. In an internship—whether they get paid, whether they don't—at least they operate within an office or a structured business environment for some period of time. Very few late adolescents have had that experience. And much better that you have it when you're a student than when you just go to work. Those little things like learning office protocol, or learning how, what the rules are within an organisation, and how you function and all that, terrifically important.

And then the community service project. We had a Singapore group that I won't name come, and they were looking at all we do and they said, "How can you mandate that people do community service? That seems silly. If it's mandated it's not service." I said, "On the contrary, a lot of these kids have never seen, say the other part of Singapore or some other less developed parts of Southeast Asia." If nothing else, they're exposed to a part of society that they would not otherwise be exposed to. And for many it's a transformative event. They also, in many instances, do a lot of very good work.

Well, another example in this community service was that beginning about 2002 or '03, or sometime several years ago, there was a project that students got involved in, in a small community in the Philippines, not too far from Cebu. And they had been involved in things like helping build a community centre for older people, and they had worked with the schools on certain training programmes for kids, and also helping build some play facilities

for younger children, a variety of different projects over time. And from the initial group that went, another group went back and this has kind of grown over the years so that we have a regular connection with this particular little town. And a substantial number of students go there every year to work on these projects. And the mayor and the town council have become so fond of our students and appreciative of what they'd done that they passed a resolution making all of them honorary citizens. And the mayor and a couple of members of the council came here to make a presentation to me to thank SMU and its students for having done this. Not too many universities in the world have kids who are doing that kind of thing.

And then there's a project going on in the law school now which has gotten a lot of worldwide attention and which involves a number of our students. There's a young professor named Mahdev Mohan, and Mahdev is a Singaporean, educated in the UK, came back and is on our faculty. Mahdev has been involved in the team prosecuting the Khmer Rouge leaders for their crimes against humanity. And right now he's back and forth between here and Phnom Penh with a second series of trials after the first series that finished, I guess the last one finished about a year ago. And now this is the second series of trials. And that's engaged a lot of our students in doing research, the background, interviewing witnesses, gathering data, gathering evidence. Yale sent a team to work with Mahdev and our students on that project, and all those around the world. There was a story in the *International Herald Tribune* just this week about some of that work. Now that was driven by a faculty member who's then brought students into it. This Philippines project was really driven by students. Another teaching project in Sikkim [India] that our students have been involved in for years. So it's gratifying to see that kind of work being done.

Patricia Meyer: Can you just describe your management style?

Howard Hunter: My attitude toward leadership or management or whatever has always been, that if you've got a good person in a job, let him or her do the job. Don't get in the way. Now it may be that this particular dean has some different ideas from that one, but you have to let that play out and see how it goes. But not to be looking over people's shoulders all the time about things, within certain broad guidelines. I mean there were some clear values that we wanted to maintain and structures and ideas about SMU. And so deans and others would be expected to adhere to that, but generally let them run their own programmes and stuff as much as possible. And the same for people working in other areas.

Patricia Meyer: I'd like to step back and ask you about the library. What was it like when you arrived? And how did you want to see it develop?

Howard Hunter: And then Ruth, in the time that she was here, created a proper, professionally-run university research library. Staff of 32, 33 professional librarians and they were real focussed on what I'd call access to information—not so much book acquisition—but access to information, because what's critical is that the researchers be able to get what they need. What's not as critical is that you have books on shelves because that's

terrifically expensive. We're not going to—as a young university with limited resources—we're not going to build the Widener library that replicates Harvard's or the Bodleian from Oxford, it's just impossible. But you can do everything you can to get the right IT [Information Technology] structures in place. Ruth's also, knows all the things about being a traditional librarian, but is also 'with it' in the sense of understanding how technology works, and how it's now part of information gathering, and how students work.

Patricia Meyer: Another area we touched on last week were the tuition increases and I wanted to ask you a little bit further, what measures did SMU take so that students could finance their education?

Howard Hunter: Okay, well the first thing which I mentioned earlier was, we decided upon, after consultation with the students' association, a fixed fee arrangement so that when a first-year student enters he or she knows what the fees will be for the whole time for the degree. So there are no changes while a student.

The second thing was to develop a comprehensive financial assistance plan that would be available to all students who had any kind of financial need. We have some students who win scholarships competitively and those are often generous, they're usually endowed by some endowment. And those students are well taken care of. But there are many, many other students who will either have continuing needs, or short-term needs, or perhaps need some assistance in going overseas for a study term or some other programme. And what we try to do is make it easy for people to gain access to these kinds of funds by giving out a lot of information to both students and parents about their availability, whether they're loans or student jobs in the university—students work as research assistants, teaching assistants, library assistants and so forth—or whether they're straightforward bursaries. We also have some scholarships which are purely merit-based and some which are merit-plus-need. And I think there's plenty of room to develop in Singapore something that's done more commonly in some other places where there may be a prestigious scholarship or something, but the amount of it is based somewhat on the need. So a student may have the honour of being called the XYZ scholar and put that on his CV [Curriculum Vitae] and so forth and so on, but if he comes from a very wealthy family, the stipend might be quite small, whereas another student who comes from a family of very modest means might get a larger stipend as part of it, rather than the same for everybody.

Low Aik Meng, who is dean of students, was in charge of developing these programmes, and together with Alan Goh, the director of admissions, they did something about five years ago now which was incredibly effective. This was when there was a lot of publicity going on about fees for universities, and SMU's more expensive than NUS and NTU. So in one of the regular ads that Alan puts in the newspaper and other places during the admissions season, he put a straightforward statement about financial aid, and how to do it, how to get it, what it's for—step one, two, three, four, and here we can make this available to you. Nothing complicated, no barriers. And he also sent a letter with all that information to the parents of all applicants and potential applicants. And it was very effective because it just gave people a little blueprint about the options which are available. And in fact we can safely say that no student has been prevented from getting an SMU education by reason of financial need. We try to reach out when we've known

and somebody hasn't asked, we've gone to them and tried to do things for them.

Patricia Meyer: Can you tell us about the types of students that SMU is looking to attract?

Howard Hunter: What SMU has looked for from the beginning is something more than just the grades. Now obviously there has to be some recognition of how a student has performed either in JC or in a poly or in an IB [International Baccalaureate] programme or somewhere else before gaining admission. But we also look at how a student has developed his or her life, what other things interest the student, what co-curricular activities has the student been involved in, not just a member of eighteen different clubs, but has a student done something serious with one of them, been a leader, come up with a new programme, been a star athlete, something of that sort.

We also introduced the concept of interviewing all applicants above a certain level, certain cut-off level. Every spring there are literally thousands of interviews—conducted by faculty and deans and assistant deans, and in some instances students and alumni and sometimes trustees—of applicants and that interview counts for 20 percent. The students also have to write an essay which is done at the time of the interview. Not separately and not at home and not with any assistance, but just at the time of the interview. And that's a significant factor in the decision as well. So we look at the whole person because what we want to do is attract people who are intellectually curious and who are going to change the world when they get out. Now, not everybody will, but we hope enough will.

Patricia Meyer: That leads into the next question. Can you tell us some more about the SMU curriculum? What's distinctive about it and why?

Howard Hunter: The idea behind the creation of SMU was to introduce diversity into the educational landscape and to offer Singaporeans a more American-style university, as opposed to British-style. The other two are not purely British-style by any means and SMU is not strictly American. They're all Singaporean in their context, but SMU has a four-year bachelor's programme, not three-year. And the students are required to take a core curriculum which cuts across many different disciplines. They have to take six courses in common and they have to take four, five courses from a general array of subjects. So they'll have something in math, science, humanities, the social sciences, and then they'll do their major subject in the business school, it may be finance or marketing. In information systems, obviously, it's all of the different disciplines brought together that deal with IT and the application of it in businesses. In law, its law and so forth. By the time they finish four years, they've had depth in a particular discipline and also experience with other disciplines to give them some broader understanding of context in which they're working. So that a law student for instance will have had a course in finance and reading financial accounting materials. May be a little dull but it's useful for a lawyer to have that skill.

All the students will have had a course in ethics and social responsibility. There's an interesting one on business, government and society, and the interrelationships with the

civil society and governing bodies and politics and enterprise. So we hope that the person who comes out is both deeply and broadly educated and has some understanding of the context of the world in which he or she is going to work. It's the first liberal arts school in Singapore.

Patricia Meyer: Can you tell us some more about changes that you've observed in different groups of students?

Howard Hunter: Well, let's take the ones in information systems as one example. A large proportion of those students are polytechnic graduates, not JC graduates. And many of them do not have the academic indicators which would predict academic success in a way say that the ones who come from JCs with four As and distinctions and so forth might have. But within the SMU environment, the SIS students seem to thrive. They tend to produce a disproportionate number of leaders within student government and student organisations, including a couple of presidents of the student association. Their academic performance in all courses, not just IS courses, is on average way above what their predictors were. I mean the difference is remarkable in what their academic predictor might be and their actual performance over time. And then their success rate on graduation is simply phenomenal. It's one hundred percent placement, the highest average salaries in Singapore! Not just within SMU but in Singapore, excluding medicine and law, medicine and law are in a kind of different category. But if you take all the business and social science and accountancy graduates from NUS, NTU, SMU, the SIS graduates have the highest starting salaries.

Patricia Meyer: How would you describe the impact of SMU on the tertiary landscape?

Howard Hunter: I think it's been explosive. I mean when I talked to people who were here at the beginning, a lot of people thought this was going to be a total flop. Now the Singapore Government does not allow total flops and they were going to make sure it worked. But it was also said to me quite candidly by both Tharman and Dr Tony Tan that one reason they wanted to try this experiment, and they wanted it truly to be an experiment, and because it was relatively small, and wasn't a comprehensive university, if it didn't work, that was going to be okay. They just wanted us to try different things and see how it worked, and it did work and I think better than anybody expected. The curricula at our two older siblings have changed. They have more interactive smaller classes; they've changed a lot of things. The new universities borrow a lot from what we have. I think SMU has dramatically changed the landscape.

Patricia Meyer: You stepped down from president of SMU about 10 months ago. What's been happening in your life since then?

Howard Hunter: The other thing, and I didn't think about this so much at the time myself, but Kwon Ping picked up on it and said it was a really important message and it was that, I left the presidency but I remained on the faculty and continued to be active within the university

as a faculty member.

Patricia Meyer: Finally, any advice for SMU students?

Howard Hunter: Oh, be open to anything and don't miss an opportunity to try something new and different.. You get jobs and you meet people by being part of the community, not by having your nose stuck in a book all the time. But that's not to say you shouldn't do your studies, obviously you have to work hard. But be open to things and open to people.

Acronyms List

Acronym	Definition
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
A*STAR	Agency for Science, Technology and Research
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
DS	Deputy Secretary
EMBA	Executive Master of Business Administration
GE	General Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAAP	International Academic Advisory Panel
IB	International Baccalaureate
IITS	Integrated Information Technology Services
IT	Information Technology
JC	Junior College
JD	Juris Doctor
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MRT	Mass Rapid Transit
NLB	National Library Board
NTU	Nanyang Technological University
NUS	National University of Singapore
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PS	Permanent Secretary
QAFU	Quality Assurance Framework for Universities
SIM	Singapore Institute of Management
SIS	School of Information Systems
SIT	Singapore Institute of Technology
SMU	Singapore Management University
SUTD	Singapore University of Technology and Design
TOC	Topping Out Ceremony
UK	United Kingdom
UNSW	University of New South Wales

US

United States