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SMU sharpens the global edge of its undergraduates

Singapore Management University

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Media Release

SMU Sharpens the Global Edge of Its Undergraduates

In partnership with 31 leading universities, SMU will organise the 2019 Study Abroad Fair to boost global exposure opportunities for students

Singapore, 28 January 2019 (Monday) – Singapore Management University (SMU) will feature 31 leading universities at the 2019 Study Abroad Fair on its campus on 31 January 2019. International exchange students currently studying at SMU will also be at hand to share with students, insights into studying and living in their respective home universities and countries. Taken together, SMU students will get to learn first-hand about semester and short-term study opportunities offered by SMU's expansive global network of 226 partner universities in 178 cities across 46 countries. The Fair is part of [SMU's commitment to increase overseas exposure opportunities and enhance support for students, ensuring all undergraduate students participate in at least one overseas programme to gain an edge and be global-ready with widened perspectives, enriched cross-cultural experiences and broadened networks of friends.](#)

Professor Lim Kian Guan, SMU's Vice Provost (Undergraduate Matters), said, "We are committed to creating opportunities that enable each of our undergraduates to study abroad for global exposure and cross-cultural immersion. Through global exposure, students will be able to prepare themselves for future careers in fast-rising economies of Asia and be exposed to innovation-led powerhouses of North America and Europe, while building the confidence and soft skills to navigate a global environment. The Study Abroad Fair is a platform to connect our students with local experts of prospective destination universities who can best answer their questions and add clarity during their decision-making process for an enriching global experience."

Partner universities that will be present at the Fair include University of California, Los Angeles, University College London, Peking University, Seoul National University and University of Sydney. (Refer to [Annex A](#) for full list of participating universities.)

Toh Yi Min, a Year 3 undergraduate at SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business, who has completed three overseas exposure programmes, said: "I am glad that SMU has provided many opportunities for me to study abroad and be immersed in foreign lands. I got to visit second and third tier cities in China, where there are abundant business potential to tap, and where I made lasting friendships with students of different nationalities.

"Global student programmes are a great opportunity to quite literally see the world through different perspectives. People often talk about how eye-opening their international exchange experiences were. I think that you only truly understand what they mean when you have been through it yourself," said Kelvin Fan, 24 years old, a Year 4 undergraduate at SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business. "My international exchange to Wharton in the USA taught me to better communicate and collaborate with people of different backgrounds, to always be mindful of differences in perspectives and assumptions, and prepared me to be comfortable with the

complexities of work and life after graduation. There are a great many things that we do not know, both about the world and also about ourselves. These overseas stints were in a sense, transformative for me.”

For more information on SMU undergraduates’ overseas experiences, please refer to [Annex B](#).

“I was initially unsure and even conflicted about where to go for my overseas exchange. Thankfully, I got to meet fellow students and experts at SMU’s Study Abroad Fair, who answered my questions and offered their views on what each university within a country could offer. This helped me with decide which university to go to,” said Hong Yang, 24 years old, a third-year undergraduate from SMU School of Information Systems. Hong Yang attended SMU’s 2018 Summer Abroad Fair and is presently on an international student exchange programme with Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Boosting global exposure opportunities to students

Based on the latest statistics, 87% of the 1,922 SMU graduates from the Class of 2018 experienced at least one form of global exposure activity during the course of their university education at SMU; 56% graduated with at least two global exposure trips under their belt.

Starting from 2018, undergraduates joining SMU will participate in at least one global exposure activity prior to graduation. Global exposure also forms a component of the University’s new Core Curriculum, which will be rolled out in August 2019. SMU strongly believes that these global exposure activities will broaden students’ perspectives, offer students more opportunities in this global world, and help students attain skills that are critical to thrive and succeed in today’s dynamically changing workplace.

International exchange is the most popular form of global exposure taken up by students. At present, SMU collaborates with 226 universities in more than 178 cities spanning some 46 countries on a range of student mobility programmes for semester exchanges and short-term study. The University’s [International Office](#) is continually establishing new university partnerships to expand the overseas opportunities available to SMU students.

DEPARTURES 46 COUNTRIES | 178 CITIES | 226 UNIVERSITIES

SMU SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY International Office

DESTINATION
STUDY ABROAD FAIR

DATE
31 JAN 2019

TIME
11:00 TO 16:30

GATE
SMU CONCOURSE

REGISTER NOW

About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (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 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and post-graduate research programmes, SMU, is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six 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

ANNEX A: UNIVERSITIES AT SMU STUDY ABROAD FAIR 2019 (as of 23 Jan 2019)

S/N	Partner University	Country
1	University of Sydney	Australia
2	University of British Columbia	Canada
3	Peking University	China
4	Aarhus University	Denmark
5	Aalto University	Finland
6	Humboldt University of Berlin	Germany
7	The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
8	Seoul National University	Korea
9	Korea University	Korea
10	Yonsei University	Korea
11	Sungkyunkwan University	Korea
12	Ewha Womans University	Korea
13	Hanyang University	Korea
14	Kyung Hee University	Korea
15	Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education	Mexico
16	Ateneo de Manila University	Philippines
17	Stellenbosch University	South Africa
18	ESADE	Spain
19	University of St. Gallen	Switzerland
20	University of Leeds	UK
21	University of Glasgow	UK
22	University of Edinburgh	UK
23	University of Warwick	UK
24	University College London	UK
25	Imperial College Business School	UK
26	King's College London	UK
27	George Washington University	USA
28	University of California, Berkeley	USA
29	University of California, Los Angeles	USA
30	Boston University	USA
31	University of Pennsylvania	USA

ANNEX B: SMU STUDENT PROFILES

Kelvin FAN Shih Lei 范世磊

Year 4, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University 新大李光前商学院

Kelvin is a 24-year-old Singaporean and currently a final year student at SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business. His current majors are in Finance and Operations Management.

Kelvin participated in an International Student Exchange Programme (ISEP) to The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania from August - December 2018. Kelvin chose to do his overseas exposure programme at The Wharton School for three main reasons:

- (1) To further challenge himself intellectually
- (2) To compare the learning experience in Wharton vis-à-vis SMU, given the context of the original SMU-Wharton partnership
- (3) To broaden his horizons through cultural and sporting exchanges.

The reputation of Penn and Wharton as one of the top business schools in the world, coupled with the allure of a vibrant financial and entrepreneurial landscape in the States, were the main reasons shaping his choice of the destination of study.

Motivation to sign up for an international student exchange

"Broadly, I wanted to learn more about the world both outside and within myself. I recognised that it was a great opportunity to quite literally see the world and through various perspectives: as a Singaporean who has been through the Singapore education system, from fellow Singaporeans who chose to be educated overseas, and from international students all around the world. It was also exciting to live in a completely different environment for an extended period and learn to embrace the local culture. Through it all, I believe that those experiences would allow me to better understand myself, and to appreciate and seek out fulfilling experiences in life even after I graduate."

Embracing the unknown

"At the end of the day, I think this experience taught me to embrace the unknown and let life take you wherever it may lead you. I embarked on this exchange planning absolutely nothing beyond the necessities: flights, accommodation, insurance and courses. I am glad I was able to be spontaneous with figuring out student activities, travel plans and, in the process, meet new people and encounter a variety of experiences I never thought I would have. As they say here, "hang loose" and "live a little"."

Key highlights of Kelvin's overseas experience

"Every single day that I spent in the States was fruitful and fulfilling. In school, classes were intellectually stimulating, professors were knowledgeable, and the massive network of notable alumni was mind-blowing. I also joined many student clubs and activities, and in the process, I had the privilege of being paired up with an MBA student as my mentor. Traveling was definitely one of the key highlights as well, ranging from hiking to admire the fall foliage, to building a snowman and driving along the frozen lakes. Fun fact: I made no traveling plans prior to embarking on my exchange, and the people I travelled with were friends that I made in the States!"

What drew Kelvin to study business at SMU

"Studying in Singapore was not my top choice back then and I already had offers to study Law overseas. However, there were 3 main reasons that motivated my switch to study business at SMU: (1) interactive pedagogy and small class sizes (2) holistic university experience beyond academics (3)

aging parents. Before I even received an offer from SMU, I had the opportunity to meet SMU seniors during an internship, and I also had the privilege of training with the Track and Field team. I had a first-hand experience of the vibrant student life and familial environment of the University, and that played a huge part in taking the leap of faith to pursue an education with SMU.”

SMU’s implementation of compulsory overseas exposure for students

“I strongly believe in the merits of overseas exposure. The move by SMU to implement something compulsory in nature can also be seen as a commitment by the University. In my four years in SMU, I have witnessed the strength of the University in boosting opportunities (increasing the number of overseas partners for exchange, study missions and summer school) and support (financial aid) for students. Even prior to the announcement, almost all students have some form of overseas exposure before graduation. However, although the implementation might be deemed feasible in theory, guidance has to be provided. Many do worry about whether they will eventually have the necessary resources or simply how to go about thinking and planning for it.

As a graduating Senior, I do not plan to take up any other formal global exposure trips by the University. However, I have made plans to return to Wharton to explore MBA opportunities and I do hope to return there a few years down the road.”

Hobbies

“I am a Track and Field athlete and I do the High Jump. Unlike my peers, I only started training when I was serving NS, and it was also how I started training with the SMU Track and Field team even before receiving an offer. I hope to continue training and competing at local and regional meets even as I graduate and begin my career. I would also like to continue giving back to and growing the High Jump community by continuing my works with Singapore High Jump.”



First day of school! Kelvin Fan, SMU undergraduate on the first day of his international student exchange programme at The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, USA.

TOH Yi Min 卓旖敏

Year 3, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University 新大李光前商学院

Yi Min is a 22-year-old Singaporean and currently a Year 3 student at SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business. Her current major is in Finance.

Yi Min participated in a Sino-Singapore Undergraduate Exchange (SSUE) in Yunnan and Nanjing from May to August 2017, summer programme in Peking University from June to July 2018 and semester exchange to Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) from August to December 2018. She believes that overseas exposure programmes can better prepare students for potential careers outside of Singapore or in multinationals.

Why she chose Hong Kong and China for overseas exposure programmes

"Hong Kong and Singapore are both Asia's financial hubs and top global financial centres. Hong Kong has the highest concentration of banking institutions in the world and is the largest trading partner of mainland China. As a finance major who aspire to explore further into Banking and Finance as a career path, Hong Kong was a cosmopolitan, fast-paced and attractive exchange destination where I could gain valuable insights into the ins and outs of living and thriving there."

A firsthand experience of Chinese cities

"SSUE gave me the opportunity to visit 2nd and 3rd-tier cities in China, where there are abundant business opportunities we could tap on. The greatest takeaway will definitely be the friendships forged with fellow programme participants, as well as the local students I met in Yunnan and Nanjing. I had the opportunity to engage them firsthand and to exchange knowledge and ideas. The SSUE programme comprised outbound and inbound segments – I gained valuable insights about the Chinese cities in the first segment, then I hosted our counterparts in the second segment, where we shared more about Singapore.

My exchange experience at CUHK helps to prepare me for a global career in the future. Besides a solid university experience, I gained a deeper understanding of the social situation in Hong Kong. Hong Kong citizens are experiencing social transition, where locals promote self-identity. This increases my awareness of the cultural sensitivities and political undertones that businesses should be mindful of when they work with customers or counterparts in Hong Kong."

Key highlights of Yi Min's overseas experience

"The key highlights of being an exchange student in a foreign country is the interaction with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. I encountered issues with communicating with some of the locals in Hong Kong, because I do not speak Cantonese, while they seemed unwilling to speak Putonghua. I realised the power of language as a tool to build rapport. Eventually, I adapted to the situation by picking up some basic Cantonese vocabulary, to show that I am trying to speak their language and they were then more willing to open up and engage me. This experience taught me to be open-minded and to think on my feet to quickly adapt to a new environment."

SMU's implementation of compulsory overseas exposure for students

"Personally, I find overseas exposure to be extremely helpful and I am glad that SMU has provided plenty of opportunities for me to go overseas."

Hobbies

"I am keen to pick up new languages. I can speak Korean and am started learning Japanese in SMU this semester. My stints overseas helped me realise how important language is in getting the other

party to open up to you. Also, I love singing, especially when it can lift the spirits of the elderly and underprivileged.”



SMU undergraduate Toh Yimin during her international student exchange programme to the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Claudsen SIAH Jian Wei 佘健威

Year 4, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University 新大李光前商学院

Claudsen is a 25-year-old Singaporean and currently a Year 4 student at SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business. His current major is in Finance

Claudsen participated in an International Student Exchange Programme (ISEP) to McGill University, Canada from August - December 2018. Claudsen chose to do his overseas exposure programme at McGill as he had always been keen to gain insights into the culture and academic life in North America. The strong reputation of McGill University (ranked 32nd worldwide in QS World University Rankings 2018) further reinforced his decision.

Motivation to sign up for an international student exchange

"Some focus on the thrill and glamour of studying in a foreign country. In my case, I was motivated to sign up for an international student exchange at McGill University (Montreal, Quebec, Canada) to strengthen my independence and resilience."

How he benefitted from overseas exposure

"My greatest takeaway from this study-abroad experience has surprisingly nothing to do with Montreal or McGill University and has everything to do with the amazing people that I've met and the friendships that I've forged. I had the privilege to talk to and learn from people of diverse cultural backgrounds - from residence housemates, school mates (student clubs' events) and faculty mates at the university. Each time I interacted, I learnt more about each of their local cultures, food, music, slangs, perceptions and even family upbringing. I consider myself lucky to have met people who have been so willing to share. I'm certain we will stay in touch even after the conclusion of the student exchange programme."

Challenges faced during overseas experience

"Having lived in tropical Singapore, it was tough to acclimatise to Montreal's winter. Typical winter daytime temperatures are between 2 and -8°C and overnight temperatures are between -10 and -15°C. The freezing weather meant that going outdoors isn't a simple chore of wearing thin top, shorts and slippers, instead it meant wearing multiple thick layers of long-sleeve top and pants, coupled with winter jacket, beanie, gloves and boots. Studying and living in Montreal's cold climate has certainly strengthened my resilience and appreciation of Singapore's steamy weather."

What drew Claudsen to study business at SMU

"I was attracted to SMU primarily for its 100% seminar-style teaching pedagogy, which suits my learning style and abilities. Comprising no more than 45 students each, SMU's seminar-style classes provide a conducive and interactive learning environment, which I highly value and appreciate. Instead of the traditional one-way classroom communication, there is strong professor-student interaction and students are encouraged to voice their views and participate in stimulating discussions. Throughout my past 4 years, I've been consistently exchanging ideas with peers and professors within a conducive and encouraging environment. In the process, I've honed my communication and public speaking skills."

SMU's implementation of compulsory overseas exposure for students

"I fully support this initiative. Firstly, global experience and understanding is vital in setting up students for a successful career in today's globally-connected society. Secondly, overseas exposure opens doors to bigger ideas, people and opportunities that you never knew existed and these things can never be learnt in the classroom or through the laptop screen. Thirdly, I have personally benefited from overseas exposure where I had the opportunity to interact with international

executives, students and professors. I learnt more about each of their local culture and gained insights into different perspectives on certain issues. This compulsory overseas exposure will certainly benefit students who hesitate to take up global exposure programmes, pushing them to step out of their comfort zones.”



SMU undergraduate Claudsen Siah with his schoolmates during his international student exchange programme to McGill University, Canada.

Malcolm Nathaniel NG Bao Kun 黄宝坤

Year 4, School of Information Systems, Singapore Management University 新大信息系统学院

Malcolm is a 25-year-old Singaporean and currently a final year student at SMU's School of Information Systems. His current major is in Information Systems.

Malcolm participated in an International Student Exchange Programme (ISEP) to Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand from August - December 2018. According to Malcolm, he was motivated to take up this overseas exposure programme "because it would provide a different experience from my four years as an undergraduate at SMU". He plans to source for a short-term overseas internship or another overseas programme, before he graduates this year.

Chulalongkorn University was his first choice

"Being a Thai Chinese with little recollection of my childhood in Chiang Rai, I chose to do my student exchange programme in Thailand. It was an opportunity to return to my cultural roots, allowing me to learn and experience what it was like to live and study there."

Key highlights of Malcolm's overseas experience

"I would sum it up with three words – family, friendship and culture.

My overseas programme gave me more chances to visit my grandmother in her hometown a few hours from Bangkok. Although Thailand is not far from Singapore, I had not seen the place for close to 15 years as I had been caught up with my studies and student activities in Singapore.

The friends I made, from local Thai students to foreign exchange students, shaped my entire exchange experience. Studying and assignments aside, we celebrated festivals and explored myriad cuisines together – memories that will stay with me.

My exchange programme in Thailand also allowed me to live the daily life of a local student. I picked up on cultural nuances – how certain gestures that were universally acceptable, were considered inappropriate to the Thai culture."

Overseas exposure broadened his horizons

"The sheer diversity and different perspectives of the people I met during exchange truly broadened my horizons. The ISEP experience helps to prepare me for life and work overseas, reminding me to keep an open mind towards different ideas. The friendships forged through deep conversations and shared experiences are invaluable, and potentially I hope they can lead to future opportunities to work abroad."

SMU's implementation of compulsory overseas exposure for students

"Definitely a plus point for the curriculum. I am happy that SMU will ensure all students have overseas exposure. I think that some students might be put off by the costs of overseas programmes but they will realise, as I did, that the University offers plenty of options for financial aid. The experience one gains from overseas programmes is not found within a classroom setting. This is my advice to my fellow undergraduates: The globe is your playground, get your hands dirty!"

Hobbies

"I have been dragonboating for almost 6 years, since poly days. During my spare time I like to hit the gym - I believe health is wealth. Occasionally, I read up on interesting data science projects to learn new techniques of analysing data."



SMU undergraduate Malcolm Ng (2nd from left) experiencing a day as a villager at Ayutthaya floating market during his international student exchange programme to Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.