

Winning hearts & minds



SIM has once again won STB's prestigious Singapore Education Award, taking the Best International Marketing Effort by a Private Educational Institution category with its strategy of providing a holistic learning experience in an environment of excellence.

Founded in 1964 by the Singapore Economic Development Board, SIM is one of Singapore's oldest private education institutions. It stands alongside other publicly funded universities to provide fine high-calibre human capital to the industry in Singapore and the region.

In 2005, SIM University (UniSIM) became the first privately-funded university approved by the Ministry of Education to issue university degrees for working professionals and adult learners. Part of the SIM Group, SIM Global Education offers programmes from 11 universities from Australia, Switzerland, UK and the US.

Mr Lee Kwok Cheong, chief executive officer of SIM, said, "While UniSIM develops its own degree courses, SIM Global Education sources for best-of-breed programmes offered by leading universities throughout the world."

Currently, 12,000 full-time students, comprising over 40 different nationalities, are enrolled in SIM Global Education. They account for 25 per cent of SIM Global Education's full-time student population.

For its marketing strategy, SIM was awarded the Best International Marketing Effort by a Private Educational Institution for a second year running at the Singapore Education Awards 2009 held yesterday.

SIM's three-fold regional marketing strategy to reach out to its regional students includes a Channel Management System, an integrated market engagement and communication strategy and direct marketing.

But marketing is only one aspect. Bringing in programmes par excellence is another. To ensure that standards are maintained, student development is another key prong to its success strategy.

Mr Lu Yi, who came from China and graduated from University of London's (UOL) Bachelor of Science in Banking & Finance in 2006 with a Second Class Upper honours degree, appreciates its nurturing spirit. "One thing I treasured most during my time in SIM was the guidance and assistance given to me by lecturers and senior management. Their practical industrial experiences provided me with feasible options in my own career development," said Mr Lu, who is now working as an auditor, Enterprise Risk & Assurance Services, with American Express International.



That guidance that Mr Lu benefitted from has translated into top-notch results across the board.

In 2008, the number of First Class honours obtained from SIM-UOL graduating class stands at 66, the highest number amongst all the international institutions offering UOL programmes. As for University at Buffalo (UB), The State University of New York's undergraduate programme, 44 per cent of SIM graduates earned its prestigious Latin honours. And 80 per cent of the graduates who earned First Class honours from Switzerland's International Hotel Management Institute's hospitality undergraduate programme came from SIM.

Besides academic excellence, SIM Global Education is also highly conscious that its students will be competing in a global environment when they enter working life.

To prepare its undergraduates for this challenge, SIM brings students of various nationalities together.

Mr Ho Viet Hai from Vietnam, who graduated last year, was impressed with the cultural diversity when he read UB's Bachelor of Arts in Communication at SIM.

"Adapting to life in the campus and getting to know my classmates from the various neighbouring countries and their culture, means that I am better equipped to work with people from China, Indonesia, the US and Singapore, which is what I have to do now."

Mr Ho is the chairman and CEO of i360 Communication Ltd and iVi Game Studio. He said, "SIM gave me the knowledge to run my own company and the environment to practice it while I was still a student. It also provided me with friends and a network to leverage my business in Asia."

Well-known badminton sportsman, Mr Ronald Susilo from Indonesia, is currently doing a Diploma in Management Studies course in SIM. He echoed Mr Ho's views that "By interacting with the foreign students here, we get to know the different cultures. In the process, we are learning how to handle and manage people from all walks of life. This will come in handy when we work."

Last year, SIM opened the SIM Global Education campus @ Ulu Pandan, which complements its Clementi Road and Namly Avenue campuses. The Ulu Pandan campus, with hostel facilities and whole array of sporting and recreational facilities provides students with an all-rounded education that balances study, play and social life.

In addition, SIM also provides development workshops and activities, and internship opportunities so that the undergraduates are equipped with personal skills for their future.



Where Dreams Come True

It was an especially fulfilling time at SIM for Mr Patrick Pham Truong Linh and Ms Vanessa Nguyen Thi Thu Trang, both from Vietnam. Not only did they graduate with their dream degrees from University of London, they also met in SIM and recently tied the knot.

"Personally, walking your University journey with your life partner is so wonderful," recalled Ms Nguyen, who is now working in Toyota Motor Asia Pacific, overseeing the Vietnam market.

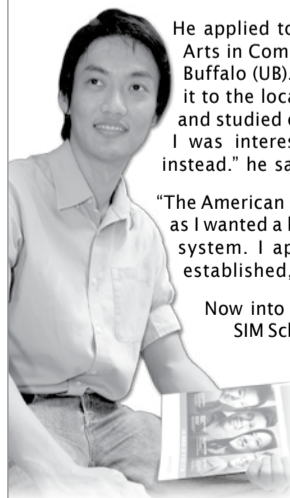
She landed a regional position with Toyota in Singapore after graduation, which allows her to contribute her skills to both Singapore and Vietnam. Her husband works as a business developer for the Strategic Investment Group in SK Energy International, a subsidiary of the largest oil refiner in South Korea.

Recalling their first meeting, she said, "We met at the Vietnamese Community Club (SIMVNC)." Besides SIMVNC, there are many other social clubs in SIM catering to students from the various communities. "The clubs help to bind the students together, providing us with support and an environment where we can study, have fun and learn from fellow countrymen who have made it in Singapore," said Mr Pham.

He recalled his first experience with SIM. "I was impressed the moment I walked into the SIM Atrium. It looked professional and the staff were helpful."

A Different Path

Armed with a Diploma in Multimedia & Infocomm Technology from Nanyang Polytechnic, Mr William Siew Jing Wen realised that his passion lies in a different direction. His heart was all set in understanding the role of media and communication in society.



He applied to SIM to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from University at Buffalo (UB). "Probably, I could have made it to the local universities with my grades and studied computer-related courses, but I was interested to read communication instead," he said.

"The American style of learning was attractive as I wanted a break from the local education system. I applied to SIM, which is well-established," he added.

Now into his final semester, Mr Siew, a SIM Scholar, said that he was satisfied with his decision. "I got what I wanted. The curriculum was all-rounded. I particularly enjoyed the continuous assessment approach that UB adopts. It suits my style."

Peace and Diversity

Coming from war torn Sri Lanka, Singapore epitomizes a haven of peace and tranquility for Mr Jude Kumar, who is currently pursuing a RMIT University's degree in Bachelor of Business (Management) with SIM.



He had a choice to study in either Australia or Singapore but he chose the latter when his friends described the country as "Heaven on Earth". "After coming here, I would agree to their description fully," he nodded. "Singapore is well-balanced and unlike other developed countries, there is still culture."

Once he enrolled in SIM, he threw himself into the various student activities, being part of the events team of the SIM-RMIT council. Organising and executing events to bring RMIT and other university students together helped hone his leadership skills.

He was also struck by the diversity in the campus. "It is quite amazing to see how different people from different backgrounds work so well together and having fun at the same time."

Staying in the campus is fun. "You can hang out, play pool, watch a movie on the big plasma screen or just chat the night away. The student lounge is well equipped and it is accessible. I adore the hostel and it just adds to the whole university experience. It even has supermarkets and restaurants nearby. I would give it a perfect score."

Members of The SIM Group



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