



SIM-UB freshmen attending an overnight orientation camp challenge.

Getting ahead with a top institution

SIM GE is an excellent place to pursue a degree with its broad-based education and vibrant student life

By Douglas Chew

THE University at Buffalo (UB), a flagship institution in the State University of New York system, is among North America's leading public research universities.

Co-founded in 1846 by Millard Fillmore, who later became the 13th president of the United States, UB now boasts an enrolment of more than 29,000 students.

It counts among its faculty members recipients of the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize and the US National Medal of Science. Its 230,000-strong alumni in 130 countries include luminaries such as Mr Li Yanhong (Robin), who co-founded China's largest search engine, Baidu.com and Mr Harvey Weinstein, who co-founded Miramax Films.

SIM Global Education (SIM GE) is UB's largest overseas academic partner. More than 1,500 SIM-UB students pursue undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Singapore. The undergraduate programmes, which are also offered in double degree or double major mode, span disciplines such as Business Administration, Communication, Economics, International Trade, Psychology and Sociology.

This year marks 17 years of mutually beneficial partnership, with 465 graduating students from the undergraduate class of 2013. Among these graduates, 283 obtained Latin Honours from UB. SIM-UB also offers an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programme.

An appreciation for learning

Mr Elijah Mak, 25, who graduated from SIM-UB's psychology programme in 2011, is currently an MRI Research Fellow at the Buffalo Neuroimaging Analysis Center, Buffalo Neuro Hospital. He will next pursue a PhD at the University of Cambridge as UB's first Gates Cambridge Scholar.

On receiving one of the most prestigious international scholarships, Mr Mak says he is honoured to be offered this rare opportunity to do something that could make a difference to humanity while engaging in a pursuit he is passionate about.

His research at Cambridge's Department of Psychiatry will focus on neuroimaging on the dementia syndrome.

Having made the most from his time at SIM-UB, he says: "The faculty members have designed the programme in such a



SIM GE's Student Involvement Centre is a point of contact for student life-related activities.

way that makes you appreciate learning for what it is, rather than a mindless mechanical rush for that A grade."

Mr Abdul Rahman Kamarudin, 24, a current psychology student, shares Mr Mak's passion for his field and SIM GE. He benefited from the recently concluded Psych Week organised by the SIM Psychology Society, which held a series of talks by psychology professionals and exhibitions to raise awareness of psychology for the student population and promote a greater appreciation of the subject for Psychology majors.

"Psych Week gave me a deeper insight based on real-world professionals in the Singapore context," he says, having received an inside scoop on the profession. He is now more aware of the work and graduate study opportunities available.

Seize the day

Other than the Psychology Society, there are over 70 student clubs catering to SIM GE students' interests in the arts, culture and sports. These clubs offer students a platform to develop personal skills in communication and leadership while helping them to develop bonds and build networks.

Mr Abdul Rahman also serves as a student involvement representative at the institute's Student Involvement Centre. There, he lends a personal touch in providing up-to-date information

to students on SIM GE's clubs, student care, career workshops, internships and education abroad programmes.

The centre is a point of contact for all student life-related activities, and offers coaching sessions to help students set goals and maximise their time while studying at SIM GE.

Mr Koh Chin Hao, 23, a Business Administration student and president of SIM-UB Student Council, is enthusiastic about SIM GE's numerous learning opportunities outside the classroom.

"Participating in various council activities can allow us to gain valuable life skills. One such skill is time management. Strategic planning of my time in campus makes my university life more fulfilling."

Beyond dollars and cents

With the academic excellence of partners such as UB, SIM GE provides an opportunity for students to gain an overseas degree right here in Singapore without the great expense incurred studying abroad. The institute estimates that it costs 30 per cent less to study at SIM GE than at the onshore UB campus.

Mr David Tay, 25, from the class of 2012, was an SIM GE scholar. His tuition fees were covered in addition to receiving book allowances. The scholarship served as a strong motivation for him to maintain his good grades.

"On hindsight, the scholarship gave me so much more than just financial support for my education," he says. "The scholarship provided me with plenty of exposure, helped build my networks and ultimately gave me numerous learning opportunities to benefit both my studies and my overall holistic growth as a student."

Mr Tay has since graduated summa cum laude (Highest Distinction) with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. The loyalty marketing executive with Singapore Airlines feels his critical thinking skills, which were well honed during his studies, have given him an edge in this career.

"One of the advantages of the broad-based education I received at SIM-UB is that I am equipped with business knowledge of different working cultures," he says. "When I interact with partners from different countries, I am less inclined to be caught in a position where I am vulnerable to culture shock."

"Being armed with both mental and physical skill sets and knowledge from my education at SIM-UB, I stand in good stead to achieve what I set out to do."

Adjunct Professor
Lee Kwok Cheong,
CEO, SIM Global
Education



2013 marks SIM GE's 17th year of partnership with UB. Together, we offer students the experience of a liberal arts education in a holistic learning environment. My heartiest congratulations to our new graduates from the Class of 2013. I am confident that they will be able to make their mark in the global workforce.

Professor
Satish K. Tripathi
President,
University at
Buffalo



The annual commencement for our UB-SIM Programs is a happy reminder of the quality of our students in Singapore and the strength of our ties to our partner, SIM GE. I am pleased to offer my warm congratulations to our new alumni as they begin promising careers with the benefit of their well-deserved UB degrees. I wish our new graduates and our colleagues at SIM GE much continued success in the future.