Building the cities of tomorrow

For Hendrik, 25, a green future starts with a degree and scholarship from UniSIM

An interest in sustainable built environments
I have always been passionate about the building and management of green facilities, as well as sustainable event management.

Thanks to the spotlight on sustainable development in Singapore, I feel that there is no better time for me to get the qualifications I need to turn my interests into a viable career. There has been a surge in demand for qualified professionals who are able to manage green facilities and related technologies.

The skills he needs
UniSIM’s Bachelor of Science in Facilities and Events Management degree programme is conducted part-time, and it offers me a flexible path to work and study for a degree at the same time.

The degree was my top choice when I was deciding to further my studies because of its strengths. It is offered in collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), and has been carefully planned and developed to be relevant to the industry.

In addition, the degree is accredited by both the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. I was also happy to find out that UniSIM was willing to consider candidates with qualifications in non-related fields — like me.

This degree will give me the skills and knowledge I need for a career in green building management, and after I graduate, I wish to join a green consulting firm that focuses on sustainable designs to improve building performance. What is also attractive: The chance to gain proficiency in the tools that drive sustainability in the field of event management.

Expanding his horizons
I was delighted to receive the UniSIM scholarship, as it would ease the financial burden of pursuing my degree. The bond-free nature of the scholarship is also a draw because it gives me the freedom to decide which organisation I want to work for after I graduate.

Learning better
Our lecturers are noteworthy professionals with years of experience. They use real-world scenarios and their work experiences to enhance our learning and help us better grasp the concepts. They also keep us abreast of the latest developments in the industry, and provide assistance and guidance with our assignments.

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knowledge and skills they need to excel in Facilities Management and Events Management. Specialising in both fields also offers more flexibility when it comes to career options.

The importance of sustainability in Singapore
The programme helped me appreciate the importance of sustainability because a good number of modules delve into green practices. These include using green building designs and operational methods to address environmental and health issues, and the adoption of environmentally friendly practices to organise green events. Energy Management & Audit was one of my favourite modules. It covered the implementation of a sustainable energy management programme as well as the evaluation of a building’s energy performance.

Juggling demands
Combining work and studies is taxing for part-time students like me, but UniSIM has made it easier for me to cope with my studies and personal commitments. The flexible programme structure allows me to manage my time well. It also allows me to decide the pace at which I complete the degree. I usually have two three-hour classes each week. In addition, some classes are conducted online, and that allows me to learn at my own time.

Not all work and no play
I am actively involved in campus activities. I was recently a Student Ambassador for the UniSIM Open House and have participated in freshmen orientations and other activities organised by UniSIM.

I hope to join the Built Environment Committee this year. The Committee aims to enrich campus life by organising activities, such as field trips, seminar talks, community service projects and student bonding activities.

Scholarship
UniSIM Scholarship
Course
Bachelor of Science in Facilities and Events Management
Institution
SIM University

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Take flight with UniSIM

An aerospace systems degree helped Roy Sng develop crucial technical skills and expand his aviation operations knowledge

When Mr Roy Sng, 27, was looking to further his education five years ago, he wanted a programme that would enhance his learning and lead to a rewarding career in aviation. He said: “I have been captivated by the aerospace and aviation industry since I was young. In 2010, UniSIM was one of the few universities in Singapore that offered a robust and established Aerospace degree programme.”

In addition, students who meet the criteria are eligible for a government subsidy. This was an incentive for Mr Sng then, who had just started his career at the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS).

AN EMPOWERED EDUCATION

UniSIM’s School of Science and Technology (SST) promotes profession-centric and career-ready education in science and technology. Its immersive and in-employment education aims to transform graduates into professionals equipped with relevant knowledge, employable skills and work experience.

Students also benefit from the university’s rigorous curriculum, industry-relevant training and career-advancing degree programmes.

Although the programme is challenging, especially for part-time students like Mr Sng, he was still attracted to the Bachelor of Engineering in Aerospace Systems.

He said: “I liked the way the courses are planned and structured. They are seamlessly integrated to ease our learning both theoretically and practically. Plus, we get to attend a mandatory week-long exchange programme at Cranfield University in the United Kingdom. This is a great opportunity as it provides great exposure and invaluable experiential learning.”

LEARNING MADE EASY

Having to juggle between work and studies, Mr Sng appreciates SST’s iLearn Strategy, which is designed for working students. The university leverages technology to give students around-the-clock access to study materials wherever they are, giving them the flexibility to study at their own pace. Lectures are supplemented with laboratory practical sessions to reinforce learning.

The curriculum is also structured on a modular basis so students can plan their schedules and choose the number of courses to take in each semester.

Mr Sng said: “UniSIM spreads its lessons over four months. This helps ensure students retain knowledge from every lesson and prevent them from crash learning the whole course within a week or two.”

ENGAGEMENT WITH PROFESSIONALS

With SST’s iSucceed strategy, students can tap on the business acumen of industry leaders through the university’s partnerships with corporate players, such as ST Aerospace, ST Kinetics and MAJ aviation.

For instance, many of the lecturers are experienced industry practitioners and veterans. Their experience helps them impart relevant skills and knowledge.

The lecturers keep lessons interesting by sharing their work experiences. This provides valuable insights and widens our perspective of the corporate world.

Mr Sng said: “Lessons are always interactive with discussions and debates. The lecturers keep lessons interesting by sharing their work experiences. This provides valuable insights and widens our perspective of the corporate world.”

CAREER BENEFITS

Mr Sng will be completing his degree in November, but he has already gained a wealth of knowledge and skills that he has been able to apply at work as a flight procedure designer at CAAS.

He said: “The management courses helped prepare and hone my collective strategic thinking to see beyond my usual scope and area of work.”

They have also deepened his understanding of the technical aspects of an aircraft and aviation operations. Mr Sng shared how he often has to meet stakeholders, such as pilots and airport operators, during work.

He said: “The courses in the programme help me understand the key aspects of aerospace engineering fundamentals, such as aerodynamics, flight mechanics, aircraft structures and design, and aircraft operations, from both an engineer’s and pilot’s perspective.”

And while career advancement is a bonus, Mr Sng feels that being able to add value to his work is meaningful and constructive, and his organisation recognises that as well.

More importantly, SST helps students expand their network through iLink. The initiative links students and graduates with professionals in the industry and associate faculties through different platforms.

It builds a learning community in SST, engages graduates in lifelong learning, and helps create business and career opportunities and advancement.

For example, a current student or a recent graduate can link with an industry partner to ask for advice. This network of sharing takes place through social learning platforms and collaborative tools.

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Gaining advantage through studies

Mr Muhammad Fariz Mohd Zain was promoted from property officer to residence manager.

"I applied what I learnt in class at work," said the 30-year-old. "This gave me an advantage rather than a disadvantage for him.

He has even built up his industry contacts, which now include his former lecturers and peers from the programme.

Besides the comprehensive nature of the programme as compared with those from other educational institutions, the fact that UniSIM’s part-time programme is offered in collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) sealed the deal for Mr Muhammad Fariz.

"The partnership meant that the programme has been carefully planned and developed. With support from BCA, there is greater relevance to our field of work," he added.

The degree is also accredited by the International Facility Management Association.

Mr Muhammad Fariz appreciated that UniSIM enables working adults like him to learn at any time and at their own pace, with e-Learning tools such as recorded classrooms.

"The programme is designed to suit students in employment; who have other commitments," he added.

Despite graduating last year, he has maintained relationships with not just his coursemates but also the university.

He has volunteered at UniSIM’s annual open house and freshman orientation, speaking to potential and new students and telling them why the university is the right fit for a working adult, as well as sharing study tips.

For current student Koh Wen Bin, UniSIM was the best choice for him to further his biomedical engineering studies.

"I was looking for a part-time degree programme in biomedical engineering and, as far as I knew, UniSIM was exclusive in providing a biomedical engineering programme that suited what I wanted – in terms of content knowledge and skills," said the 25-year-old, who is in his second year of the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Biomedical Engineering programme.

The part-time degree programme allows Mr Koh to continue working as an engineering assistant in the biomedical engineering department at the National University Hospital, which is an important criterion for him.

"I wanted to study and work at the same time, as I did not want to worry about finding a job after I graduate if I were to take up a full-time degree programme," he said.

Another plus point was that juggling work and studies enabled him to apply what he learnt to his job immediately.

Modules such as Anatomy and Physiology, and Biomaterials have helped Mr Koh to understand work processes better and, subsequently, carry out his daily tasks more effectively.

He was also exposed to other concepts besides engineering, such as chemistry, information technology and even health-care administration.

The degree programme, which he hopes to complete by end-2016, has helped him to empathise with patients.

"I now understand why some equipment is designed in such a way and their functionality," he added.

The programme’s rigorous demands mean that Mr Koh has to decline invitations to social functions from time to time. But this is a small price to pay in his drive to become more competent in his chosen field and advance in his career.

"With the skills I’ve learnt in the programme, I hope they will open more doors for me career-wise," he said.