

SMU's new School of Law building to be ready by 2017

Published on Jan 20, 2014

By Pearl Lee



(From left) SMU president, Professor Arnoud De Meyer; Attorney-General Mr Steven Chong SC; Chancellor Yong Pung How; Jonathan Marshall, son of the late David Marshall, Ms Ho Ching; Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr Ho Kwon Ping, architect Siew Man Kok (far right) look at the model of the new Singapore Management University (SMU) law school building, Jan 20, 2014. The SMU broke ground on its new School of Law building on Monday, at the open space between Armenian Street and Canning Rise. -- ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

The Singapore Management University (SMU) broke ground on its new School of Law building on Monday, at the open space between Armenian Street and Canning Rise.

The new 22,000 sqm building - about the size of 52 basketball courts - will be ready by 2017. It will feature the Kwa Geok Choo Law library, named in memory of the late Mrs Lee Kuan Yew, the David Marshall Moot Court and the SMU Pro Bono Centre.

Currently, the law school shares the same building as its accountancy school. The law school, which took in 150 students last year, will take in about 180 students from this year.

SMU president Arnoud De Meyer said planning for the new building began in 2010. When completed, the new premises will not only increase the space, but also help to "foster closer ties among SMU's law students, alumni, and the legal fraternity", he said. He added that SMU is located near the law courts - it is about a kilometre away from the Supreme Court - and various law firms. "The new building... will further promote these links and engagement as it will provide an ideal environment in a convenient location for students, alumni and fraternity to meet and interact."

SMU law dean Yeo Tiong Min added that the new facilities, such as the moot court and the Pro Bono legal clinic, will help to "support the students' training... put them in good stead to raise the bar higher".



Publication: The Straits Times, Breaking News

Date: 20 January 2014

Headline: SMU's new School of Law building to be ready by 2017

The Pro Bono Centre, to be housed in the basement level of the seven-storey building, will be accessible from the carpark to make it more convenient for members of the public coming forth to seek legal advice.

Currently, SMU students already participate in legal-related volunteer work, within the university's administration building. The Pro Bono clinic will be supported by volunteer lawyers and SMU law students, and will expose the students to real-life cases, said Professor Yeo.

Attorney-General Steven Chong, who was guest of honour at the ground-breaking ceremony, said the new moot court facility will "further hone and develop" the students' oral advocacy skills. He added that he was part of the judging panel that selected the SMU team to represent Singapore in the world's largest moot competition - the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition - last year. The team eventually came in second. Mr Chong had remarked then that the team was "one of the finest" that he had judged in a while.

He noted that SMU had participated in the national competition for only three years before it made it to the final round at the international Jessup competition, held at Washington D.C. Calling it a "huge achievement", Mr Chong said the National University of Singapore's (NUS) law faculty, the country's first law school, took "much longer to get there". "I told NUS that (their law students) cannot afford to rest on their past successes," he said.