地下购物街生意冷清

在勿拉士峇沙一带的新大校园地下，有一条购物街。不过因为很新，不多公众知晓，加上“深藏地底”，结果生意不尽理想，让业者很是苦恼。

蔡慧玲

很多人不知道新加坡管理大学全体师生在6月间，已搬往位于勿拉士峇沙一带的市区校园。当然更不知道校内的“地下”，有一条连接大5栋建筑的购物街。

这条街，也开放让公众光顾的购物街。店家虽然营业已有段时间，生意却不尽理想。很多本地的业者，也没有给“深藏地底”的购物街施以援手。

业者说，在建设校园时，考虑到我国炎热的天气，也为了尽量保留绿意，给学生一个开阔的学习空间，便建了这条占地约5000平方米的地下走道，其中825间店铺全部，48个店铺已租给20个。

似乎是一定已经

在校园内的Kopitiam食阁已经售卖甘榜峇鲁的及新加坡的也家业，但当初认为这个地下商场很有发展潜力，加上自己有熟悉的人士，所以决定签下几十年的租约。

不过开业两个月，他发现生意不如预期，因为除了其他档口，也因为无法招徕足的顾客而几乎天天亏损。

据业者向学生了解，即使知道地下底下已有商店营业，大多数学生也因为附近的食阁食物价格较便宜，而宁愿多走多路到校外用餐。

新加坡大学二年级生钱嘉雯（20岁）通常都到附近的食阁吃饭，而学校食堂的食物则比较贵。

她发现，即使有折扣，店内的食阁的食物也比一般商场的食阁稍贵，而且因为是学生负担得起的。她希望有更多的摊位可以加入，因为如果可以的话，他更喜欢在大学用餐。

黄丽梅在新加坡管理大学地下商场开店，她的店里的顾客都是来源于学校。

“这存在，否则也该减租，帮帮他们。”

选择在新加坡大学设店的本地一家专卖店的店长表示，地下商场的顾客不多。

不过酒店经理施静怀告诉记者，公司在这里开店，主要是看准新大年轻消费群，外来的顾客不多，对公司的影响不会太大。事实上，公司已经看到一些熟面孔出现，相信过一段时间，生意会好转。

针对生意欠佳的投诉，新大学发言人说，商场开放只不过两个月，因此还需要一段时间观察。

他说，目前问题主要在学生还不知道校内有这些设施，但假设是以时，自然会有越来越多的人知道，到时租户的生意也会慢慢好转。

有人想来上课

新加坡管理大学自迁入市区校园后，不仅为师生带来交通上的方便，也为学生提供了更多的学习机会。

新大学务长陈其森教授告诉记者，新校舍地理位置优越，来往的上班族都会注意到它的存在。他说：“有越来越多的企业和公共企业对新大感兴趣，想多了解学校所提供的课程，甚至在各方面寻求同新大合作……”

新大校方表示，学生会考虑与新大合作，进一步了解学校所提供的课程。

陈其森表示，新大希望在政府支持下，大学可以推出更多的课程，包括与跨国公司合作的项目，甚至让学生在世界各地实习。

学生宿舍租金不会太贵

新大决定在校园内设立学生宿舍，而且宿舍的床位将比原来的计划多得多。新大学与新加坡国立大学合作，提供800到1500个床位。

据陈其森透露，学生宿舍将采用全新设计，每间宿舍都将提供私人空间，包括床铺和私人储物空间。

他认为，新大宿舍的租金不会太贵，而且宿舍的环境将比一般的公寓更安全，更环保。

他说，新大宿舍的租金将比一般的公寓便宜，而且学生还可以享受到学校提供的各项设施和服务，如图书馆、运动设施等。

学生宿舍将设在新校区内，租金将由学生和家长分摊。
Li Ka-shing Library
The five-storey high library has not only loan services but also reading rooms, sofa sets and a café to create a comfortable and conducive studying environment for students. Corporations can pay $700 to be members to allow their employees to use the library facilities. Individual memberships are still being planned.

Campus green
The open green space offers a resting space. While it may not be large, it is an effort in preserving the many trees in their original locations.

Biotherm boutique
Biotherm chose to set up its first boutique in the concourse of SMU because there is a ready pool of students who may be ignorant about the importance of make-up. Besides, networking and socializing are important for business students. In addition to retailing, Biotherm will be working with SMU to start make-up and skincare workshops.

Raffles Girls’ School gate
The Lee Kong Chian School of Business is situated where the former Raffles Girls’ School is. The National Heritage Board has preserved the gate of the former RGS in front of SMU’s business school. Public can understand the history of RGS from inscriptions on the gate.

Wine appreciation classes
The Coffee Connoisseur has set aside a special corner in its café for wine appreciation classes. They are bringing in sommelier Mr Chen Fu Liang who has five years’ experience in teaching wine appreciation classes to educate students and public on knowledge of wine. The café stocks up on many coffee table books for browsing.

Slow business for concourse retailers
There is a stretch of retail outlets in the concourse of the SMU city campus along Bras Basah Road but because it is very new, not many members of the public know about it. On top of that, it is located underground. This results in less than brisk business and the frustration of retailers.

Many are not aware that SMU has moved into its new city campus in Bras Basah since June this year. Even more are not aware that there is a concourse that connects the five buildings of the university.

The concourse, while open to the public, has not seen brisk business even though it has opened for some time. Students of SMU also do not add much to the traffic.

During the construction of the city campus, the considerations of the tropical climate and preserving the green lung to create a porous campus led to the creation of a 5,000 square metres underground mall for which 80% is set aside for commercial use. Of the 34 units, 28 have been taken up.

SMU graduate Edmund Ng signed a three-year lease for a bakery at the Kopitiam foodcourt because he had then believed in the potential of the concourse and he could rely on his business contacts.

After two over months of operation, he realized business was not ideal and other tenants in the foodcourt were also unable to attract customers and suffered losses almost daily.

According to students, many prefer to forgo the convenience of the concourse and patronize nearby coffeeshops because these are cheaper and even though they have to walk a little further.

Business management student Qian Jia Wen, 20-years-old, eats regularly at nearby Armenian Street coffeeshop because the foodcourt prices are expensive.

She said that even with the discounts, the prices were comparable to any commercial food outlets and not every student could afford that. She hoped to see more competitive prices once more F&B outlets moved in.

Edmund Ng is relying on regulars to survive. However, when weekends arrive and no students are in campus, it is tough killing time. He will bake cakes and pastries to prepare for the coming week’s business.

He is most worried that during the next long vacation from May to August next year, the foodcourt will lose its customer flow and worsen their takings. He hopes that SMU would help to promote the concourse and let the public know or at least, reduce rentals to help them.

Biotherm, also located in the concourse, said that traffic flow is little. However, the branch manager said that they were targeting the SMU crowd and not so much passer-bys. The slow traffic will not affect its business. In fact, the outlet is starting to see familiar faces returning to the shop. They believed that business will pick up after a while.

Am SMU spokesman said that the outlets have only started operations for about two months and some time is needed for business to improve.

The main reason is the lack of awareness of the existence of the retail mall and this will get better after a while. Then, business will pick up gradually.

Some come here to study; others to teach
SMU’s city location has brought not only convenience to students and faculty but also created many learning opportunities for them.

SMU Provost Professor Tan Chin Ting said that commuters are now aware of SMU’s presence in the city center. “More public and businesses are increasingly getting interested in SMU and are keen to find out what kind of programmes we offer. They have been eagerly enquiring how they can work with SMU. This can only benefit the students,” he said.

There has been almost a doubling of interest from private enterprises who wish to collaborate with SMU. Some would like to send guest lecturers, some are providing internship openings, others are asking SMU faculty to train their executives.

For example, Standard Chartered is setting up a global innovation laboratory to let SMU students research on new banking products and services. OCBC is also sending their financial expertise to teach classes in SMU.
Professor Tan revealed that following the three new master’s programmes launched this year, the university will be launching another three or four new master’s programmes next year. He said that there is immense interest from the public to pursue doctoral degrees. SMU is seriously looking into offering doctoral programmes. Then, SMU will become a more comprehensive university.

He added that the programmes will be part-time in nature or of shorter term to encourage more working adults to sign up.

On the value of higher qualifications, he said, “With more people holding basic degrees, there will be a need to acquire higher paper qualifications because this is becoming instrumental in moving up the corporate ladder.”

**Hostel fees will not be too expensive**

SMU will be building student hostels in the vicinity and this will accommodate even more students than originally planned. It was reported earlier that the new city hostels can take 800 to 850 beds.

The new hostels will be situated in the Selegie Road area. Professor Tan said that the university is still in discussions with the authorities and details are not firmed up yet. If all goes according to planned, some hostels will be ready by early next year.

Because of the city location, rental costs of the hostels will be of concern to students and parents. Professor Tan said that the university will not subsidise the rental costs but assured that the amount will be kept affordable.