SMU scores with 'raw passion’

By Shermaine Wong

FOR the third year running, Singapore Management University (SMU) has won the local Students In Free Enterprise (Sife) competition — and a trip to Paris for the Sife World Cup this September.

The winners put it down to passion in helping the less fortunate.

Sife is a business contest open to tertiary students globally. It aims to get youths to use their business skills to create entrepreneurship opportunities for the community.

In Paris, the seven-member SMU team will compete with students from 46 other countries. It hopes to do better than its predecessors — who made it to the top 16 out of 38 teams last year — and finish in the top eight in Paris.

SMU won the Paris trip by beating five other teams from various tertiary institutions in the Singapore Sife competition on June 5, where they had to present business plans to a panel of 33 judges.

SMU team member Cherilyn Tan, 21, a second-year accountancy student, said: “I think what really won us first place was our raw passion.”

Runners-up Republic Polytechnic did not fare too badly, considering it was competing for the first time and does not have a business school.

Team member Aaron Yeo, 19, a biomedical science student, said: “We’re a little disappointed but we’re happy we managed to reach a level that no one expected us to get to.”

Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC MP Penny Low, a first-time judge at the Sife Singapore competition, was impressed with how Sife encourages youths to help the less fortunate become self-reliant. She said: “If any of the teams champion their initiative for the next 10 years, I think we will see a very different landscape in Singapore.”

HSBC is supporting Sife globally through a US$3 million ($$4.7 million) grant and also sponsored the Sife Singapore competition.

HSBC’s CEO, Mr Paul Lawrence, also a judge at this year’s Sife Singapore competition, explained: “We cannot enjoy long-term success unless we conduct ourselves according to a set of values that earns the trust and respect of the wider community.”