She gives up overseas scholarship to be ‘mum’

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SHE gave up a chance to study overseas to play parent to her five younger siblings.

She applied for Public Service Commission scholarship to study in the US, but backed out halfway during the process. She scored three As and one B for her A levels.

But giving up on the dream has now paid dividends for Alvina Teh (right).

She enrolled in the Singapore Management University (SMU) as a business student and topped her cohort of 1,500 two years running.

Said Miss Teh: “I wanted very much to have an overseas education. But if I had left, I would have missed out on the crucial teenage years of my five younger siblings.”

She is the fourth child in a family of nine.

“SMU has brought the US-style education to Singapore.

“I feel I have the best of both worlds here,” said the 21-year-old commenting on the university’s seminar-style classes and focus on class participation.

She did a double major in finance and marketing.

As the “part-time” parent at home, Miss Teh is in charge of her younger siblings’ school work.

She added jokingly: “My mother has semi-retired from parenthood and relies on me and my older siblings to take over the role.”

Her parents, both in their 50s, run the publishing company Pacific Communications (both declined to be named). “There are different departments at home and I’m in-charge of my younger siblings’ academic portfolio.”

SMU has also provided Miss Teh with a platform to explore other passions, like radio.

She is a co-founder and one of the DJs of the SMU campus radio.

She is also the president of the SMU broadcast and entertainment club (SMUBE), which organises campus events.

This evening, she will be the emcee for the official opening ceremony of the University, which will be attended by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Last week, she was one of the student panelists alongside Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh at a talk given by American billionaire George Soros.

The panel discussion was jointly organised by SMU and the Institute of South-east Asian Studies.