SMU undergrad takes semester off to start limousine company

Report and Pictures
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THE words limousine and affordable do not usually come together in the same sentence. Limousine rides usually convey an image of luxury and expensive transportation.

But one student and entrepreneur plans to change that perception.

Until 15 Mar, Singapore Management University (SMU) business undergraduate Elliot Lin, 23, is offering a one-way ride within Singapore (except Changi Airport) for $20 between 9am and 5pm from Monday to Friday, and between 7am and 5pm on weekends.

During this period, he will also offer a one-way ride within Singapore (excluding the airport) for $28 between 7am and 9am on weekdays, and between 5pm and midnight daily.

A trip to and from Changi airport any time daily will cost $34. The fares include ERP charges as well.

Since the service was launched, Mr Lin said about 20 people have taken the service, mainly for trips to Changi Airport and for visiting relatives during Chinese New Year.

“I encourage clients to car-pool if possible to make each trip more cost-effective,” he said.

From next week, he plans to distribute fliers to promote the BlackLiner service in the Central Business District.

Mr Lin gave SMU student Theresa Wee, 21, and her boyfriend a short tour during the launch.

She said: “The ride was pleasant and the vehicle has lots of leg room. I would take the service again and I feel that there is a market for people who would like such affordable rides.”

Before launching the business, Mr Lin worked as a bus and tram driver in Sentosa and built up his contacts there.

He pooled together $6,000 from his parents, his savings and about $8,000 from some personal unit trust investments to buy the car, which cost company he had set up with a partner more than $90,000.

He said: “Right now, the fares charged by other limousine operators can only be afforded by richer folk but I am targeting heartlanders.

“Rising transport costs here would make such personalised services worthwhile, especially as it gets more and more expensive to own a car.”

Mr Lin’s business venture, called BlackLiner Executive Limousine, was launched on 2 Feb and is part of Ackzo6-Ventures Pte Ltd, a holding company he had set up with a partner and which he hopes to grow into a transport company. They have one limo so far.

Despite the cheaper price, Mr Lin said his limousine isn’t short on frills. Besides luggage space, there is a table with a laptop charger, drinking water, newspapers and magazines. There is also a 13-inch TV that can play movies and cartoons.

You can ride his limo for $20