

**He has muscle disease,  
 but will be going on  
 uni trip to Middle East**

# A lucky chance I couldn't miss



**SPRIT OF ADVENTURE:** Mr Daniel Ng, a third-year finance and operations management student at Singapore Management University, suffers from muscular dystrophy. TNP PICTURE: CHOO CHWEE HUA

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**H**E HAS a medical condition that could render him wheelchair-bound by the end of this year. But that hasn't stopped, nor will it stop, Mr Daniel Ng, 25, from having a fulfilling undergraduate experience.

His latest foray? A study trip to the Middle East in April.

Mr Ng, a third-year finance and operations management student at Singapore Management University (SMU), has muscular dystrophy, a genetic disease that weakens muscles.

He said: "I had my reservations about going on the trip because of my condition. But I thought about it and realised it was an opportunity I couldn't miss."

About 30 SMU students will visit several large companies there, such as the Emirates National Oil Company, during the two-week trip.

They will also have the opportunity to network with executives based there. (See report, right)

Mr Ng was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy when he was 12.

He recalled: "It was hard to accept that I would eventually be wheelchair-bound. But I thought, my condition is just a small part of me; there are so many other things I can do."

He took up his professor's offer of a place on the business study mission after she assured him he would be well looked after.

His air tickets, for one, will be sponsored by Etihad Airways. The university is still finalising sponsorship

details with several other corporate sponsors.

He said: "My professor told me not to worry about my condition...that my classmates would help me along."

Mr Clarence Chan, 22, who is working on a project with Mr Ng in preparation for the trip, said he admired Mr Ng's spirit of adventure in going on the trip despite his condition.

He said: "Daniel deals very positively with his condition. You'd think somebody in that situation would be sad and forlorn, but Daniel isn't."

Mr Ng's condition has degenerated rapidly since he was a student at Temasek Polytechnic more than three years ago.

He recalled: "When I was in poly, I could still take the bus. Now I can't, so I have to take a taxi or the MRT."

In a month, Mr Ng's taxi fare can be as much as \$400.

Though his father, a coach driver, and his mother, a coffee-shop helper, have repeatedly urged him to quit school because of his condition, Mr Ng is determined to complete his studies.

Mr Ng, who has two younger brothers, makes it a point to participate actively in school activities.

He is the vice-president of SMU's Rotaract club – a community service organisation which regularly organises activities to help the less fortunate.

Recently, he helped organise a field trip for about 50 old folks, where they took trishaw rides and visited the Asian Civilisations Museum.

The Middle East experience, he says, will be useful if he pursues a career in oil trading, which he is thinking of taking up upon graduation.

## ABOUT SMU'S BUSINESS STUDY MISSION

SMU'S Business Study Mission (Middle East) is a 13-week module which examines the Middle East's developing relationship with Singapore.

The module ends with a two-week trip to the Middle East.

Students study the Middle East's unique business environment, focusing on the real-estate sector.

They will be exposed to case studies, student projects and guest lectures, which will present students with real-life environmental influences and challenges that impact businesses in the Middle East.

To date, SMU has sent more than 140 students to the Gulf region.

More than 30 have secured internships in large Middle Eastern companies such as Emirates National Oil Company, Etihad Airways, Jurong International Consulting and the Gulf Research Centre.