Uni discount hunters

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DISCOUNTS. Freebies. Two-for-One special offers.

Bargain hunting, a Singaporean trademark, seems to have found its way into our universities – as a Co-Curricular Activity (CCA).

A group of students at the Singapore Management University (SMU) have formed an "official" club to provide all students and faculty with the best discounts in town.

Calling themselves UniVantage, their aim is "to make life better for fellow students" by allowing them to enjoy as many different discounts as possible.

This group of students has been hard at work contacting various retailers and merchants. The merchants offer a set of exclusive privileges to the SMU community and enjoy their patronage in return.

It started as a tri-university initiative in 2000 to bring privileges to all undergraduates nationwide. After a few years, it evolved into separate clubs in the various universities.

In the National University of Singapore (NUS), the scheme is known as NuStyle and is run by the NUS Students' Union Business Committee.

UniVantage

In SMU, the key aspect of UniVantage is the Students Privileges Card Scheme.

Under this scheme, all SMU card members get to enjoy special privileges and discounts by flashing this card.

Currently, SMU card holders enjoy special privileges with over 120 merchants in different industries, including fashion, lifestyle and dining.

The majority of the merchants that UniVantage sources for is based on feedback received from students, such as The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Fish & Co.

Miss Amanda Chua, 20, is an Economics student in SMU.

"I know of UniVantage as I have received a booklet they printed. I usually use the discounts at places such as Coffee Bean."

To increase awareness, UniVantage uses other media as well. They produce magazines and make good use of online networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

The current director of UniVantage, Mr Shue Zhen Yao, 23, feels the CCA prepares him for his future career.

"One good thing that I always tell my members is that UniVantage is a good platform for us to learn, be it negotiation skills or interaction with people."