新大法学学院或增50%名额

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越来越多高素质学生申请报考新加坡管理大学法律系，新大正探讨扩大法学院收生的可能性。

新大法学院院长杨忠明教授（46岁）昨天在记者会上透露，新大有能力在未来三至五年逐步将收生人数增加50%，从目前的120人增至180人。院方目前正在与律政部商讨理想的收生人数。

现任法学院院长富尔门斯顿教授（Michael Furmston，78岁）指出，法学院平均每年收到约1000申请，经过笔试与面试的筛选后，平均每年只录取120人，竞争非常激烈。

新大首届108名法学系学生今年刚毕业，除了四人不打算当律师，其余都已获得律师事务所的培训合约。

如果新大收生人数得以增加，将有助于进一步缓解法律界人力不足的情况。据了解，本地法律界的各领域一向普遍缺乏年轻律师，原因包括企业法律、合规和风险管理部门的扩充，以及跨国和本地企业对法律人才的需求日趋增加。

本地另一所提供法律学位的大学是新加坡国立大学，每年收生人数约250人。

杨忠明毕业自国立大学法系，当他被要求比较新大与母校法学院时说：“如同比较苹果与橙，难以相提并论。”国大法律系已有多年的历史，但新大还不到五年，只能说明我们正在创造历史。”

新大校长德梅耶教授强调，新大法学院的强项在于商业法，与国大不同，因此可以相辅相成，满足市场不同的需要。

德梅耶称，学院的课程已与新加坡法律教育学院（Singapore Institute of Legal Education）探讨，让学生能以怎样的形式参与义务工作。

杨忠明表示，新大无权任何科系的学生，都在新大接受教育，都要在毕业前完成80小时的社会服务工作，也必须修读道德与社会责任及会计等课程，目的就是培养学生成为有知识和社会意识的全人。

另外，卢维林教授（David Llewelyn，55岁）也将在二年出任副校长，是新大法学院第一次有副校长的职务。卢维林目前也是新大教授，擅长知识产权法，是多本法律教科书的作者之一。他计划推动跨学科的知识产权法研究和学习。

富尔门斯顿教授表示在新大授课，并协助落实设立本地商业法中心的计划。
SMU law school may increase student intake by 50%

As more outstanding students are applying to the SMU School of Law, the school is reviewing the possibilities of increasing its student intake. Dean-designate Professor Yeo Tiong Min (46 years old) said at a press conference held yesterday that SMU has the capacity to gradually grow its student intake by 50% in the next three to five years. The law school is presently in discussions with the Ministry of Law to discuss the ideal student intake.

Current Dean Professor Michael Furmston (78 years old) pointed out that the law school receives, on the average, 1,000 applications each year, about 120 are accepted following a written test and interview, indicating the intense competition.

SMU’s first batch of 106 students had just graduated last year. Except for four who do not intend to join the legal profession, the rest have received their training contracts from legal firms.

If SMU’s intake can be increased, it will help ease the tight labour market in the legal sector. Zaobao understands that various fields in the legal sector have been experiencing a shortage of young lawyers, the reasons include the expansion of corporate law, compliance and risk management departments, as well as an increased demand for lawyers from multi-national corporations and local enterprises.

NUS is the other local university which provides degree programmes in law. It takes in about 250 students each year.

Professor Yeo graduated from NUS’ law faculty. When asked to compare SMU’s law school with his alma mater, he commented that it would be like comparing apples and oranges. “NUS’ law school has a long-standing history while the SMU School of Law is not even five years old. We’re in the process of making history,” he remarked.

SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer stressed that SMU’s strength lies in business law, unlike NUS, hence both universities can complement each other and respond to the different needs of the market.

Professor Furmston also pointed out that having two law schools is not one too many. Sydney and Melbourne have four to five law schools each.

Professor Yeo, who will officially take office in July, is SMU’s Yong Pung How Professor of Law. He was just appointed in January as Singapore’s first Honorary Senior Counsel.

specialises in international private law, and his research papers have been published in publications in Singapore, United Kingdom, Australia and Japan. It is notable that Professor Yeo has never argued in court but the arguments in his papers have been relied on in courts, contributing significantly to the development of law.

Appointed as the second Dean of SMU School of Law, Professor Yeo has already embarked on a review of the school’s existing curriculum. Plans to enhance collaborations with foreign institutions are also underway to create more exchange and internship opportunities for students. In addition, he will also strengthen the areas of research and student participation in community service.

At the opening ceremony of the New Legal Year 2012 last month, Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong had proposed for the larger law firms in Singapore to emulate their American counterparts in setting up pro bono departments. He had also highlighted that young lawyers should provide pro bono legal services. Following CJ Chan’s comments, there has been much public discussion about the social responsibility of lawyers.

On the subject, Professor Yeo Tiong Min said that the law school is already in talks with the Singapore Institute of Legal Education to discuss the various ways in which law students can participate in pro bono work.

SMU President Arnoud De Meyer added that all SMU students, regardless of their faculty, must fulfill 80 hours of community service before they graduate. They are also expected to take up compulsory subjects such as Ethics and Responsibility, and Accounting. The objective is to groom them into knowledgeable and well-rounded individuals with good social awareness.

Separately, Professor David Llewelyn (55 years old) will also be taking office as Deputy Dean of the SMU law school from July this year. This is a new position created by the SMU School of Law. Professor Llewelyn, presently a faculty member of the school, specialises in intellectual property law and is also the author of many textbooks on law. He plans to promote more interdisciplinary research on and learning of intellectual property law.

Professor Furmston will continue to teach in SMU after stepping down and will follow through his plans to set up a Centre of Commercial Law.

Photo caption: Professor Yeo Tiong Min and Professor David Llewelyn, both of whom have different legal experiences and specialisations, will together, in the next five years, lead the SMU School of Law.

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