SMU professor dies during dive trip off Mersing

By JALELAH ABU BAKER

The body of a Singapore Management University (SMU) professor who died during a scuba diving trip in Malaysia was recovered on Thursday.

Professor Winston Koh, who taught economics, was believed to be on his first such trip to Pulau Dayang, off Mersing, a popular dive spot.

Superintendent P. Raveendran, the head of the Malaysian police’s Public Order and Traffic Department in Johor, told The Straits Times yesterday they received a report that he was missing at sea on Sunday.

Three other friends the Singaporean was with on the trip made the report.

“A search and rescue operation was conducted by multiple agencies and his body was found about 100m from where he was reported missing,” he added.

Professor Koh’s body was found in the water and taken to Mersing Hospital, where his wife identified his body.

His body is expected to be transported to Singapore today.

Prof Koh, who has been featured in the media here for being an avid marathon runner and was touted as being a star professor in SMU, was known by his students as an approachable man who had a love for learning.

SMU president Arnoud De Meyer yesterday sent a message to the school community to inform them of the mishap and added that the school is in touch with the family to extend assistance and support.

A former student, Mr Justin Choo, 28, who took a class under him in 2009, said that his death is a great loss to the school and alumni community.

“He was an inspiration to all of us, an all-rounder. He was consistently pushing himself. He picked up ballroom dancing and photography recently. He embodied lifelong learning.”

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