More join biggest private school here

SIM global education arm’s enrolment now 23,000, up from 19,500 in 2010

By SANDRA DAVIE

SINGAPORE’s biggest private school – the global education arm of the Management Development Institute (MDI), SIM Global Education (SIM GE) – now stands at 23,000, up from 19,500 in 2010.

The rise is reflected in the university’s annual report for the fiscal year ended Dec 31, 2012. SIM GE now has 13,000 Singaporean and 10,000 international students in Singapore and overseas. Of the Singaporeans, 20,500 are Singaporeans, of whom 16,000 are studying full-time and 4,500 part-time, at the school’s main campus at 80 Mountbatten Road.

The jump to 23,000 is also an 11 per cent rise from 2011, when the school’s main campus was completed.

Senior Education Correspondent SANDRA DAVIE reports.

The SIM Global Education campus at 80 Mountbatten Road has been expanded since then to take in 30 more lecture theatres, computer labs and facilities for the performing arts, and a new student hub.

Mr Lee explained: "More young Singaporeans are opting to study abroad. But many can not afford to go overseas, so if they can do it here, why not?" He added that SIM has also attracted an increasing number of overseas students who want to study locally.

One of the major attractions is SIM’s EduTrust mark, which allows its courses to be recognised as equivalent to those at public universities.

SIM also benefits from Singapore’s fast-growing student population, which has risen by about 600 per cent since 2003.

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Mr Lee attributed the increase in student numbers to SIM’s stronger marketing efforts and overseas expansion by its ERAS programme, under which it now has 1,600 Singaporean students studying full-time and 500 part-time at over 25 countries in a single academic year.

"The SIM Global Education brand has become stronger and students can do well here and get into top universities in Singapore," he added.

SIM Global Education, which has 23,000 students in all, including those studying at its sister arm UniSIM, has had its student intake capped at the current level, which is 15,000.

"So if they cannot get into a public university, SIM Global Education is an option," he said.

SIM Global Education has also added more centres in Singapore, through which it now has about 3,500 part-time students.

SIM official said Singapore’s growing economy was a major reason for the jump in student numbers.

"Many of the Singaporean students have graduated and started working, but they are aspiring for a degree. So not all who want a degree have a shot," he added.

Mr Lee said the expansion of universities has driven up the demand for degree opportunities.

SIM Global Education has announced plans to expand its overseas operations to 30 countries over the next three years.

"I want to build a world-class private school here," he said.

The SIM Global Education campus at 80 Mountbatten Road was opened formally in 2011. Since then, there have been four additional buildings added, bringing the total number of buildings to 20.