UniSIM law school gets overwhelming response

Double the expected number of prospective applicants show up at its open house

Yuen Sin

Interest in SIM University’s much-awaited law school – due to open next year – is so high that it had to hold an extra briefing session on its courses yesterday.

More than 450 showed up for two two-hour briefings detailing the school’s law programmes at UniSIM’s annual open house – double the expected number.

The UniSIM School of Law, Singapore’s third law school, will aim to address a predicted shortage of lawyers in the fields of criminal and family law.

There are a total of 60 places available on its two courses, 48 of which will go to those with degrees applying for the Juris Doctor programme. The other 12 will go to A-level school leavers and polytechnic diploma-holders without work experience.

and management, said that it would be a “tough fight” for those like her applying for the LLB course.

“There were a couple of concerns from the crowd today about how many of us will be admitted for the LLB course because there were a number of people with diplomas,” she said.

She added that they were assured that the final percentage of those admitted to the respective courses will still depend on the profile of applicants.

Professor Leslie Chew, the law school’s dean, was “very encouraged by the tremendous interest”.

“Not everyone makes a good family lawyer, but lawyer. We hope to attract a special breed of students who have relevant work experience, strong hearts and helping dispositions,” he said.

“From the turnout today, I am particularly encouraged that many come from the type of backgrounds we are hoping to attract,” UniSIM president Cheong Hee Kiat said earlier this month when the school was announced that it hopes to draw mature individuals with experience in related fields, such as social work and law enforcement, who want to make a switch to a second career in law.

Students will be selected not just based on academic ability but also on their attitude and interest in the practice of family and criminal law.

Legislative executive Sheryl Keith Nuqui, 26, said that many of the prospective applicants had experience working in criminal and family law.

“There was an overwhelming number of people today but I’m not surprised because many of us had been waiting for such a programme,” said Ms Keith Nuqui, who has six years of working experience and holds a diploma in law and management as well as a bachelor’s degree in law from the University of London.

“I can meet the criteria for the JD programme, but I’m pretty sure there will be loads of people like me with even more experience.”

But she is undeterred by the competition. “The applicants are all people who want to do their part for the community, and we can all learn from one another’s experience.”

Applications for the law school will open on Tuesday and close on July 31.

yuensin@sph.com.sg