

Contact: **Jasmine**
enquiries@firstmedia.edu.sg
www.firstmedia.edu.sg
www.firstmedia.com.sg

5 & 18 Teck Lim Road
Singapore 088383
Phone (+65) 63378663
Fax (+65) 63371217



**FIRST MEDIA
DESIGN SCHOOL**
SINGAPORE

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Venture Capital for Tomorrow's Designpreneurs

Private Design School Puts Education and Opportunity First in New Initiative To Aid Students Hit By Crisis

Singapore – As students arrived at First Media Design School (FMDS) on Monday morning to meet their classmates and get started with their advanced diploma design programmes, a few have already had the chance to learn their first lesson – and it has little to do with tools or techniques. Many designers these days are more than just about winning awards or making a quick buck. They are keen to get a proper education on the ins-and-outs of not only designing but also running a design studio and being the master of their own futures. However, tough economic times are making some students willing but unable to make an investment in education, forcing them to put their aspirations on hold indefinitely.

FMDS, however, saw this as an opportunity to make its own investment in education, by financially supporting its most needy and deserving students. A combination of full, partial and merit-based scholarships and a new interest-free study-first-pay-later scheme means that students who value an education in design skills and the opportunity to be mentored as budding design entrepreneurs will not need to be burdened by its costs.

Ng Kai Ling, 21, who just started her two-year advanced diploma course in graphic design, agrees: "This education is capital to me that I can use to make my own future. You still have to work hard and take advantage of opportunities. I'm really glad I can do something that my family will be proud of." She and approximately 10 others are financially supported by the school, a number that will steadily increase as the school rolls out its new initiative to aid Singaporean students and their parents. Students on the study-first-pay-later scheme will pay for the \$535 initial registration fee at the beginning and only pay the balance of their school fees after they graduate, in small monthly installments of about \$400 over five years. On average, local and international students enrolled in two-year advanced diploma programs at FMDS pay \$12,500 and \$18,500 per year respectively.

As a sign of good faith, the school will charge no interest and students who participate in the scheme will have to sign a contract with FMDS. As a form of repayment assurance, students and their families can use existing insurance policies and/or their parents' assets as collateral. Says CEO Mark Phooi, "FMDS is in the business of educating passionate young minds and we want to reach out to students in this special time of need, providing them a pathway to realise their aspirations."

The scheme is primarily targeted at students who fulfill the following conditions: passionate individuals with a positive, entrepreneurial attitude and a strong interest in design, whose parents are currently unemployed or have a combined household income of less than \$2000 per month. The parents must act as guarantors and own a HDB flat to be used as collateral. However, depending on case-by-case circumstances and after personal interviews with the school, the abovementioned conditions may be modified or waived.

International students are not left out either. Two Vietnamese students, Hoang Nhat Thien Chi (fashion design) and Phan Thi Dieu My (graphic design), are starting one-year programmes this term and are on full scholarships – an opportunity which they describe as "amazing". They find the instructors helpful, the classes small enough and the attention they receive individually very important.

To help them become both designers and leaders, they will experience FMDS's unique teaching curriculum, Design Management, which trains and motivates students to become 'whole brain' designers. The curriculum has four key teaching objectives that relate to creativity, communication, business and management skills. Satisfaction of these objectives will produce designers both willing and capable of fulfilling their career/business aspirations of becoming future 'designpreneurs' (design entrepreneurs).

(more)

For Immediate Release

FMDS entered the education business primarily motivated by manpower needs for designers also trained in management. It offers advanced and specialist diploma programs in graphic design, multimedia design, fashion design, fashion marketing, digital media, design management and integrated brand communication.

The school aims to educate and nurture enterprising students who, upon graduation, will have the opportunity to work with First Media Consulting and/or its working partners locally and overseas. Alternatively, students have the option of advancing to the final year of a Bachelors of Arts programme at one of FMDS's partner universities overseas, or locally at SIM University, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts or LASALLE.

FMDS hopes to use its financial aid scheme to set an example for other Private Education Organizations through its commitment to the underprivileged, organisation-wide social responsibility and the future of design and entrepreneurship.

First Media Design School (FMDS), established in 2006, is a learning organisation and teaching institution dedicated to training, developing and nurturing creative professionals as well as mentoring design entrepreneurs. Motivated by manpower needs for designers also trained in management, the school aims to educate and nurture enterprising students who upon graduation will have the opportunity to work with First Media Consulting and/or our working partners locally and overseas. It has campuses in Singapore, Jakarta and Accra, Ghana (opening late 2009) and is affiliated with universities in Singapore, UK, Australia, and New Zealand. FMDS has more than 200 students pursuing courses leading to certification and advanced diplomas. It is a part of First Media Pte Ltd, a group of 10 design studios now celebrating its 20th anniversary of socially responsible design and entrepreneurship.



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