

SMU law school looks to up student intake

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TWO students who had applied to join the new law school at the Singapore Management University (SMU) – but were rejected – received a surprise recently.

In a turnaround, the university offered the two students a place in its inaugural law intake, which starts in August.

TODAY has learnt that the offers to the two students – who are joining the National University of Singapore's (NUS) law faculty instead – was part of a wave of offers SMU has made to students who were initially rejected.

When contacted, an SMU spokesman said the university has made 197 offers and received 88 acceptances so far.

The original target for the number of students this year was 90, and to date its enrolment figure has already hit 105, which includes 17 existing students who will pursue it as a double-degree course.

It is understood that one

reason for ramping up its recruitment drive is because SMU hopes to expand its intake to 120 law students this year, instead of waiting until next year.

SMU has already written to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Law for approval to expand the intake for the four-year course.

However, this latest round of recruitment is proving to be tougher than expected for SMU, due in part to a preference for NUS, which is facing competition for law students for the first time.

By comparison, NUS has only sent out one set of offers to about 300 students. It is understood that it has already hit its target intake of 240.

The two schools received more than 1,200 applications each.

According to figures provided by both NUS and SMU, among the students who received offers from both universities, about 70 opted in favour of NUS, with only 10 choosing the newcomer.

"We're obviously very happy. I think we've managed to attract many students

who would have gone abroad because we've established our international standing," NUS law faculty vice-dean Victor Ramraj told TODAY.

As such, he said NUS will not be offering any places to students it had initially turned away.

An SMU spokesman acknowledged its competitor's track record, and said that SMU has been "conservative" in making offers as this is its first batch of law students.

He added that the school was "still getting quality", with three-quarters of the acceptances going to students who scored three As in their A-level examinations.

He also said that although SMU has 80 students on the law school waiting list, it has still been approaching students it had initially turned down for the faculty – including those it had offered a place in another course. Several more are appealing to join.

Now all that is needed is approval from the relevant authorities, and everything, it seems, will take its course.