**Personal Statement**

**Please discuss your academic and career objectives. Be specific about the area in which you plan to study, your reasons for wishing to study at Singapore Management University. We encourage you to upload a pdf document. Your file attachment should be less than 5mb. Please attach your file and name them appropriately.**

**My Academic Goal and Area of Study**

I spent 3 years in Ministry of Home Affairs’s (MHA) Operations Research (OR) unit and slightly over 1 year in MHA’s Data Science unit. I identified a gap whereby I may be able to translate business problems into technical problems but I am limited in terms of expertise to explore the available tools and to understand how those tools work behind the scene. I believe that there is a need for me to equip myself with in-depth technical knowledge and expertise in the area of analytics (including OR). This will help me to make better decisions for the business as I will know how certain tools work and why I should choose particular tools over the others. For example, if I were to propose a machine learning solution, which algorithm should I be using? What parameters should I tune? What values should I tune to? How does this mathematical solver solve the linear programming model? Why is this solver better than the other? In summary, my goal to further my study is to equip myself so as to be a better domain expert to value-add and even to transform the business.

In terms of area of study, I would like to go in-depth into the realms of both OR and Data Science, and how both interlink and complement one another. Singapore, with its limited resources, would face future challenges that I foresee that OR would be able to address. I hope that by the end of the programme, I will have better understanding how OR methodologies work and how to further tweak them to meet the dynamic nature of real-world problems. Furthermore, with Singapore’s move towards Smart Nation, I would want to be part of this initiative as more than just a spectator but a contributor. I would want to understand Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) beyond just running Python scripts but to also be able answers the following questions: How do ML and AI work? How can they make our lives easier? How can they be deployed to normal citizens and understood by business users? These are some questions and areas that I would like to go into.

I am a believer in lifelong learning and up-skilling myself but I too believe in teaching and imparting knowledge and skills to others. Outside work, I spent almost 10 years teaching and mentoring youths and young adults in church. I believe that knowledge should be shared but beyond knowledge, I believe one should know how to learn and I am inspired to teach others how to learn and for them to be an imparter of knowledge eventually.

**My Career Goal**

My career goal is therefore to be that bridge between business and technical users in wherever organisations or companies I am working in. I would want to be a technical person who has the domain knowledge but at the same time know how to navigate the corporate world to be able to innovate and deliver what technology promises to achieve in a real-world context. In addition, as mentioned above, I aspire to be an educator or mentor one day to impart knowledge and inspire the younger generations.

**Why SMU?**

SMU prides herself as a different U and I personally resonates with this statement. I believe I too have become a different ‘me’. Growing up, I had been doing well academically. Scoring straight As, topping my levels and having classmates looking for me to share my answers to homework were commonplace throughout my years in studies from primary school to Junior College. To me, getting the right answer was the most important objective. However, having been in the working world for 7 years, I have gained new perspective. It dawned upon me that sometimes the right answers or solutions may not be sufficient. As OR and Data Science analyst in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), we provide business users quantitative solutions, reasoning and insights to enhance their decision makings and business processes. There were many occasions that there seemed to be a mismatch of expectations between the technical team and business users. My linear programming model might churn out the most optimal solution but business users might not be convinced simply because the model did not provide favourable outcomes to the business. On separate occasion, while promoting the use of data science to help business users gain insights, I had always been facing with the challenge of having to help business users identify the problem statements to solve and what tools were best for the particular problems. I learnt that in the real world, there is more than being able to provide the right answer especially in the domain of analytics. There is a need to bridge the gap between business and technical domains. One needs to be able to translate business problems to technical problem, solve them and translate the technical solutions to implementable real-life solutions that business users can understand and have confidence in. I believe SMU with its focus on industry-relevance, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit would be able to help me to be a different ‘me’ ready for the future where technological change is the only constant.