PRESIDENT TAN BECOMES PATRON OF THE UNIVERSITY HE ENVISIONED

“He saw us as the catalyst for radical changes in Singapore’s university system”

Mr. Ho Kwon Ping, SMU Chairman

New generation entrepreneurs
ZEST (pg 2)

Professor Arnaud De Meyer honoured for significant contributions to Science
ACADEMIA (pg 9)

US Trade Representative speaks at SMU
CONNECTIONS (pg 17)
It is an aspect of organisational renewal and vitality that I would urge all departments to always keep in mind – to constantly reinvent themselves to take on new challenges.

Professor Arnoud De Meyer, SMU President

On 1 September 2011, President Arnoud De Meyer made an announcement on organisational review: “The fast-changing tertiary education landscape demands that we stay ahead through constant innovation and differentiation, and to organise ourselves accordingly. The role of corporate communications has grown in significance, the reputation that university events generate has increased our visibility, and the impact of the postgraduate programmes we are launching is far-reaching. The value-added that executive and professional education, research centres and institutes contribute to education, society and business has become extremely important.”

To tap into the opportunities that these developments present, he decided to merge the offices of Corporate Communications and University Events and added a new function, Corporate Marketing, to form the Office of Corporate Communications & Marketing (OCCM). He appointed Alan Goh, then Director, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, to head OCCM.

SMU SKBI and MasterCard develop Singapore Index of Inflation Expectations

SMU and Citigroup (Cit) to develop Singapore’s first financial literacy programme

SMU gives students a head-start with 3 new 2nd majors

Building partnerships in China & India

Partnership with Singapore’s newest university, SUPI

SMU Global Footprint: One thousand and one nights

SMU’s first EMBA graduates set high benchmark

Scholarship in honour of Charlie Chia Cheng Guan

Cashing in on creativity

Leading the dialogue with the Education Minister

US Trade Representative speaks at SMU

Channel NewsAsia’s Perspectives

Presidential Distinguished Lecturer Series: Dan Breznitz

SMU leaps 19 places in prestigious Tilburg Worldwide Ranking

Double accreditation on-the-double

ISES award takes Singapore’s service excellence to new heights

SMU People

S R Nathan appointed Distinguished Senior Fellow

Professor Ezra Vogel on the legacy of Deng Xiaoping

New leaders

– At the School of Law
– At the School of Economics

Professor Arnoud De Meyer honoured for his significant contributions to Science

Professor Francis Koh is first Singaporean to receive University of St. Gallen Honorary Doctorate

ISES award takes Singapore’s service excellence to new heights

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Zest – showcases stories of our students as they journey through a transformative learning experience.

Academia – highlights contributions of our faculty towards developing high-quality education, creating impactful research and building strong industry ties.

Connections – features our collaboration with global leaders and university partners, and contributions for the betterment of our students, as well as for education, society, the industry and the global community.

Visually attractive and prose-friendly, we hope it will engage and provide you, our readers, with a delightful reading experience. We have also added a regular feature – SMU People, where we invite you to send us your favourite photos that reflect the vibrancy of life at SMU and the spirit of our University.

We hope you like this new initiative. Do tell us what you think – send your views and suggestions to smuengage@smu.edu.sg.

Read on and enjoy!

Leila Thayalan
Editor-in-Chief, SMU Engage
Corporate Communications

CONTACT US

If you have any comments, suggestions or contributions for SMU’s Engage newsletter, please contact smuengage@smu.edu.sg.

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To a very special man who made SMU special, we warmly welcome President Tony Tan to a homecoming to the University he created and inspired, and which I hope he will continue to guide as Patron.”

Mr Ho Kwon Ping, SMU Chairman

On 13 January 2012, Singapore’s recently elected Head of State, President Tony Tan Keng Yam came to see the pioneering university he first conceptualised in the 1990s. He was greeted by Mr Ho Kwon Ping, SMU Chairman, whom he had approached to make his dream a reality. With SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer and others, President Tan took a stroll around Campus Green, where several SMU martial arts clubs showed him their moves. Then he was guided on a tour down to the Concourse where he was among the first to travel back in time through the SMU Timeline and Time Tunnel exhibitions, which charted the history of the University.

AN APPETITE FOR CHANGE

Before a celebratory dinner hosted at the Li Ka Shing Library, Mr Ho Kwon Ping paid tribute to President Tan as SMU’s inspirational founder.

“Despite his somewhat conservative bearing and attire, exemplified by his trademark slicked-back Brylcreem hairstyle,” said Mr Ho, “President Tan is actually quite radical and an entrepreneur. His vision of a holistic, broad-based education modelled after the best American universities was radical. His comfort with us, literally being a start-up with unconventional ways of doing things, was entrepreneurial.”

A SALUTE TO THE PAST; A TOAST TO THE FUTURE

Mr Ho went on to his own personal recollection of the founding of SMU and how, in 2010, he called for a history of the founding of the University to be recorded for posterity. This has now been completed, he explained, under the curatorship of the Li Ka Shing Library and includes the SMU Oral History Collection – 21 recorded interviews with the key figures in the SMU story, including President Tan, Professor De Meyer and Mr Ho himself.

To mark the launch of the collection, an album of rare archive photographs was presented to President Tan, and for his homecoming, he was presented with his personalised matriculation card.

Professor De Meyer thanked President Tan for driving the renewal of Singapore’s higher education landscape. He summarised recent developments at SMU and plans for the future. “President Tan, we welcome you to SMU as Patron and look forward to showing you how far your dream has come, and equally important, how far it can go, on this and many future Patron’s Days,” he concluded.

President Tan left the campus shortly after dinner while the students, faculty members and staff continued the festivities with celebratory comedy performances, student bands and dancing late into the night.
NEW GENERATION ENTREPRENEURS

When SMU was set up in 2000, one of its aims was to groom outstanding business leaders and creative entrepreneurs capable of excelling in a dynamic world; they would be leaders who are ethical and socially responsible, bold and articulate, and capable of making a difference in their respective fields. Twelve years and eight cohorts later, we are delighted to see many young SMU undergraduates and graduates jumping out of their comfort zones, banking on their most valuable assets – youth, ideas and an SMU education, and taking the plunge to run their own businesses and pursue their dreams.

If variety is the spice of life – and business, then consider the diversity of industries they have ventured into: food and beverage, photography, business consultancy, tourism, web portals, app development and other technological solutions, and even dog training. The road less travelled is definitely not for the faint-hearted, for the path of entrepreneurship is usually lined with risks and obstacles. To this, several young entrepreneurs pointed out the edge that SMU has given them to help them succeed.

For George Chen, Bryanmaguire Chia (both Information Systems graduates) and Lee Pei Zhi (Business graduate) from the Class of 2012, the encouragement and help they received from the SMU Institute of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SMUIIE) Business Innovators Generator Incubator was something they are grateful for. The trio founded Sageby, a technology start-up providing an innovative platform for data collection and market research. Not only are they housed at the incubator, which provides a conducive environment for their company to grow, they also benefit from the access to advisors and the exchanges they have with other tech start-ups that share the premises.

Kent Hoie (Business graduate, Class of 2011) of Team Galaktikos feels the same. The online marketing platform that his team has created allows companies to propagate branding through the viral effect of social networks. He appreciated the abundant opportunities and the competitive advantage that the University offered: “Here, we get to mix with people who are our potential clients or customers,” said Kent. And for Gay Zheng Cai (Business undergraduate, year 3) and his business partner at Hello Stranger, a social photo booth company, the invaluable advice they received from the University helped to put their company on the right track to success.

Despite the assistance and advice available, for many, the decision to be an entrepreneur is still not an easy one. Jocelyn Chan (Business graduate, Class of 2011), founder of Sal Happy Salads, shared that she was faced with a dilemma at one point, feeling “very torn between finding a job and setting this up”. But the self-proclaimed “health foodie” believed in her product and took the leap anyway, when she was granted the lease for two shoplots in the SMU campus. Today, Jocelyn, who serves up a variety of healthy and tasty rice-based salads on campus, admits that it is stressful running a business but very fulfilling. “It’s really enjoyable – not easy, especially in F&B, but really enjoyable,” she said.

Like Jocelyn, Kenny Mah’s (Economics graduate, Class of 2007) passion clearly lies at the core of his business. He juggles a full-time job at a financial firm and commits his weekends to Puppy Love, a dog-training centre which he co-owns. While the company enjoys a thriving business (Kenny sees an average of 50 clients a week through private consultations or group training sessions), Kenny was quick to point out that Puppy Love is more than a commercial entity and that making a difference both in the lives of dogs and their owners comes first at his company. To that effect, Puppy Love goes to community centres, condominium offices, and schools to promote dog awareness and educate the public on issues, such as responsible ownership and dog handling.

Standing by your decisions

Andy Soh, Tocco Studios
Information Systems graduate, Class of 2010

Andy Soh’s approach to entrepreneurship is based on the advice of one of his mentors, Pamela Lim, a Senior Lecturer of Strategic Management at SMU: “Life is not about making the right or wrong decision. It’s about righting your decision. Once you’ve made a decision, make it right.”

Andy co-founded Tocco Studios, which provides touch-screen technology software, with Vincent Lai (Information Systems graduate, Class of 2011) when they were both undergraduates at SMU and also both members of the University volleyball team. “Some people said good friends should not work together,” says Andy Soh, “But I disagree. We had good chemistry and good results from working together. So I thought we would make a good team.”

This turned out to be the right decision. Tocco Studios now serves a growing number of clients, from educational institutions in Singapore to several banks in the Middle East.

Read on for more stories of our graduates’ experiences in running their own businesses.
We want to compete against the large, established recruitment portals out there – the monster.coms of the world,” says Daryl Low.

He set up Quantine with fellow SMU graduate Kenneth Yap (Information Systems graduate, Class of 2009) three years ago to market skills assessment software to HR departments, and they recently took the bold step of setting up Next-5.com. This interactive recruitment networking platform includes an innovative, high-tech virtual interviewing platform.

With a degree from SMU, Daryl would have had a choice of high salary jobs, but he chose to become an entrepreneur. “To be honest, you can find a job any time. While we’re still young, the opportunity cost is lower. It’s easier to forfeit a $6k income now than to give up a $60k income in 10 years time,” he says.
Winning partnerships for SMU and Singapore sports

SMU-SSC to nurture values and give youths a competitive edge

“Our goals go beyond winning medals and scoring high grades. We aim to nurture values... to be equipped with skills and knowledge to face future challenges.”

Professor Arnoud De Meyer, SMU President

“Through the Lifeskills Centre and sports electives, we can give our youths a competitive edge as they enter the workforce and better prepare them for the future.”

Mr Lim Teck Yin, SSC CEO

SMU to help launch SSF’s “Sailing in the City” programme

With a stiff wind whipping across the quay, SMU President Arnoud De Meyer and Singapore Sailing Federation (SSF) President Dr Ben Tan met at Marina Bay in March 2012 to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to promote keelboat sailing among youths and explore other sailing-related initiatives.

“Our goal is to join SSF in growing the sailing fraternity and to work together to promote keelboat sailing among youths and explore other sailing-related initiatives.”

SMU President, Prof Arnoud De Meyer, and SSF President, Dr Ben Tan, sealed the partnership to promote keelboat sailing among youths.

“Sailing in the City”, which will give students and members of the public the opportunity to sail at Marina Bay.

In his speech, Dr Tan affirmed SMU’s achievements, “I have followed SMU’s sailing progress since its inception and have always been impressed by the growth of the club’s programmes. SMU’s sailors have injected a dose of fresh ideas and spirit into the sailing scene. I look forward to seeing them go on to bigger and better things,” he said.

SMU is the only university in Southeast Asia to have a keelboat sailing programme.

SMU is collaborating with SSF to lead the promotion of tertiary sailing and youth development, and to jointly organise the first Asia Pacific Match Racing Student Cup 2012 – an international competition open to both local and international student participants, to be held in Marina Bay in September 2012.

Other areas of collaboration include staff exchange and co-organisation of conferences and seminars.
What a celebratory night it was! The winners of the 2012 University Student Life Awards (USLA) were invited to a Bollywood-themed Awards Night specially organised for them. Held in March 2012 at the SMU T-Junction, the annual USLA recognised students who have contributed most to university life through their participation and achievements in their Co-Curricular Activities. Hosts Professor Ong Siow Heng, Dean of Students, and Mr. Jimmy Ye, Senior Associate Director of the Office of Student Life, and many of the staff and faculty who supported the event, were dressed for the occasion in brightly coloured, elaborate Indian apparel.

The Excellence Awards for individuals recognise outstanding students or CCA groups which served with distinction in designated categories. The three worthy winners this year were Aaron Lum Zhi Hao (Arts), Shaun Toh Hong Yi (Sports) and Urmila Mandapaka (Student Leadership & Community Integration).

Dean of Students Awards were presented to students who served with merit in the areas of Arts, Sports and Adventure, and Student Leadership and the top students in each of these categories were conferred the Tan Tee Chee & Tsan Kah Ngeoh Awards.

In total, 77 awards were presented to individuals and groups, including five staff and faculty members who were awarded the Student Life Recognition Award for their contributions and support for holistic education in SMU, while five student services groups were awarded tokens of appreciation for their dedicated service towards the SMU community.

A twist it certainly was. Instead of students performing for the audience, this year’s entertainment was by SMU staff for the students – a Bollywood-style dance to the music of The Pussycat Dolls’ ‘Jai Ho!’ The audience cheered and clapped along and finally gave a standing ovation to show their appreciation for the dancers’ spirited performance and good-natured playfulness.

A showcase of talent at the University Student Life Awards

SMU President Arnoud De Meyer (Centre) takes centre stage during the Bollywood dance performance.

Samuel Chao takes top prize in Emerging Leaders global essay competition

While employers in Singapore are becoming increasingly aware of how articulate and confident SMU graduates are, second-year business undergraduate Samuel Chao has shown on the international stage how SMU has also done an excellent job in developing students’ intellect and writing skills.

Samuel entered Project Firefly’s inaugural Emerging Leaders essay competition sponsored by Credit Suisse. Participants were asked to address one of four topics in 1,500 words or less. Two related to China, the world’s second-largest economy, including the topic chosen by Samuel: Will the Renminbi become the world’s next reserve currency?

His essay was judged to be the best among over 400 international submissions from 187 tertiary institutions in 43 countries. Besides the top three awards, a further 10 students received honourable mentions for their high-quality essays, one of them being SMU’s fourth-year business student Ni Shengning.

Samuel’s prize was 3,500 Swiss Francs (approximately S$4,700) and a place in Credit Suisse’s Thought Leadership Conference in Hong Kong in March 2012.
Calling on all SMU students, alumni, faculty and staff. Send us your favourite photos that reflect the vibrancy of life at SMU and the spirit of our university, and you may just see yourself and your friends or colleagues in the next issue of SMU Engage!

Email your photos, captions and relevant details (name, place, event or occasion etc.) to us at smuengage@smu.edu.sg
Prof Vogel spoke before a diverse and well-informed audience which filled the 300 seats of SMU’s Mochtar Riady Auditorium.

Prof Ezra Vogel responded to questions from the audience.

SMU once again became the venue for a gathering of eminent thought leaders in May 2012 when diplomats, civil servants, academic and business leaders, staff from non-governmental organisations and students from various universities and junior colleges packed the Mochtar Riady Auditorium to hear eminent Sinologist Professor Ezra Vogel speak.

The Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences Emeritus at Harvard University and highly regarded author on Japan, China and Asia, came to SMU on the prestigious Ho Bee Professorship in Chinese Economy and Business. On his first day in SMU on 23 May, Professor Vogel delivered his public lecture on “The Legacy of Deng Xiaoping” to more than 300 enthused members of the audience. Response to the public lecture was overwhelming and seats were over-subscribed.

The lecture was based on his most recent book, “Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China”, published by Harvard University Press in September 2011. Professor Vogel offered fascinating insights and analyses, drawing on an academic career spanning five decades in Harvard and Yale, and his experience as a US National Intelligence Officer for East Asia in the 1990s. His lecture explained how China, under Deng’s leadership, became a predominantly urban society, the second largest economy in the world, and established itself as a global power for the first time in the modern era.

The Ho Bee Professorship in Chinese Economy and Business was established in 2008 with an endowment of $53 million by the successful Singapore-based international real estate development and investment company, Ho Bee Investment Ltd. The Ho Bee Professorship provides the opportunity for a distinguished visiting professor to advance education and research in the area of Chinese entrepreneurship and business, while the lecture series offers a platform for industry leaders and eminent scholars of international renown to share their knowledge and perspectives.

After stepping down as President of the Republic of Singapore and as Patron of SMU in August 2011, Mr S R Nathan accepted the invitation to become a Distinguished Senior Fellow at SMU’s School of Social Sciences (SOSS). Since then, he has been visiting SMU three times a week to engage with undergraduates.

Said Mr Nathan, “We have a good exchange. It’s good listening to them because they are looking at things from a different perspective”. SOSS students have quizzed him on his diplomatic career, his two terms of presidency, Singapore in the 60s and how it has changed over the years. Students found his anecdotes of his careers and life to be interesting and intriguing.

In March 2012, Mr Nathan was Guest-of-Honour at SMU’s inaugural Social Sciences Conference where he also joined a lively discussion forum with 250 students. Mr Nathan was SMU’s inaugural Patron. He graced every Patron’s Day celebration from the very first, at SMU’s Evans Road campus in 2001, to his last in 2011.

S R NATHAN appointed Distinguished Senior Fellow

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2012 is proving to be quite a landmark for Professor Yeo Tiong Min. Not only was he named Singapore’s first Honorary Senior Counsel, he has also been appointed as Dean of SMU’s School of Law.

Professor Yeo takes over the Deanship from Professor Michael Furmston, who will continue teaching at SMU after stepping down. He will also help the University to set up a Centre of Commercial Law.

Started in 1997, the Senior Counsel scheme recognises those who possess outstanding ability as advocates, an extensive knowledge of the law and the highest professional standing. Professor Yeo was conferred the honorary title on account of his papers having been relied on in courts all over the world, before even meeting the mandatory 10 years since passing the Bar, which is required for regular Senior Counsel appointments.

Professor David Llewelyn, who has been with SMU since August 2010, will become Deputy Dean of the School of Law. This is a new position within the school. Professor Llewelyn has combined private law practice with teaching at the London School of Economics; Queen Mary College, London University; and King’s College, London. He specialises in intellectual property law and has published extensively in the area.

After a search lasting some 17 months across universities in North America, Europe and Asia, SMU has appointed Professor Bryce Hool as the Dean of the School of Economics.

Professor Hool was formerly Head of Economics and Associate Dean (International) of Business and Economics at the University of Auckland, where he led his faculty to top the ranking of national research and become one of the top economics schools in the southern hemisphere. He was previously at the University of Auckland for 12 years and at the State University of New York at Stony Brook for 17 years.

A veteran marathoner, Professor Hool was determined to set a brisk pace in starting his new appointment. Even before he took over from Interim Dean Professor Phang Sock Yong, Professor Hool was already working with his future colleagues on the curriculum for a new Master’s programme in Financial Economics.

Professor Hool says his priority is to build on the school’s strengths in statistics and econometrics by developing in more diverse fields, such as industrial and health economics.
Honoured for his significant contributions to Science

Professor Arnoud De Meyer

One of Europe’s leading business schools, University of St. Gallen, recently conferred an honorary doctorate on Francis Koh, Deputy Dean (Undergraduate & Administration) of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Professor of Finance (Practice), and Director of the MSc in Wealth Management. Professor Koh is the first Singaporean to receive this recognition from a Swiss university.

SMU Engage spoke to Professor Koh about the award in a recent interview.

Q1. WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS WHEN YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS HONOUR?

Professor Koh: I was pleasantly surprised and deeply honoured. It is rare for a faculty member, especially for a Singaporean, to receive an award from a Swiss university.

Q2. THE AWARD HONOURS YOUR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS IN CORPORATE FINANCE AND FOR BRIDGING THE DISCIPLINES OF FINANCE, ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT. COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS?

Professor Koh: My corporate finance research covers the birth of companies through private equity and initial public offers; their marriage through mergers and acquisitions; and their decline because of failures and bankruptcy. Wealth management is a growth area in Asia, especially following the recent global economic crises which had great impact on the assets of high-net-worth individuals.

Q3. HOW DO YOU THINK SMU COULD CONTINUE TO LEAD IN THE AREA OF WEALTH MANAGEMENT?

Professor Koh: SMU is very well connected to the financial community, physically very near to the financial institutions in the city centre, and our faculty members are doing frontier research. To continue to lead in the area of wealth management, we should continue to leverage on our advantages, and carry out relevant, high-quality research which has impact for the academic as well as the practice community.

Q4. YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN DEVELOPING A CLOSE AND FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SMU AND ST. GALLEN. HOW WAS THIS DEVELOPED AND WHEN DID IT ALL START?

Professor Koh: Both SMU and St. Gallen are mid-sized universities focusing on management and business, with a regional focus and forward-looking global outlook. In the early days of SMU, we sought international strategic partners while St. Gallen was looking for like-minded Asian partners. My role was to act as a catalyst to move the strategic relationship forward in a mutually beneficial manner as envisioned by senior management.

Q5. COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT SMU’S CURRENT AND PLANNED COLLABORATIONS WITH ST. GALLEN?

Professor Koh: We have implemented specially customised student exchange programmes and the exchange of visiting faculty members. SMU has also hosted several doctoral students from St. Gallen who were doing research in finance and wealth management. We look forward to more collaboration with the University of St. Gallen in the various areas of finance, including banking, investment management and wealth management.
ISES award takes Singapore’s service excellence to new heights

The stars of Singapore’s business community gathered in November 2011 for the inaugural Singapore Service Excellence Medallion Ceremony organised by SMU’s Institute of Service Excellence. In an evening of glamorous gowns and dazzling prizes, Guest-of-Honour President Tony Tan Keng Yam presented the inaugural Organisation Medallion to Mr Lee Seow Hiang, CEO of Changi Airport Group; while Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office and NTUC Secretary General, presented the first Individual Medallion to Mr Edwin Teo, Sales Advocate of Atlas Sound & Vision.

The prestigious medallion is supported by the National Trades Union Congress, SPRING Singapore, Singapore Tourism Board and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency as part of the GEMS Up movement to raise service standards in Singapore.

Double accreditation on-the-double

The Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB) received a wonderful Christmas present in 2011, when it was awarded EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) accreditation for five years by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD).

Professor Howard Thomas, Dean of the School, was elated by the news: “To be one of the few schools in Asia to attain a five-year accreditation demonstrates EFMD’s strong confidence in the holistic nature and high quality of our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes,” he said.

Just eight months earlier, the School achieved AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation. For both accreditations, the School has the distinction of being one of the youngest schools in the world to be accredited.

SMU LEAPS 19 PLACES IN PRESTIGIOUS TILBURG WORLDWIDE RANKING

65TH IN THE WORLD, 2ND IN ASIA

The Tilburg University Top 100 Worldwide Economics Schools Research Ranking 2012 by Tilburg University, The Netherlands, has placed SMU’s School of Economics 65th in the world and 2nd in the whole of Asia, based on research contributions published in leading world economic journals between 2007 and 2011. This represents a leap of 19 places from 84th position in 2011 (for research published between 2006 and 2010).

When comparing rankings for research published in a single year, the school has also advanced from 57th position in 2010 to 47th position in 2011.

Internationally, SMU ranks in the top 10 for Econometrics, which further strengthens SMU’s overall ranking. The research has also produced an early detection system for asset price bubbles and created two indices for Singapore, namely, the Inflation Expectations Index and the Corporate Governance Index. Asset bubbles and inflation are immensely important issues and SMU research will be valuable to central banks around the world in their policy-setting.

Professor Bryce Hooi, Dean of SMU School of Economics, said, “The latest ranking results are significant. Naturally we’re very pleased to be continuing our strong upward trajectory in this ranking. It validates our position as a leading economics research centre in Asia and among the top tier internationally. For a university just over a decade old, this is a remarkable achievement. The ranking is based on academic research which is also frequently the underpinning for commercial research and policy formation, so this international recognition reinforces our credentials in these areas.”

Tilburg University
Understanding Society

Rank University Score
55 Carnegie Mellon University 86 (+7)
56 Tel Aviv University 86 (0)
57 University of Bonn 86 (+3)
58 Arizona State University 85 (+5)
59 Hebrew University of Jerusalem 84 (-6)
60 National University of Singapore 79 (-4)
61 Dartmouth College 78 (-6)
62 University of Melbourne 77 (+13)
63 University of Washington 77 (0)
64 University of York 77 (+2)
65 Singapore Management University 75 (+14)
66 University of Colorado 75 (+5)
67 Purdue University 74 (+2)
68 University of Arizona 74 (+5)
69 University of Paris I 73 (+1)
70 Georgetown University 72 (+1)
71 University of Rochester 72 (+9)
72 McGill University 71 (0)
73 Rutgers State University 70 (-9)
74 VU University Amsterdam 70 (+5)
75 Stockholm School of Economics 68 (0)
76 University of Copenhagen 68 (+1)
77 University of Essex 68 (+1)
As people’s expectations of the economy may actually affect its performance, it is important to understand what these expectations are and how they are formed. That is the focus of the SKBI-MasterCard Singapore Index of Inflation Expectations, launched in January 2012, which was jointly developed by Dr Aurobindo Ghosh, Professor Jun Yu from SMU Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics, and MasterCard.

An online survey of Singapore households found that those who followed media reports on global economic issues had a lower inflation expectation. Citizenship status or length of stay and the level of confidence in future equity investment also play crucial roles in forming expectations.

A national survey in 2005 showed that young adults were among the least financially literate among various sectors of society. With this in mind, SMU and Citi Singapore have jointly launched the first structured financial literacy programme for this group. The programme sets out to equip young adults between 17 and 30 years old with essential personal financial knowledge and skills to give them a firm foundation in managing their money and a financial head start early in their working lives.

SMU and Citi to develop Singapore’s first financial literacy programme

SMU SKBI and MasterCard develop Singapore Index of Inflation Expectations

International and Asian Studies

This will take a multi-disciplinary approach to examining the emerging role of Asia in the world, by integrating disciplines such as sociology, political science, economics and law. External experts will be brought in to share their specialist knowledge and industry experience, while students will be encouraged to participate in study missions and joint programmes with other universities. The second major will be launched in August 2012.

Public Policy and Public Management

This second major will also be launched in August 2012. Professor James Tang, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, said that he was encouraged to introduce it because of the surge of interest from students during last year’s General Election campaigns. “Young Singaporeans need to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by policymakers and the tradeoffs they have to manage in formulating policy responses,” he said. This second major will focus on how policies are decided, implemented and evaluated. It will be unique in its emphasis on the integration of academic study with real policy problems. It is also the first public policy major to be offered in Singapore at the undergraduate level.

Arts and Cultural Management

Associate Professor Kipal Singh, who will oversee this second major to be launched in January 2013, said that it has been created against the backdrop of the report of the Singapore Arts and Culture Strategic Review Committee, which estimates that at least 500 jobs will be created in this sector annually over the next five years. He added that the School intends to tap into the best arts practitioners from Singapore and around the world to teach the second major, exploiting SMU’s strong international links. Guest lecturers will include former Singapore Arts Festival Head Ms Goh Ching Lee, Theatre Director Mr Ong Keng Sen, and the Chief Executive of Britain’s Royal Opera House, Lord Tony Hall.

SMU SKBI and MasterCard develop Singapore Index of Inflation Expectations

SMU gives students a head start with 3 new 2nd majors

Three new second majors to be introduced by the School of Social Sciences at SMU will give undergraduate students from all six Schools at SMU the opportunity to expand their knowledge in challenging ways beyond their main degree subjects.

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Mr Michael Zink, Head of ASEAN and Citi Country Officer, Singapore, presenting the cheque to Prof Arnoud De Meyer, SMU President.

Citi has pledged S$278,000 towards the planning and development of the programme, which will be rolled out in 2013.
One of SMU’s Strategic Goals 2011–2015 that President Arnoud De Meyer announced in October 2011 was to “Raise the reputation and international profile of SMU”.

In the last few months, we have made good progress. Amongst others, SMU established significant partnerships with institutions in India and China – two emerging powerhouses in the global economy. For each partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covers initiatives from the development of educational and training programmes to joint research as well as the exchange of knowledge, faculty members, students and staff.

University of International Business and Economics, Beijing

Just two weeks after SMU President Arnoud De Meyer visited the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing, UIBE President Shi Jianjun flew to Singapore to sign an MOU.

UIBE is a national top-rank multi-disciplinary comprehensive university in the fields of economics, finance, management and law. The MOU covers the full range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as well as executive education.
Bombay Stock Exchange Institute, Mumbai

With the financial markets in Singapore and India forging ever closer links, SMU and India’s Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Institute have agreed to collaborate on training Asia’s future financial market specialists and to conduct research focusing on Asia’s capital markets. The two will also offer postgraduate certificate programmes in areas related to financial markets, such as risk management, SMES and family-owned businesses and executive leadership.

Professor Rajendra K Srivastava, SMU’s Provost and Deputy President (Academic Affairs), flew to Mumbai to sign the memorandum with Mr Ambarish Datta, Managing Director and CEO of the BSE Institute. Mr Datta said, “SMU has, in a short span of time, established itself as a leading institution in the field of business and management in Asia. This collaboration will help students from both countries to learn from each other”.

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi

Professor Srivastava welcomed Mr K T Chacko, Director of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), to Singapore to firm up on collaboration initiatives with SMU.

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), Singapore-India trade has doubled. Singapore is now the second largest investor in India, while India is the eighth largest foreign investor in Singapore.

This inspired SMU and IIFT to agree to jointly design and launch Management Development Programmes as well as offer postgraduate certificate programmes in areas related to international trade, business and management. Both parties also agreed to conduct joint research and case writing related to the Asian region.

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

The formal establishment of an agreement between SMU and the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) came hot on the heels of the MOU-signing with IIFT. The inking of the agreement took place on 28 May 2012 on IIMB’s campus.

Under the partnership, SMU and IIMB will facilitate joint research and publication by their faculty, organise research seminars and workshops, as well as provide support for projects in research centres at both institutions in areas of mutual interest. Doctoral students and junior faculty of SMU and IIMB will be invited to participate in Summer/Winter Institutes to be hosted or co-hosted by the two institutions. Additionally, possibilities for joint executive education, faculty exchange and graduate student mobility between SMU and IIMB will be explored.

Apart from boosting research productivity at both institutions, the tie-up is also in line with SMU’s strategic investment in developing Asian market insights and cross-border management capabilities.
Partnership with Singapore’s newest university, SUTD

SMU became Singapore’s third publicly funded university in 2000, and just last October we teamed up with the fourth, even before it had opened its doors.

SMU and the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that creates a framework for collaboration in education, research, and student and faculty exchanges. Five elective courses in management will be co-developed and students from both universities will be able to attend chosen courses at the partner university. High-achieving SUTD students can also be considered for advanced placement in SMU’s Master in Management and Master of Science in Innovation programmes.

Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for Defence and Education, said the agreement “shows that our universities not only compete to spur one another towards excellence, but also work together to complement each other’s strengths. Initiatives such as this ultimately benefit Singaporean students by widening the range and quality of offerings in our university system”.

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Connections

A colourful student life typifies the SMU experience. I found the recently concluded Business Study Mission (BSM) to the Middle East (Summer 2012) a memory that I hold dear to my heart. It is beyond doubt that this trip to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman and Qatar has been the highlight of my journey in SMU. Unknowingly, this summer witnessed a chapter in my SMU life that can neither be rewritten nor erased.

For us, this BSM was more than just another university module. It was a time to bond, interact and forge the friendships that remain the cornerstone of university life. Definitely, the BSM students learnt much about business models and economic climates during our 13-week module and two-week study trip in the Middle East. Yet, what all of us took away from this experience was beyond what one could ever learn from the textbooks and classrooms.

Upon completion of an intensive curriculum – comprising guest lectures, research, presentations and reports – we finally flew off to the Middle East. With great enthusiasm, we visited distinguished institutions in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), such as the Abu Dhabi Council of Economic Development, Qatar Financial Centre, Dubai Chamber and Emirates National Oil Company. Interaction with students from universities such as Zayed University, Sultan Qaboos University and the colleges within the Higher Colleges of Technology made us realise that we share more similarities with the Arab students than we had perceived.

This unique experience was taken to another level through networking sessions with Singaporeans in the GCC region that were kindly hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs missions in Qatar and Abu Dhabi. Beyond that, our close interaction with the Singaporeans in Capitala made this trip so much more enjoyable. Conversations with them widened our horizons – their enthralling life experiences challenged each and every one of us to think out of the box.

This BSM was an exhilarating experience. Through bumpy bus rides and Arabian nights, we all knew that a magical bond had been forged. I cannot speak for all of us, but I walk the streets of Singapore today knowing that I am empowered with new knowledge and unique experiences that will serve me well in the future. For what it is worth, BSM Middle East has taught me one thing – carpe diem. Seize the day.

Liu Xuanyi
Bachelor of Business Management, Year 1

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SMU GLOBAL FOOTPRINT:

1. Third-year Business students Nathalia Tan (L) and Shifi Yee (R), donning the abaya, take time off to visit the Sheik Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi, the largest and grandest mosque in the UAE.

2. Third-year Social Science student Claire Tai, giving the hosts at Zayed University, Dubai, a detailed presentation on life in Singapore and SMU.

3. The SMU team poses with a student from the Higher Colleges of Technology at a dinner hosted by the Singapore Embassy in Abu Dhabi. (The writer of this article, Liu Xuanyi, is fifth from left.)

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One thousand and one nights

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Bachelor of Business Management, Year 1
When Mr Timothy Chia Chee Ming, member of SMU Board of Trustees, wanted to honour the memory of his late father, Mr Charlie Chia Cheng Guan, he felt that endowing two bond-free scholarships in his name was the most meaningful way.

“My late father was deprived of the opportunity to further his studies when he was young. It is my hope that this scholarship will enable more deserving students to benefit from the quality undergraduate programmes that SMU offers,” said Mr Timothy Chia.

Mr Charlie Chia helmed United Motor Works (UMW) Group, a Malaysian conglomerate founded by his father in 1917. The scholarships will give preference to Singaporean Accountancy, Business, Economics or Law undergraduates with financial needs in their second, third or final year.

Mr Darren O’Brien, MD of Grocery, Kraft Foods Australia, gave these parting words, “The EMBA experience is not so much about what we have learnt as it is about how we have learnt it, the academic as well as the cultural and the richness of the experience we have shared.”

The pioneer cohort of students in SMU’s Executive MBA (EMBA) programme set a high benchmark when they graduated in May 2012. Twenty-nine senior executives drawn from diverse geographical and professional backgrounds made the grade after nine weeks of intensive study spread over 13 months, with teaching led by eminent academics and business leaders. With study periods at SMU’s Lee Kong Chian School of Business, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in the US, Indian School of Business in India and Peking University in China, the EMBA class benefitted immensely from the opportunity to expand their global perspective of business management.

Participants were drawn from 10 countries, with an average of 19 years of work experience and an average age of 43 years. They included CEOs, COOs, MDs, GMs and business directors, experts in finance, HR, supply chain management, IT, banking and insurance, negotiation and the health industry, as well as successful entrepreneurs. SMU’s own VP of HR and Faculty Administration, Mr Terence Fan, was full of praise for his fellow students. “SMU’s pioneer EMBA class must be one of the best ever assembled in the world,” he said.

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The pioneer cohort of EMBA students at The Wharton School in the US (Above).
CONNECTIONS

Cashing in on creativity

Some people are thinkers and some people are doers. It is popularly believed. Business success, however, more often comes to individuals or teams that are able to do both, and turn ideas into reality. Mark Chong, Associate Professor of Corporate Communications, teamed up with serial entrepreneur Hugh Mason to explore how this can be done. Their book – Brainfruit: Turning Creativity into Cash from East to West – aims at giving creative people some understanding of business.

In fact, the authors call their book an essential travel guide – for anyone setting out to make a business out of their ideas. Organised into five sections – “From Ideas to Ideas Business”, “How money flows to creative people... or not”, ”Where do you want to go?”, “Meet the Money” and “The Ideas Ecosystem”, the reader is introduced to key business concepts, taught insights of the Ideas Business landscape, given tips on how to grow their businesses, and provided advice on the everyday aspects of running a business, so as to complete the winning partnership between business creativity and commercial practicality.

Brainfruit is packed with inspiring stories of people who have succeeded in turning creativity into a viable business. And rather than featuring business superstars, the authors have chosen ordinary people for these profiles. Insight exercises will also help readers understand themselves and the business potential of their ideas. Also noteworthy are the QR codes that can be found throughout the case studies, bringing readers to a wealth of additional content and references online.

Targeted at recent graduates of a creative course, people working in the creative business, and those who find themselves running a business (almost by accident), this book will help explain what their businesses may need to succeed!

A handy travel compendium, Brainfruit is available at all major bookstores in Singapore at S$29.00 (before GST), or online at skoob.com.sg and amazon.com. Who knows, the creative juices it stirs in your brain at the start of the journey may well bear fruit by the time you reach your destination.

Leading the dialogue with the Education Minister

SMU students demonstrated their well-known confidence and eloquence when they engaged Education Minister Heng Swee Keat in a two-and-a-half hour dialogue. The event, which was attended by some 300 students from SMU and the other universities, discussed issues ranging from social inequality to how graduates could best present themselves and enhance their value to potential employers.

The Minister advised that in order to achieve a meaningful career, students will also need an ability to adapt in a rapidly changing world and to collaborate across cultures.

The government had recently announced an expansion of the university sector and a number of undergraduates asked Minister Heng if creating more universities would result in the devaluation of their degrees. In reply, he explained that by having a “critical mass” of talent, Singapore is likely to attract more investors and thus create more jobs. “Quality begets quality and numbers multiply,” he added.

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Minister Heng said that he was concerned about the number of employers who had told him that Singaporean students lack drive and the confidence to venture out of their comfort zone. He said chief executives and entrepreneurs had singled these qualities out as being essential to succeed in the competitive global playing field.

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Education Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat (Centre) receiving his token of appreciation from SMU Apolitical President, Mohamed Irshad (R), with the moderator of the forum, Ryan Tan (L).

Education Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat sharing a light moment with SMU students.

Brainfruit: Turning Creativity into Cash from East to West
Hugh Mason and Mark Chong (SMU, 2011)
When US Trade Representative Ambassador Ron Kirk wanted to address the thought leaders and decision makers in Singapore’s business community on the future development of Asia-Pacific trade, his office approached SMU to partner them in this effort.

Professor Bryce Hool, Dean of the School of Economics, represented SMU to welcome Ambassador Ron Kirk, who is also a member of President Obama’s Cabinet and the President’s principal trade advisor, negotiator, and spokesperson on trade issues. Ambassador Kirk’s address focused not only on the Trans-Pacific Partnership – a leading element of US engagement on trade and investment in the region – but also on opportunities to promote and elevate Asia-Pacific economic forums as platforms for regional integration, and ways that Asia-Pacific models may foster multilateral trade successes. He also touched on emerging issues and trade frictions, and the dynamic US-China trade relationship.

Professor Hool then joined Ambassador Kirk on stage to invite questions from the audience. Business leaders from various companies and institutions in Singapore – including GlaxoSmithKline, Google, OCBC, GE Energy and the American Chamber of Commerce – stepped forward to ask a series of challenging questions.

The subsequent press conference, also held at SMU, was widely reported in the local and international media.

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Ambassador Ron Kirk, 26 April 2012

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Ambassador Ron Kirk, 26 April 2012
Professor De Meyer explained the distinction between management and leadership, saying that management is about coping with complexity, while leadership is about change. He also said that with increasing changes in internationalisation, leaders in politics and business need to operate in networks. “Rather than working from the top, now we get things done through a community of people,” he added. However, the wide availability of information also means that leaders today need to communicate their vision in a more persuasive and “seductive” way.

A panelist argued that whilst one can teach someone economics or political science, it is almost impossible to teach leadership. Professor De Meyer assured, “You can teach leadership. It’s like teaching someone to play the piano. You have to have talent, it doesn’t work without talent; but then it requires thousands of hours of practice. We need to give our students, political leaders and business leaders the opportunity to practise leadership,” he concluded.

A very successful episode, it achieved 2.5 times higher ratings than usual for the time slot, received over 17,000 page views online and was among the top three news and documentary programmes for the period January to mid-June 2012.

Perspectives is a discussion programme involving a panel of leading thinkers who discuss the impact of key global events on business and society. It is aired on Channel NewsAsia and is currently distributed through its affiliates in 24 countries and beamed to more than 34 million households across Asia and Australia, and is available for viewing globally on the channel’s website.

For more, scan this QR Code.