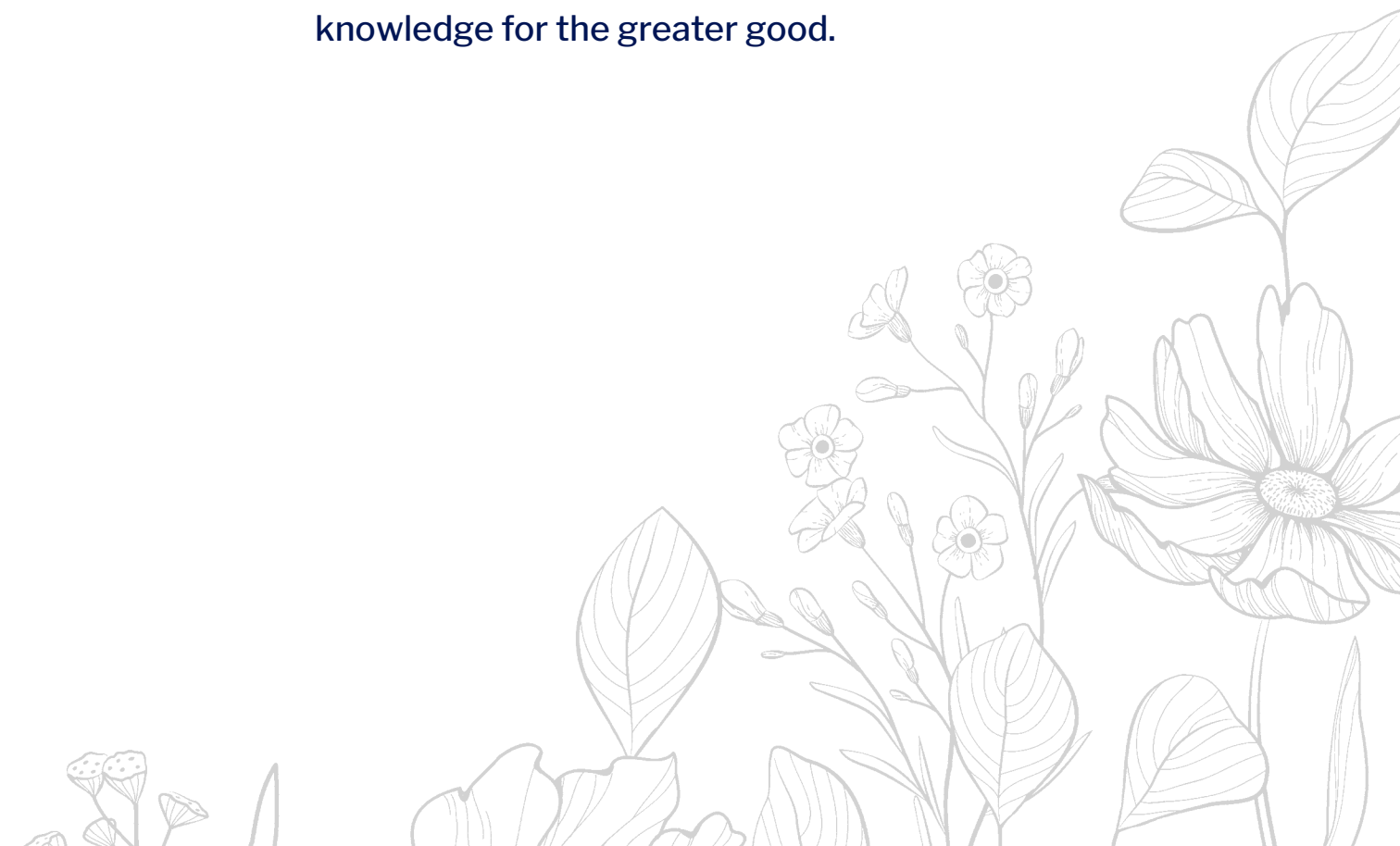


ADVANCING  
KNOWLEDGE,  
EMPOWERING  
CHANGE  
AGENTS,  
**SHAPING A  
BETTER WORLD**



This year, SMU research tackled urgent challenges of sustainability, ageing societies, and digital transformation, while collaborative projects with leading institutions delivered insights that can influence policy, transform industries, and improve lives. We continued to combine academic rigour with societal relevance to empower change agents – students, researchers, and partners – who can apply knowledge for the greater good.



# GLOBAL ACCOLADES FOR FACULTY MEMBERS



*SMU President Prof Lily Kong.*

## **Professor Lily Kong Elected Fellow of The British Academy**

SMU President Professor Lily Kong has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy, one of the world's highest honours in the humanities and social sciences.

She is recognised for her influential scholarship in social and cultural geography, urban research, and higher education leadership. Her work spans intercommunal relations, cultural policy, creative economies, and sustainable cities.

Each year, the Academy selects a small number of scholars worldwide whose work has had transformative impact. Professor Kong joins a distinguished global community dedicated to advancing knowledge, policy, and society through the humanities and social sciences.



*Prof Robert H. Deng.*

## **Professor Robert Deng elected as a Fellow of the Asia-Pacific Artificial Intelligence Association**

Professor Robert H. Deng, Professor of Computer Science and Deputy Dean of Faculty & Research, School of Computing and Information Systems, was elected as a Fellow of Asia-Pacific Artificial Intelligence Association (AAIA).

AAIA's main mission is to enhance the development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) by scientists in the field of AI and other fields around the world through academic research, academic exchanges, and science education, among many other activities. The organisation aims to build a broad AI industry to promote the development and application of AI in different fields of science and technology.



*Prof Kenneth Benoit,  
Dean of the School of Social Sciences.*

## **Professor Kenneth Benoit appointed to board of Social Science Research Council**

Professor Kenneth Benoit, Dean of the School of Social Sciences, was appointed as the board member of SSRC (Social Science Research Council), Singapore. Prof Benoit was also appointed as Chair of the SSRC's Ideas Festival 2026.

As Singapore progresses and matures as a nation, the social sciences and humanities grow increasingly important to enrich understanding of our society and issues such as ageing, social mobility, cultural diversity, quality of life, and regional and global challenges that affect Singapore. The SSRC was established in January 2016 to provide concerted direction and support for social science and humanities research, serving as a focal point for efforts to develop talent and strengthen social science and humanities research that benefits social and economic development in Singapore and the Asian region.



Prof Liandong Zhang.



Associate Prof Yun Lou.



Associate Prof Eugene Tan.

## SMU accounting professors earn prestigious recognition for ESG research

Dean of the School of Accountancy Professor Liandong Zhang and School of Accountancy Associate Dean (Research) Professor Yun Lou received Honourable Mention at the 2024 Moskowitz Prize, the premier global award in sustainable finance research, for their research on ESG ratings.

Their study, titled *Do Commercial Ties Influence ESG Ratings? Evidence from Moody's and S&P*, stands out for its rigorous empirical methods and its transformative potential to reshape real-world business and investment practices. The findings, which have already been referenced in regulatory proposals within the European Union, carry significant implications for regulators, investors, and the broader financial ecosystem.

This year's Honourable Mention underscores SMU's leadership in advancing sustainable finance and influencing global conversations on sustainability.



## Associate Professor Eugene Tan appointed as Singapore's representative to AICHR

Associate Professor of Law Eugene Tan has been appointed by the Government of Singapore as Singapore's Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) from 2025 to 2027.

The AICHR was inaugurated in 2009 as ASEAN's overarching institution responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. As an active member of AICHR, Singapore supports AICHR's efforts in enhancing cooperation on human rights issues among ASEAN member states, as well as external partners.



# IMPACTFUL RESEARCH

## Monitor breathing through your ears

SMU researchers have developed an innovative technology using in-ear microphones to monitor breathing modes. This innovation relies on the occlusion effect, which is the increased sensitivity or volume of sounds produced by the body when someone's ears are covered. Using earbuds, the ear canal can be blocked, enabling the sound waves to be trapped within the ear, thereby amplifying the low-frequency sound that the device can detect.

The breathing mode monitoring system, BreathPro, is developed by a team from SMU's School of Computing and Information Systems, with collaborators from the University of Cambridge. There is potential to apply this non-invasive, cost-effective and motion-resilient solution to monitor vital signs in daily life conditions.

## Community wellbeing improves via sustainable fashion initiatives

A study done by SMU Lien Centre for Social Innovation showed that redistribution of preloved clothing to the community can improve recipients' perceived wellbeing, happiness and sense of dignity.

This was the first-of-its-kind, data-driven study, conducted in



Beneficiaries selecting preloved UNIQLO clothing from NHN redistribution centre.

partnership with UNIQLO, showing tangible boosts in perceived confidence and community support among beneficiaries of UNIQLO's Neighbours Helping Neighbours (NHN) initiative, laying a firm foundation for scaling this model for social good.

This sustainable fashion initiative demonstrated the potential to create even more positive change for its beneficiaries and the wider community.

## New discovery on the role built and social environments have on ageing

A new study from SMU Centre for Research on Successful Ageing (ROSA) has revealed that physical infrastructure and social connections are essential for seniors to age in place. The findings provide important insights into how built and social environments can

foster a sense of attachment, social inclusion and identity for Singapore's growing demographic of older adults.

The study provides a deconstructed view of what makes ageing in place a palatable option for older adults, including infrastructure, amenities and social environments that can impact a sense of belonging, social inclusion, and place attachment. With these findings, relevant organisations and authorities can explore extensions of the concept of family beyond the home to the community for the ageing population.

## Gaps in policies and support services for ageing caregivers

New research from ROSA has found a growing group of older adults who are also caregivers. One in seven older adults provides care, yet many juggle

full-time jobs and their own health issues. The study brings attention to the need for workplace flexibility, health interventions and better access to caregiving support. With Singapore's population rapidly ageing, ROSA's research underscores the immediate need for policies that recognise and support older caregivers.

### **Evidence-based report on resolution mechanisms for cross-border disputes**

The SIDRA International Dispute Resolution Academy (SIDRA) at SMU Yong Pung How School of Law has delivered the SIDRA International Dispute Resolution Survey (SIDRA Survey) 2024 Final Report, which stands out as an evidence-based resource. This report is the result of a global study examining how users of dispute resolution mechanisms, such as businesses and their legal representatives, make decisions regarding the resolution of cross-border disputes.

Now in its third iteration since launching in 2018, the SIDRA Survey has expanded its scope significantly. It includes questionnaires in all six official United Nations languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, and Russian, and has gathered responses from 26 different countries. This year's Survey also incorporates new

sections specifically focused on intellectual property disputes and technology disputes.

The 2024 SIDRA Survey provides essential insights that will help navigate the evolving landscape of international dispute resolution, enhancing understanding and fostering positive changes in the pursuit of justice in commerce.

### **New initiative to advance tax research**

The Yong Pung How School of Law has received a grant from the Tax Academy of Singapore to establish the Singapore Tax Academy Research Initiative (STARI). This initiative will conduct high-quality research on taxation issues relevant locally and globally, while also enhancing Singapore's domestic tax research capabilities through specialised training for tax professionals. Additionally, the STARI Visiting Professorship will allow the tax community to learn from distinguished



(L-R) Prof Lee Pey Woan and Mr Dennis Lui at the signing of the agreement to establish the Singapore Tax Academy Research Initiative (STARI).

international tax academics, positioning Singapore as a leader in international taxation research.

### **ADB-IEA Innovative Policy Research Award**

Professor Tomoki Fujii and Associate Professor Christine Ho were awarded the ADB-IEA Innovative Policy Research Award by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Economic Association (IEA) for their research paper titled, *Information or Cash? Boosting Attendance and Social Outcomes at Low Cost in Rural Bangladesh*.

Their paper was one of the three best papers, out of over 150 papers covering a wide range of economic topics, selected for the Award.



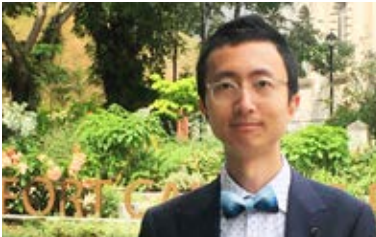
Prof Tomoki Fujii.



Prof Christine Ho.



# NOTABLE RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED



Associate Prof Wang Rencheng.

## **Corporate Environmental Performance, Human Capital, and Information Management**

School of Accountancy  
Associate Professor Wang Rencheng was awarded the Ministry of Education's Academic Research Fund Tier 2 for his project "*Corporate Environmental Performance, Human Capital, and Information Management*" to investigate how a firm's environmental performance impacts its approach toward human capital, including information management, employee retention, recruitment, and talent quality. Additionally, it aims to examine the potential negative externalities of corporate environmental incidents on the information environment in labour markets.



Prof Zhang Yichong.

## **Estimation and Inference with Many Weak Instruments and Controls**

Many economic studies seek to estimate the causal effect of a key variable on an outcome, but simple regressions often fail due to unobserved confounding factors. Instrumental variable (IV) regression helps address this issue by using instruments that affect the key variable but not the outcome directly. However, IV methods face several challenges: weak instruments, a large number of instruments and controls, and clustered data, all of which can impact the accuracy of inference. Previous research has addressed these issues separately, but School of Economics Professor

Zhang Yichong's project "*Estimation and Inference with Many Weak Instruments and Controls*", awarded with the Ministry of Education's Academic Research Fund Tier 2, aims to tackle them simultaneously, focusing on cases where many instruments have small but non-negligible effects rather than a few strong instruments. This work will enhance the reliability of IV regressions with complex data, improving causal inference in empirical studies.





Prof Winston Chow.

### **Enhancing Inclusive Global South Participation in the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body tasked with assessing climate science and informing policymakers about climate change, its impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation. College of Integrative Studies Professor Winston Chow, Co-Chair of Working Group II of the IPCC, is tasked to produce a report that focusses on climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerabilities. This Working Group also leads the effort for the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities (SRCities). Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) are critical actors in the preparation of the IPCC reports as the coordinate inputs from Lead Authors.

Their role is enabled by Chapter Scientists including managing references, enhancing coordination, and fostering inclusivity within diverse teams. Prof Chow's project "Enhancing Inclusive Global South Participation in the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities", supported through the Climate Adaptation & Resilience programme, will address these challenges by recruiting and strengthening the capacity of Chapter Scientists to support Global South CLAs involved in the preparation of SRCities. It aims to ensure effective participation and contributions of CLAs from the global South and enhance the inclusion of knowledge, evidence and perspectives from the Global South. The project will support Chapter Scientists in their role through training, peer networking opportunities, and equipping Chapter Scientists as knowledge brokers to support CLAs in disseminating IPCC findings effectively. This initiative bridges gaps in equity and representation, fostering a more balanced and inclusive assessment process that addresses priorities relevant to stakeholders in the Global South.



Prof Paulin Straughan.

### **Understanding the evolving nature and perceptions of work for Singapore Residents aged 53-78**

School of Social Sciences Professor Paulin Straughan has been awarded with a grant from SkillsFuture Singapore for her project "Understanding the evolving nature and perceptions of work for Singapore Residents aged 53-78". The research project aims to study the working preferences of older Singaporeans and understand their perceptions towards upskilling, reskilling and the types of employment that may be meaningful for them. The results from this research are expected to shed insights and inform the design of a jobs-skills-learning recommender, the SkillsFuture Career Transition Programme (SCTP) and other services and facilities catered to older adults' needs.



# NOTABLE RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED



Associate Prof Hannah Chang.

## **Advancing Consumer Behaviour Research through Generative AI and Large Language Models**

Consumer behaviour plays a critical role in shaping the economy, yet it is dynamically evolving and difficult to predict. Lee Kong Chian School of Business Associate Professor Hannah Chang was awarded the Ministry of Education's Academic Research Fund Tier 2 for her project "*Advancing Consumer Behaviour Research through Generative AI and Large Language Models*", which aims to leverage modern Large Language Models (such as ChatGPT) to augment scientific practices for causal inference. The project seeks to equip social scientists with cutting-edge AI-based toolkits to enhance the study of consumer behaviour in today's rapidly changing marketplaces, thereby improving understanding for researchers, businesses, and policymakers.



Prof Nadja Alexander.

## **Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy**

Yong Pung How School of Law Professor Nadja Alexander has been awarded with additional funding for the extension of the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy (SIDRA). A platform for thought leadership in international dispute resolution theory, practice and policy, SIDRA leads the way through projects, publications and events that promote dynamic and inclusive conversations on how to constructively engage with and resolve differences and disputes at global, regional and national levels. In particular, SIDRA differentiates itself through its focus on applied research that has practical impact on industry.



Prof Rajesh Balan.

**Accurate, Low Latency, client-side, Indoor Location without fingerprinting or knowledge of AP locations**

School of Computing and Information Systems Professor Rajesh Balan has been awarded

with a grant from the Smart Nation Group for his project “*Accurate, Low Latency, client-side, Indoor Location without fingerprinting or knowledge of AP locations*”. In this project, the problem being addressed is to provide an accurate, low-latency, minimal maintenance indoor localisation solution to locate organisational resources. Their goal is to achieve this without any form of Wi-Fi fingerprinting, without any knowledge of the location of the Wi-Fi Access Points (AP), and without the availability of any maps of the indoor spaces being used. The

team plans to achieve this by leveraging the new 802.11mc Wi-Fi Fine-Time Measurement standard in pure 1-sided mode that allows time-of-flight measurements to be made between a client device and any AP. These measurements will then be used with inertial data to jointly optimise both the location of the device and the location of the APs.

To amplify our impact, we continued to connect our talent and ideas with a global network of partners and communities dedicated to building a better future. These collaborations will enhance our capacity to tackle complex issues and drive meaningful change beyond academia.