Colleagues, Students

Friends of SMU

Wishing you all a very good afternoon.

A year has since passed since my 2011 State of University Address and what a difference a year makes!

I had shared with you our strategic goals and some new areas of emphasis and growth that are important in differentiating SMU in our journey from Institution-Building towards Reputation-Building. Today, I would like to give you an update of the progress made in three key areas – Education, Research, and Building Reputation and Internationalising the SMU Brand.

I would like to share with you the great momentum and success that have been achieved in our efforts.

1. EDUCATION
UNDERGRADUATE – INTENSE COMPETITION
We knew that it would not be all plain sailing when we went out to attract
the best and brightest students for our new undergraduate intake. There was intense competition from new players in the local university landscape. But it was through the SMU can-do spirit, let’s roll-up-our-sleeves attitude, and collaboration among the teams from the Admissions Office, Corporate Communications & Marketing, Finance, Vice Provost (Undergraduate), Facilities Management, Student Life, Registrar and our 6 Schools that we achieved the spectacular intake number of 1,930 students.

At our recent Convocation to welcome these freshmen, you would have seen these fine young men and women who, as we say, will be transformed over the next four years into confident, articulate individuals with soft skills, hard and heart skills.

But first let me share with you a video clip of the Freshmen Team Building Camp organised by SMU Students’ Association. I had a great time interacting with our students.

What great energy! Did you feel that? That’s the SMU team spirit!

On the topic of the SMU team spirit, our Corporate Communications & Marketing team led by Alan Goh together with some of our alumni, parents and employer partners launched a proactive branding exercise. They developed and launched our 2012 integrated Undergraduate Admissions Campaign to generate a high level of awareness of our SMU value proposition.

The Campaign employed a good mix of platforms of advertising in the print and on-line media augmented by the resourceful use of our SMU’s own communications channels to reach out to prospective students. And as a bonus, our Campaign won the silver prize in the SPH iink Awards for
its originality, creativity, innovative thinking and its ability to deploy traditional and new media to impact its audience.

CURRICULUM REVIEW
Last year, I spoke about how we would need to constantly review our curriculum so that our students can enjoy a distinctive holistic undergraduate education experience that is relevant, and for them to be future-ready. This new academic year, we launched

- Three exciting new second majors by the School of Social Sciences – International and Asian Studies which will take a multi-disciplinary approach to examining the role of Asia in the world;
  Public Policy and Public Management, Singapore’s first undergraduate public policy major; and
  Arts and Culture Management, to take advantage of the emerging Singapore Arts and Culture sector.

- New sport elective - Principles of Coaching in Sports -developed in collaboration with Singapore Sports Council as part of our MOU with SSC. Our other related plans are to develop a Lifeskills Centre to develop courses in sports-related skills, character building and community spirit development.

I am also pleased to add that just two weeks ago, we recognised several of our colleagues at this year’s Teaching Excellence Awards.

INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AND PEDAGOGY
At SMU, we value teaching excellence and take great pride in the quality of our faculty and the important role they play in making an impact in teaching and learning.

Hand-in-hand with excellent teaching is also the support from our Centre
for Teaching Excellence which promotes new forms of pedagogy.

Recently launched is a state-of-the-art Virtual Exhibition Site or VirTEx, an online virtual world that creates a stimulating and interactive learning hub for SMU faculty and staff to share and discuss their innovative teaching practices. Leveraging on strong 3D technology, the system enables users to be fully immersed into a 3D life-like experience with rich digital media assets including audio/video, text, animations and movies. Visitors can create an avatar and walk around rooms which showcase projects of our SMU faculty.

ALUMNI GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

As for the beneficiaries of our teaching, our graduating cohort this year is the largest with 1,929 undergraduate and postgraduate students graduating in eight separate ceremonies spread over three days. And as our SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping had commented, we had five-and-a-half times as many students graduating this year as there were at SMU's 1st Commencement in 2004 when we had about 300 students.

I am proud to add that our alumni have now grown to nearly 10,000 strong and many of them have ventured beyond the shores in search of professional excellence. We have grown our overseas chapters from a mere two in London and Dubai to 7 chapters today including Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and the US. In fact, with the strong presence of many SMU graduates in China, we will by the end of this year, have established alumni chapters in Shanghai and Beijing thus expanding the SMU global footprint.

More importantly, these chapters form an extensive and growing network and community for our alumni to engage with one another, and help promote the SMU spirit wherever they may be.
POSTGRADUATE – ACCELERATED GROWTH

The energy and momentum continued through as we worked hard on promoting our postgraduate professional programmes. It was perhaps a slow start to begin with so we set up the Office of Postgraduate Professional Programmes to give it a shot in the arm. And the results are telling.

In the last year, our numbers for postgraduate students have increased from 379 students to over 600 – registering a robust 60% increase. And within this year, we will cross the landmark number of 1,000 postgraduate students on our campus. It will be a momentous occasion for all to rejoice.

To-date, we have 18 masters and PhD programmes. Several of our programmes were borne out of foresight of what the industry needs, and we launched them expeditiously to gain a critical first-mover advantage.

You can see that we have achieved several Firsts.

First in Asia: our Master of Science in Innovation, Master of Science in Wealth Management, Master of IT in Business - Financial Services, and Master of IT in Business - Service Sector Analytics tracks.

First and only one in South-East Asia: our Master of Science in Communications

First in and only one in Singapore: our Juris Doctor Programme

First in Singapore: our Master of Professional Accounting Programme

Other programmes we launched this year include Masters in Quantitative
Finance, in Financial Economics, in Information Systems, and PhD in General Management.

We also graduated our pioneering Executive MBA class, a diverse class of senior executives including CEOs, COO, MDs, GMs, business directors, experts from various fields as well as entrepreneurs. This picture was taken at the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania, which was part of their global programme.

Our SMU EMBA has the most senior student class profile in the world with the current intake consisting of 68% C-suite executives. Such quality will help shape the SMU EMBA into a leading premium brand in Asia.

What PGPP has done has given us a lot of good cheer and confidence that our executive development and professional studies too can succeed with their plans.

2. RESEARCH
DYNAMIC RESEARCH CULTURE, ASIAN KNOWLEDGE HUB
Last year, I spoke of creating a stimulating and dynamic research culture that combines focused disciplinary research with opportunities for multi-disciplinary perspectives.

To create peaks of excellence for SMU, I asked that we focus on three Areas of Excellence (AoEs) – Financial Markets and Institutions; Analytics for Business, Consumer & Social Insight; and Innovation & Entrepreneurship have gained some traction.

In addition, I also gave ourselves a challenge - to become an Asian knowledge hub for research centred around the world of business and management.
We have shown the naysayers that we have the gumption and courage to carry this through. And many of our faculty have responded positively.

Our Lee Kong Chian School of Business is ranked 52nd worldwide and 3rd in Asia by University of Texas, Dallas. The ranking is based on the number of publications in 24 leading journals of major management disciplines from 2007-2011.

In addition, our School of Economics ranks 66th in the world and 3rd in Asia by the Tilburg University Top 100 Worldwide Economics Schools Research 2012. This represents a leap of 18 places from 84th position in 2011. The ranking is based on research contributions published in leading world economic journals between 2007 and 2011.

Internationally, SMU ranks in the top 10 for Econometrics which further strengthens our university’s overall ranking.

The research by our Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics has produced an early detection system for asset price bubbles and created two indices for Singapore, namely, the inflation expectations index in collaboration with Mastercard and the corporate governance index for the Securities Investors’ Association of Singapore. Asset bubbles and inflation are immensely important issues, and our research will be a valuable resource to Central Banks around the world in their policy-setting.

Our SMU Living Analytics Research Centre (also known as LARC) and Livelabs have made good progress in ramping up so that they can contribute significantly towards Singapore’s aspiration of becoming globally recognised as a hub for Consumer & Social Analytics.
LARC will be helping Singapore-based organisations gain competitive advantage so that they can grow domestically and internationally. It will also attract overseas firms to Singapore to test new concepts.

And to illustrate how others regard our research, let me give you a sense of how widely our SMU research publications have been referred to.

Here is a compilation of research publications put together by our Office of Research on SMU’s research excellence.

Our Library diligently keeps our SMU Institutionary Repository. I understand that some 9,600 of our research publications have been accessed more than 87,000 times worldwide in a period of just 1.5 years.

CASE WRITING
In addition, our Case Writing Initiative has made excellent progress within just 11 months.

We have completed some 28 cases offering Asian insights and perspectives including those for company training and executive development.

I am told that our cases were widely referred to with some 235 case downloads through SMU Publishing and purchases made by top business schools including Columbia University (US), ESSEC Business School (France) and ESADE (Spain). Also, there were 339 downloads through the European Case Clearing House in the first nine months when we started.

Research at SMU is unique because of our practice-driven research and research-driven practice. Indeed, thirty per cent of our faculty are on the
practice track. We do practice-relevant work that impacts education, industry and society,

On that note, I would like to say a big thank you to all our faculty who have kept their passion for research going. Many have worked very hard to publish high quality research.

And to honour our best researchers for 2012, we will be holding our research awards celebratory night in two weeks’ time.

3. BUILDING SMU REPUTATION AND INTERNATIONALISING THE SMU BRAND

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Just as our success in research and case writing contribute to building our academic reputation, so do our initiatives in thought leadership and organisation of conferences.

We hosted several key international conferences which brought top academics and industry players together for the exchange and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

We had at SMU, the Association of Asia-Pacific Business Schools Conference organised by Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Trajectories of Chinese Communities in South-East Asia by our School of Social Sciences, and the SMU-SOAR Accounting Symposium for international scholars and experts by our School of Accountancy.

Externally off-campus, the Wee Kim Wee Centre organised the American Creativity Association Conference International, and our Provost played a major role in the Pan-IIT Asia Pacific Conference.
We have hosted world renowned speakers such as Dan Breznitz and Ezra Vogel, and Paul Krugman will be paying us a visit later this year.

Our Institute of Service Excellence (ISES) continues to make an impact on raising Singapore’s service standards and in promoting a culture of service excellence. They launched the inaugural Singapore Service Excellence Medallion to recognise individuals and companies for their service excellence.

In helping to raise the profile of SMU, several of our faculty have also appeared on Channel NewsAsia’s primetime programme, Think Tank. I too represented SMU on CNA’s Perspectives programme twice.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS
In the last year, we made good progress in sealing several significant partnerships with institutions within two emerging powerhouses of India and China. These include partnerships with top universities and industry such as:

- University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) and Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE) for the full range of programmes
- Xiamen University and Huazhong University of Science and Technology for the Master of Science in Financial Economics
- Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore for joint research and publications with faculty, and provide support for joint projects in research centres at both institutions
- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur for joint academic programmes and research
- Bombay Stock Exchange Institute, Mumbai to conduct training, research and postgraduate certificate programmes
- Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) New Delhi to jointly design
and launch Management Development Programmes for Asian markets, and conduct joint applied research and case writing in International Trade and Business.

Here’s a picture of the IIFT MOU signing ceremony.

Some of our other notable partnerships include:

- **CASS Business School, City University London** for the Master of Science in Quantitative Finance, and also to organise faculty exchange
- **Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)** for collaboration in education, research and student and faculty exchanges
- **School of Accountancy with KPMG** for research on forensic data for fraud detection; and other collaborations with the **Singapore CFO Institute and the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority Singapore (ACRA)**

**STUDENT AS AMBASSADORS**

Our students are our ambassadors for they play their part in helping to build SMU’s reputation and internationalise the SMU brand. Many of them were successful in local and global competitions, which will be too numerous for me to mention.

Let me highlight three of them:

- Our Samba Masala received a rock-star welcome at their second appearance at the Coburg Samba Festival in Germany. This is the largest samba percussion gathering outside of Brazil. They also made it to the front pages of two German newspapers and two TV programmes.
• Our SMU Salsa Club, Caderas Latinas won top prize in the Latin Dance Category of Dance Grand Prix Italia. They competed against 50 international groups and dance schools including the traditional powerhouses of USA, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Africa. Besides the top prize, they also won the Best Performance Award across all categories of dance.

Let me share with you a video of their performances.

(video screening)

• And over this exciting F1 weekend, our SMU Sailing Team is organising the inaugural Asia Pacific Student Cup, which is currently taking place. This first-ever tertiary-level keelboat sailing competition, comprising 11 teams from China, India, Australia, Thailand and Singapore, will be competing in the heart of the city, Marina Bay. We wish our team success and also for the other teams in good sporting spirit!

FINANCIAL STRENGTH TO SUSTAIN GROWTH AND INNOVATION
All our various efforts and initiatives would not have been possible but for the great generosity of our donors and supporters. To-date, we have firm commitments close to $18.5m, with gifts for:

• A one-stop career development centre that simulates the corporate world was launched just two days ago. It is now known as the Dato’ Kho Hui Meng Career Centre, named after its donor. It is a state-of-the-art facility that promises to be a successful top-notch career planning and development facility. Here is a photo of our launch with Dato’ Kho.

• And just yesterday evening, we launched the UOB-SMU Asian
Enterprise Institute for business consulting, research and knowledge creation to serve the needs of SMEs. This was made possible because of the donation from UOB and their customers who are SMEs. Together the donation with matching funds totaled some $10m.

You can almost feel the energy and pulse of SMU with many new exciting initiatives being rolled out.

Support for our university also comes from our stewardship of more than 600 donors who support in many different ways with gifts close to $8m in the first quarter of this financial year.

**ENDORSEMENT & ACCREDITATION**

**ACCSB and EQUIS**

Just last December, SMU was awarded the European Quality Improvement System accreditation, making our university and business school the youngest to be awarded both AACSB and EQUIS accreditation. It is a testament to the university's reputation, resources, quality and global standing.

**QAFU**

In my last address, I had mentioned to you that we would be going through the Quality Assurance Framework for Universities (also known as QAFU) validation exercise. I had asked for your fullest cooperation as some of you would have been selected for interviews with the External Review Panel, and the results of the exercise would determine the level of resources we might have available in the coming years for new projects and innovation.

I am pleased to give you an update that SMU did very well in the review. In fact, we were commended by the QAFU Panel for our continued progress
in many areas including (i) engaging industry experts in University governance and guidance; (ii) strategic plan with focused areas that were good fit for University; (iii) efficient and effective resource allocation; (iv) our 3-track system for faculty; (v) innovative pedagogy and (vi) active development of collaborations.

There was only one highly recommended action by QAFU. This was to refresh our IT infrastructure for teaching and research for which we received project funding from MOE.

**OUR FUTURE: MAKING A GREATER IMPACT**

As we forge ahead in working towards realising our strategic goals, I would like us to think about how we can make a greater impact.

Impact occurs when we have foresight and fill a gap even before it is identified. When we talk about the future, we need to emphasise the virtuous cycle connecting research, teaching and practice. They are interconnected, iterative and feed one another to generate new knowledge and ideas.

This knowledge contributes to the holistic and relevant education and learning that we provide at SMU.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

A hallmark and another part of the learning at SMU is the community service that our students do both locally and overseas. In 2011, close to 4,500 SMU students were involved in some community service endeavours. Two thirds were involved in local projects, one third involved in about 180 overseas projects in 20 countries across Asia and Africa. Their reward? A good heart and character that will stand them in good stead long after they have left school.
OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES
Just as important is the overseas exposure that our students enjoy. In the last 12 months, about 77% of our students went overseas on various programmes. We are working towards increasing the participation rate to 100%, and have recently approved a change for study missions to be open to all schools.

CONTINUAL CURRICULUM REVIEW
Just as SMU is well-regarded for its innovative curriculum, we are continually making adjustments and refreshing our modules and electives. We cannot afford to compromise the quality of our offerings and should ensure that they always help address market needs.

In fact, about 70% of our students have chosen to take a double degree or second major. No other university in Singapore can match SMU’s capacity to offer these options.

LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
Also unique to SMU is this very strong approach to learning beyond the classroom through our Student Life events and activities. I recently went to Vivace, the recruitment fair for SMU’s 150 student clubs and was really amazed to see how entrepreneurial our students were. It was like a raw free market, buzzing with activity.

We are looking into ways, like this, to recognize learning beyond the classroom. It is a ‘work in progress’, so stay tuned.

Our momentum continues onwards and upwards.
POSTGRADUATE
From our 18 Masters and PhD programmes, we will increase, by the end of this academic year (AY2012/2013), to 22 programmes.

We will embark on a university-wide growth plan for Postgraduate Programmes & Executive Development. Key programmes will be aligned to our Areas of Excellence with more multi-disciplinary content and international learning opportunities. Greater emphasis will also be placed on enriching postgraduate student life and providing them with dedicated career services.

SMU CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN RESEARCH
As mentioned earlier, research is the other key pillar in a university. Research and case writing can provide new knowledge and enrich our undergraduate, postgraduate and executive development programmes.

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH
In July this year, MOE’s International Academic Advisory Panel announced their support for plans to develop talent and research in the social sciences and humanities, so as to serve Singapore’s future social and economic development. The Panel cited several areas on which Singapore could tap to create niches of research excellence. These include:

• Asian societies and markets
• Management of multi-ethnic social compacts
• Challenges and opportunities facing cities, especially global cities and
• Comparative studies of governance models and practices

The Panel also recommended the establishment of a Research Council that focuses on the social sciences and humanities. It is thus timely that
we position SMU to attract this national funding for we have the talent and expertise to address many of these areas, and we can play an important role in contributing to Singapore’s success.

We know that much of ground-breaking research occurs at the intersections of disciplines. Thus building multi-disciplinary collaborations will continue to enable our community to make the greatest impact.

Through the collaboration of our Schools – LKCSB, Economics, Law, Information Systems and Social Sciences – SMU is in a perfect situation to help address the mentioned areas and several others such as social problems related to income disparity, environmental and sustainability issues, and issues related to a growing ageing population.

Our society needs to find solutions to deal with these issues, and social sciences and humanities research can help to find the much-needed solutions.

To give an example, in the case of ageing, social sciences can help us understand the new societal changes, sociological, psychological and behavioural changes related to ageing.

Government policies need to be adjusted accordingly to solve these new problems. New business opportunities for the private sector might also evolve along the way.

The issues of sustainability and income disparity will also be faced by Singaporeans and thus it is important to develop research that is use-inspired and driven by the needs of society.
A GREATER SENSE OF COMMUNITY

For coordination and collaboration to occur at a large scale across several aspects of our university, we need to have a refinement of mindset, from silos and shorter-term goals to “SMU-first” and a mix of short-term goals and long-term capacity, and culture building.

We need everyone in our 8,000 strong campus community to think of themselves as not only a stakeholder but also an owner of SMU. Owners are enablers and facilitators. When everyone takes ownership, our university will be transformed into a community that supports one another in our quest for excellence.

There are many amongst our faculty and staff who have taken ownership and are also collaborating and working as a community in realising various projects and initiatives.

Some examples include our inter-department team comprising Integrated Information Technology Services, Corporate Communications & Marketing, Schools, Research Centres and Institutes, and Offices who worked collaboratively for the launch of the NextWeb project.

Another example of great collaborative effort is the team comprising Finance, Corporate Communications & Marketing, Campus Development, and students who worked on setting up The SMU Shop.

These are both firsts for SMU.

Both were gruelling projects with few takers. But through the ownership and collaborative efforts of these teams, both projects were successfully launched and off to a good start.
I would like to urge that we promote this “want something, do something” spirit that will transcend the organisation.

2012 EMPLOYMENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEY
We have just received the results of the 2012 Employee Engagement Survey. We haven’t done too badly, but we are not excellent. I can tell you that we have challenges and opportunities in the areas of enablement, engagement, and training and development.

The Heads of Departments (HODs) will be briefed on the action plans, and I would urge you to work with your respective HOD in the coming weeks on what and how to improve the level of employee engagement. Already, we are implementing the Management Development Programme for middle management staff to equip them with essential and effective management and leadership skills.

BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL VITALITY
- NEW INITIATIVES AT SMU
1. CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICE
As a university that values practice conscious/relevant research, it is important that we translate research so that we can engage industry and build a faculty of distinction. We can only be successful if we have a well-run university so we will be launching several initiatives.

We will be investing in our faculty through the Centre for Management Practice. The Centre will work on faculty development and coaching management. It will also create opportunities for our faculty to translate their research through case writing and opinion editorial articles for key media. In addition, our faculty will be involved in corporate engagement.
2. ENHANCING OPERATIONAL STRENGTH

To enhance our operational strength, and improve operations and service orientation, we have identified three drivers of operations excellence:

- Business Process Improvement Programme or Six Sigma Initiative is to equip our people with the skills to pursue better productivity, efficiency and innovation.

- Responsibility Centre Accounting will improve quality and productivity through increase of transparency of the consumption of resources, budgets, physical facilities and information systems.

- Management Development Programme, a dedicated talent development programme for middle management staff to become more effective leaders and change agents.

If we are successful in installing such foundational strength, then I think SMU is an institution that is built to last.

3. BUILDING GLOBAL ALLIANCES

I would like to give you a peak into our future partnerships. As our university has moved into the reputation building phase, it is critical for us to build global partnerships and alliances with like-minded reputable universities so as to leverage on complementary strengths.

We have worked in this direction and an example I would like to cite is the THEMIS Undergraduate Law Consortium with ESADE (Spain), Freie Universitat (Germany), Universite Paris Est Creteil Val De Marne (France) and Maastricht Law School (The Netherlands).

When we become part of a global consortium with strong university partners, there is great potential for us to work on new education, research
and exchange programmes that have no geographical boundaries.

**CLOSING**

In closing, I would like to say that I am delighted to note that we have many exciting programmes and initiatives. If we adopt the “want something, do something” mindset, there are no obstacles and challenges that we cannot surmount.

Let’s shape our future together!