

Inaugural Address  
SMU President Professor Lily Kong  
12 February 2019

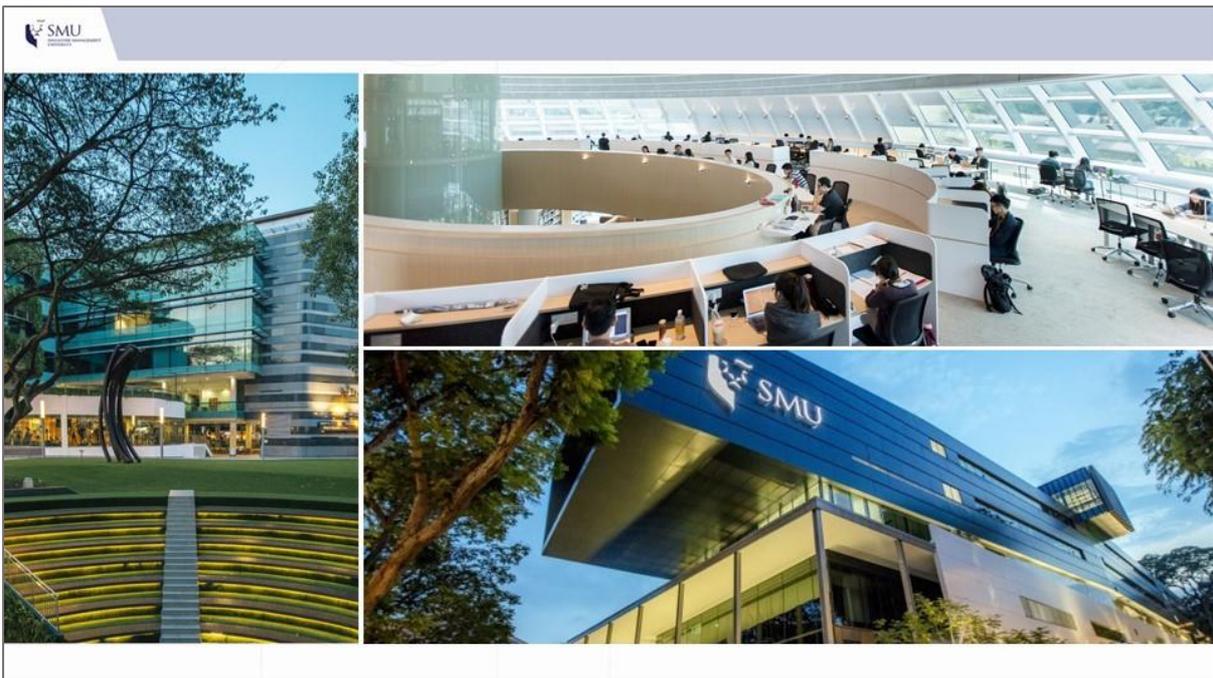


Acknowledging the pioneers, learning from history

1. A very good morning to everyone. Let me begin by saying how deeply honoured I am to be appointed SMU's fifth president. As I begin my journey in this role, I am reminded of two aphorisms from different traditions.
2. The first is a Chinese idiom, which literally means, "When you drink water, think of the source" – freely translated as "When you drink the water, remember with thanks those who dug the well." For those of you who understand Chinese, the words are "ying2 shui3 si1 yuan2".



3. And so, I would like to acknowledge all those who were leaders and pioneers in the establishment of this unique institution. Here on the screen are some who have made the journey from the beginning, some of whom are still active leaders and working shoulder to shoulder with us in the University. I acknowledge too our past Presidents, who have carried the mantle before me.



4. With their efforts, we have an SMU today that we are proud of, not just in terms of the wonderful facilities we have, but also in terms of the timely, rigorous and relevant programmes we run, the research and thought leadership we provide, and the lively community of students, alumni, faculty and staff.
  
5. As we remember to thank those who dug the wells before us, there is a second aphorism I wish to draw on, from George Santayana, the Spanish-born American writer and philosopher, who once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."
  
6. I share this not as an indictment of what has gone before – not at all – but as a reminder that we learn through experience: positive experiences and difficult experiences, a reminder of what we should reprise and what we should not do again.
  
7. So as we look ahead towards SMU's third decade, we honour the source of our water, and we remember the past, in order that we might forge ahead in a world of higher education that is now very different from that in the year 2000 when we first began. So what is that world today?

## Environmental scanning: the changed and changing world of higher education

The image displays a collage of university ranking logos and data tables. The logos include QS World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities, Best Colleges US News Rankings, THE World University Rankings, and FT.com Global MBA Ranking 2019. The data tables show top universities like MIT, Stanford, and Harvard, along with a 'World rankings - Asia' table.

2019	2018	Worldwide Name	Country
1	1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	United States
2	2	Stanford University	United States
3	3	Harvard University	United States
4	4	California Institute of Technology (Caltech)	United States
5	6	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
6	5	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
7	7	ETH Zurich (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule)	Switzerland
8	8	Imperial College London	United Kingdom
9	9	University of Chicago	United States
10	7	UCL University College London	United Kingdom
11	15	National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore
12	13	Nanyang Technological University (NTU)	Singapore
13	12	Princeton University	United States
14	14	Cornell University	United States
15	16	Yale University	United States

Rank	University	Score	World Score	Regional Score
1	The University of Tokyo	94.4	94.4	94.4
2	National University of Singapore	93.8	93.8	93.8
3	The University of Hong Kong	93.2	93.2	93.2
4	Public National University	92.6	92.6	92.6
5	Peking University	92.0	92.0	92.0
6	Tsinghua University	91.4	91.4	91.4
7	Nankai University	90.8	90.8	90.8
8	University of Science and Technology of China	90.2	90.2	90.2
9	East China Normal University	89.6	89.6	89.6
10	Harbin Institute of Technology	89.0	89.0	89.0

### What is the new world of global and local higher education?

- Technological change and the world of new jobs
- Technological change and new modes of delivery
- Market change and new competition for universities
- Demographic change and new student profiles
- Economic change and new corporate universities
- The rise of Asia and new competition for jobs
- The expectations of universities and trade-offs that are made
- The proliferation of university rankings

8. Let us begin with an environment scan. The world of global higher education is a lot more complex and challenging today than it was 19 years ago.

9. One of the factors that has dramatically altered the world of higher education, is technological change.

10. **Technological change** means that new jobs are being created very rapidly. How often have we heard that many of the jobs today did not exist five years ago? And in 5, 10 and 15 years' time, there will be many, many new jobs that have not yet been created. Universities need to prepare students for jobs that do not exist now. How are we to do that?

11. Technological change also means that we now need to compete with new forms of educational delivery, such as Massive Open Online Courses (**MOOCs**). Some early observers went so far as to suggest that MOOCs will put universities out of business. Evidence suggests this is not likely. Time will tell. There are also other options such as microMasters programmes, enabled by technology, which MIT has pioneered.

Online learners from anywhere in the world can take courses on edX, the MOOC platform that MIT and Harvard developed in 2012. Learners who pass an integrated set of MITx graduate-level courses on edX, and one or more proctored exams, will earn a MicroMasters credential from MITx, and can then apply for an accelerated, on campus, master's degree program at MIT or other top universities. This has been called 'inverted admission'.

12. These are new modes of delivery that universities need to be cognizant of and respond to. And so we have developed our strategy for technology-enhanced learning that not only recognises the new world but also speaks to our own DNA. I have elaborated on this in the preceding few months as the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Undergraduate Education were shared and adopted.
13. Third, the new world of global higher education has also witnessed **market changes**. Universities are facing new competition, as new universities and campuses are established around the world as well as right here in Singapore. Universities such as New York University have established themselves beyond the Big Apple, including in Shanghai and Abu Dhabi, attracting students from all around the world. Nottingham, Monash, Carnegie Mellon and others, all have branch campuses in different parts of the world.
14. There is KAUST - King Abdullah University of Science and Technology – that has been established with deep resources, in the Middle East.
15. Right here in Singapore, since the time we were established in the year 2000, new universities and colleges have come up, including SUTD, SIT, SUSS and Yale NUS College. So the competition amongst universities has intensified, and we must continue to keep our distinctiveness as a university.
16. During this period, **demographic change** has also taken place. In many parts of the developed world, there is an ageing population and more older students are going back to university after having worked for a period of time, to learn new skills and

knowledge. Universities therefore now have students with quite different profiles than the traditional 18-24 year olds that we had as our mainstay in the year 2000. The emergence of the non-traditional student is a phenomenon in many parts of the world, and will become increasingly apparent in Singapore. We will need to adapt to that, developing different offerings and growing our andragogical approaches.

17. **Economic change** is rapid. Structural changes are taking place, so much so that demands for different and new skillsets have sometimes led corporations to feel that universities are not doing enough to meet their needs, or not quickly enough. As a result, they have taken education and training into their own hands and established corporate universities, such as Apple, Boeing, Disney and Motorola. This is not new, but could intensify. How should we work with industry to ensure relevance and timeliness in what we do?
  
18. Still further changes have come with **the rise of Asia**. How often have we heard this called “the Asian century”? The growth of Asia has led to a greater need for a more highly educated workforce, and coupled with aspirations for social mobility, have led to a greater demand for access to higher education. This has led to the massification or a growth in the provision of higher education in this part of the world, not least in China. As a result, there has been a staggering growth in the number of graduates and resultant competition among graduates, who increasingly have to compete for jobs globally, or at least regionally. Our students graduate to that world of competition. We must prepare them for the world of cross-border mobility, competition and work.
  
19. At the same time, **the expectations of universities** have grown. Universities have instrumental roles to play. The university I went to as an undergraduate was principally about manpower training, graduating the workforce for the country. Today, universities are also expected to provide upskilling and reskilling for older workers. At the same time, universities are to be the sources of long-term research, as well as the drivers of innovation and national competitiveness.

20. Besides these quite instrumental roles, it is also important to recognise the normative role of higher education; are we building better citizens, and more resilient societies? Are universities a ladder of social mobility?
21. So the expectations of universities have grown over time. Can these competing roles be pursued without collateral damage? How do we balance the pursuit of research with the demands for high quality education? How do we contribute to the development of young men and women who will be concerned citizens, while enabling them to be economically contributing ones? How do we ensure that research breaks new ground in the world of intellectual thought while making meaningful impact on economy, society and polity?
22. The different expectations of universities today are indeed very real and they can pull us in different directions. We need to make strategic decisions, as no one institution can be all things to all people. We also need to leverage the different strengths of colleagues, recognising and celebrating different contributions of myriad groups on campus, and ensure that our recognition and reward system does not take a one-size-fits-all approach.
23. One last point about the new world of local and global higher education. This is the **proliferation of rankings**. There are some good things that come out of rankings. They force us to look at ourselves, at what we're doing, how well we're doing, who our competitors are. But at the same time there are well-known arguments that the rankings are imperfect measures, as they are oftentimes uni-dimensional, reductionistic and do not provide a good basis on which universities are to pin our strategy and activities. We need to offer complementary narratives so that we can hold fast to what we believe in, the pressures of rankings notwithstanding.
24. So, we are now at the threshold of our third decade, facing quite a different world than in 2000, or even in 2010. The best lesson we can learn from the past, from our founders, is the pioneering spirit that they had. It does not matter what age we are as a university – that spirit of being pioneers is what will ensure that we thrive.

SMU: towards the third decade

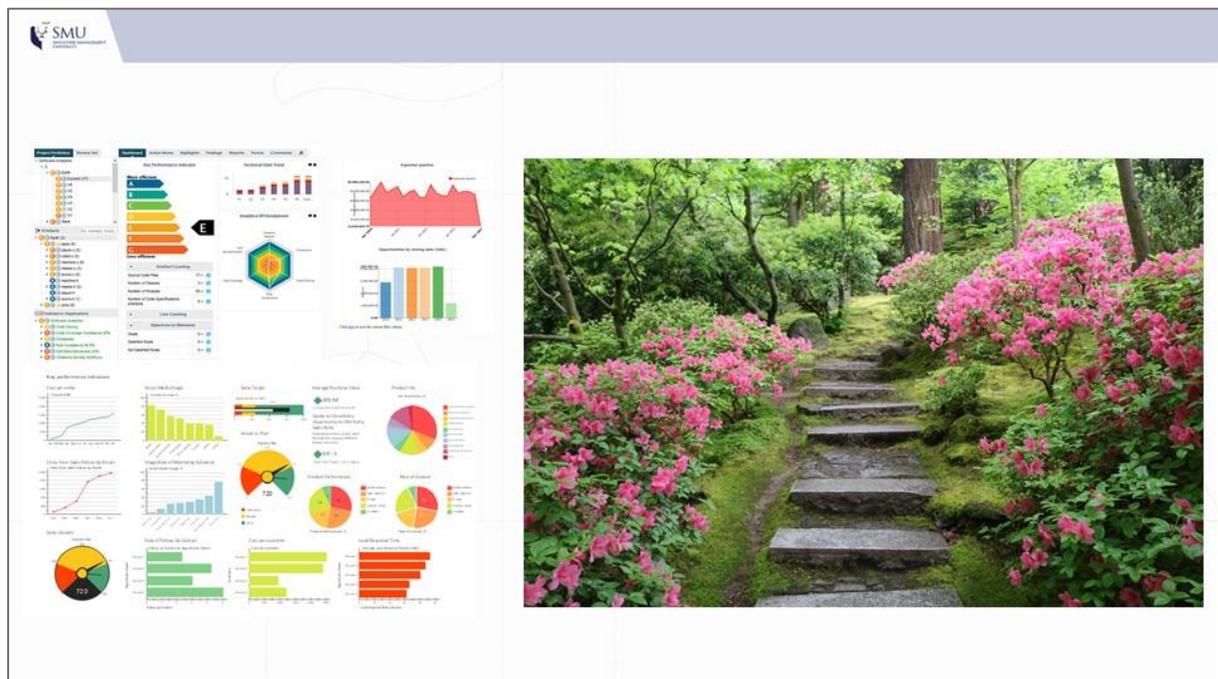


25. There are three key sets of questions I would like to address from this point on. The first is: What do we want to achieve and why is this important? The second is: How will we get there and what might get in the way? The third is: who is going to make change happen and who will support them?

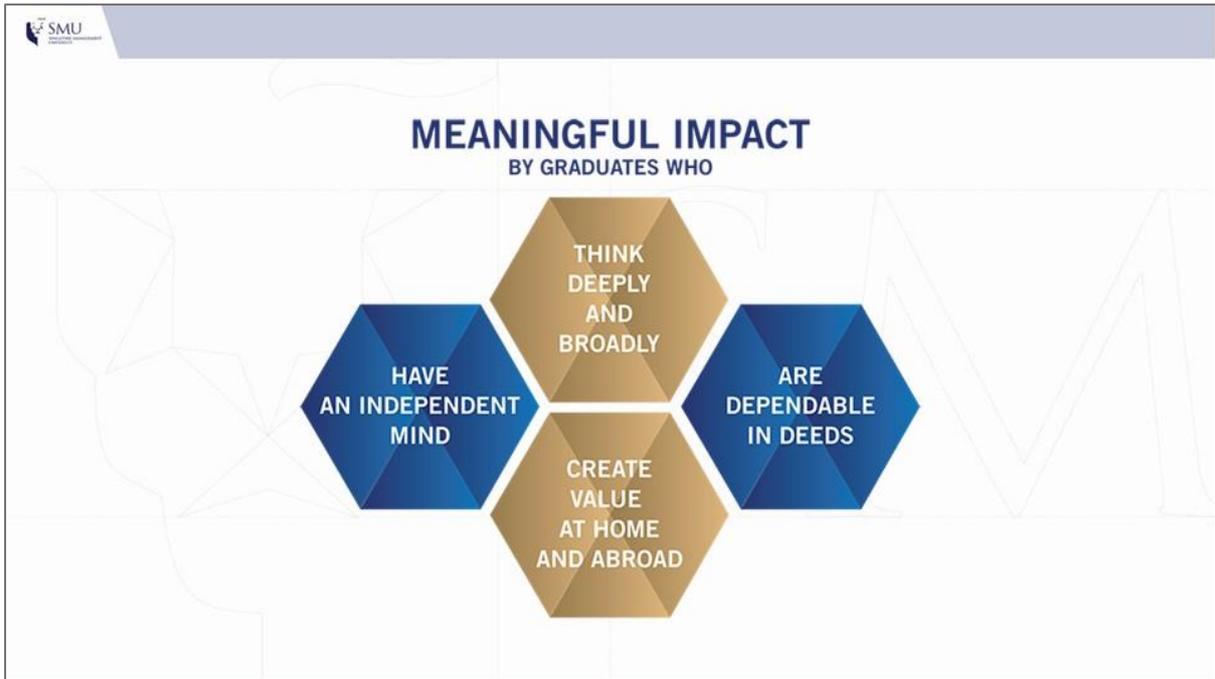


26. First, what do we want to achieve and why is this important? Let me phrase the question in a different way: what is our garden and what is our journey of purpose?

Our vision, the garden



27. We could turn that garden into KPIs as many organisations do, and we do too. And it is important to have a set of performance indicators that we are keeping an eye on to ensure that we are on track. But I want to emphasise that even while we break up what we are trying to do into KPIs and metrics, let us not forget our vision of the garden we are trying to nurture and cultivate, because not everything that can be easily measured is important, and not everything that is important can be easily measured.



28. What is that garden? In education, we want to have graduates who are able to bring meaningful impact upon the world, whatever world it is that they occupy – whether it is the private, public, or people sector. This is a graphic that will be familiar to you. It is something that was developed through the Blue Ribbon Commission for Undergraduate Education last year. We want graduates who are able to think deeply and broadly, and at the same time, act to create value at home and abroad; have an independent mind and at the same time are collaborative and dependable in deeds. This is the garden: well tended so that the graduates are meaningful contributors to the world.

29. And we are not starting fallow. We already have graduates who have made and continue to make meaningful impact.

*Making meaningful impact*



30. **Mohamad Irshad (BBM 2014)** – who founded Roses of Peace, a non-profit interfaith peace movement at SMU. He is now a Nominated Member of Parliament propounding religious harmony and inter-religious relations.

31. **Shereen Williams (BAcc 2005)** – who works in Wales on regional community relations and in her spare time works to support victims of forced marriages in Muslim communities. In 2017, she was made an honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). She credited the broad exposure at SMU for her ability to work with politicians, community leaders and the underprivileged alike.

32. **Tengku Suzana Tengku Abdul Kadir (BBM 2013)** set up travel portal “Have Halal, Will Travel” to help fellow Muslims find halal food and prayer places while travelling. The portal attracts 600,000 unique visitors every month.

33. **Jeff Tung (BBM 2013)**, founder and CEO of Sheng Ye Financial Group, an entrepreneur who saw the potential of fintech and applied it in supply-chain financial services. In Year 3, he went on exchange to Shanghai Jiaotong and saw the huge potential in China. He now operates in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Tianjin. He is also a generous donor to SMU.

34. **Chew Kok Soon (Spec Dip International Trading, PCP, 2017)**, an example of the non-traditional student I referred to earlier, was laid off as data analyst in the finance industry. He sought to retrain through our International Trading Professional Conversion Programme. He now works at Luxasia, where he is a Senior Supply Chain Analyst, and valued by his new employer.

35. **Alvin Poh (BSc (ISM), 2010)**, Co-Founder and former CEO of Vodien, Singapore's leading cloud hosting provider, drawing on his education in SIS. Vodien merged with an Australian firm, Dreamscape, in July 2017. He too has given back to SMU through a scholarship for needy students.

36. So we have graduates whom we have impacted in positive ways and who are in turn making meaningful impact beyond the university. They are the seedlings in our garden that we can be proud of having nurtured, and who have bloomed and borne fruit.



37. The challenge I set before us is this: for every single graduate from this University, what is their story, what is their part in the garden, how are they contributing, what have we nurtured that they in turn contribute?



38. And so I turn to faculty and staff, the work that they do, the research that they deliver, and what makes meaningful impact. What is their role in our garden?

39. I cite the example of research conducted by **Prof David Chan** and **Prof Benedict Koh**, from Psychology and Finance respectively. They have studied how monthly matched savings schemes can be made more effective to help elderly women from low income households save for their retirement. They used an experimental design and longitudinal tracking to assess how different factors of a matched savings scheme affect women's decisions to save regularly. The results have contributed not only to scientific knowledge, but are also practically important. I understand that the study's insights and recommendations are being used as important inputs to the ongoing development of policies and programmes.

40. Similarly, the work of **Prof Bryce Hool**, **Prof Jun Yu** and several others at the Centre for Research into the Economics of Ageing (CREA) demonstrate the twin impact on

scientific knowledge and policy making. CREA has been running the world's largest longitudinal high frequency survey on ageing adults. This ongoing survey, the Singapore Life Panel (SLP), collects valuable data from more than 10,000 individuals on a monthly basis. The SLP covers topics on health, wealth, employment, consumption and many others that influence retirement decisions. CREA uses these valuable data to provide insight into the situation of ageing Singaporeans and produce analyses to inform policy making. While the scientific econometrics work is being led by Jun, Bryce has worked tirelessly to keep the data collection going, and engaging public and private sector agencies to translate the research findings into ways to improve the lives of Singaporeans.

41. **Lee Pey Woan**, School of Law, was appointed amicus curiae to Singapore Court of Appeal in 2016, as have several others in the School of Law. An amicus curiae is literally a "friend of the court" who is not a party to a case but assists by offering information, expertise, or insight that has a bearing on the issues in the case. She, and other colleagues in the School of Law, are thus making direct contributions to the exercise of justice in Singapore.
42. **Annie Koh** – Academic Director, Business Families Institute. Annie has led three surveys published by BFI in partnership with Deloitte Southeast Asia on succession planning in family businesses, which identified the opportunities and challenges facing family businesses in Asia, and the factors that contribute to their sustainability in the long-run.
43. **Neeta Lachmandas** – Director, Institute of Service Excellence. She has been working to raise service levels in Singapore through benchmarking and comparative analysis, research and thought leadership, and industry engagement. The Institute's Quarterly Consumer Service Index is eagerly anticipated and followed by the industries surveyed for the insights it delivers.
44. **Asst Prof Akshat Kumar** – School of Information Systems. He has been named one of "AI's 10 to Watch", according to the IEEE Intelligent Systems Magazine. He has been

working on automated planning and decision making in multiagent systems, with a focus on agent-based systems, including autonomous entities such as self-driving cars and autonomous ships, and the effects of their behaviour on the environment.

45. **Ada Chung** – Head of Mrs Wong Kwok Leong Student Wellness Centre. She and her team were credited by alumnus Nicholas Patrick for saving his life through timely support when he was contemplating suicide as a student.

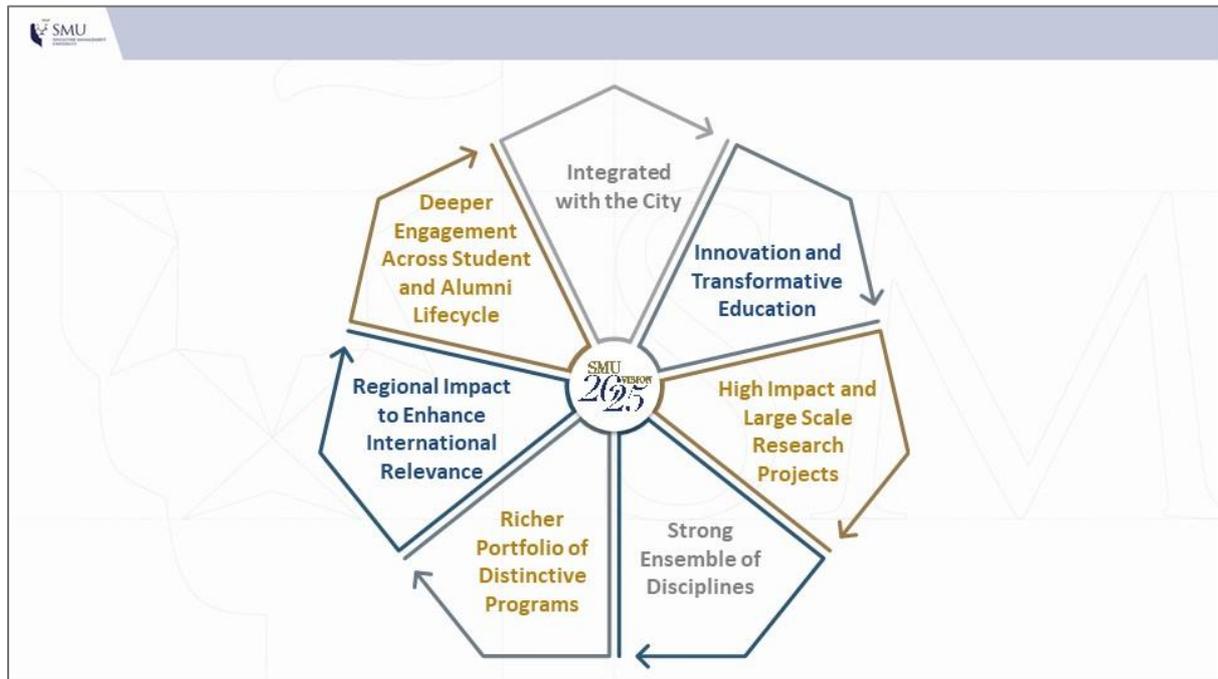
46. **Rosie Ching** - Senior Lecturer of Statistics, known for using impactful teaching methods. She has won numerous awards including from Wharton-QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) Stars Reimagine Education Awards, 2017. Recently 175 of Rosie's students taking the Statistics module went all over Singapore to conduct a survey on Singaporeans' perceptions, knowledge and attitude towards breast cancer, and learned to use statistical methods to analyse the results. As SMU moves to introduce the rank of Principal Lecturer for the lecturer track, it is to recognise the outstanding work of colleagues such as Rosie.



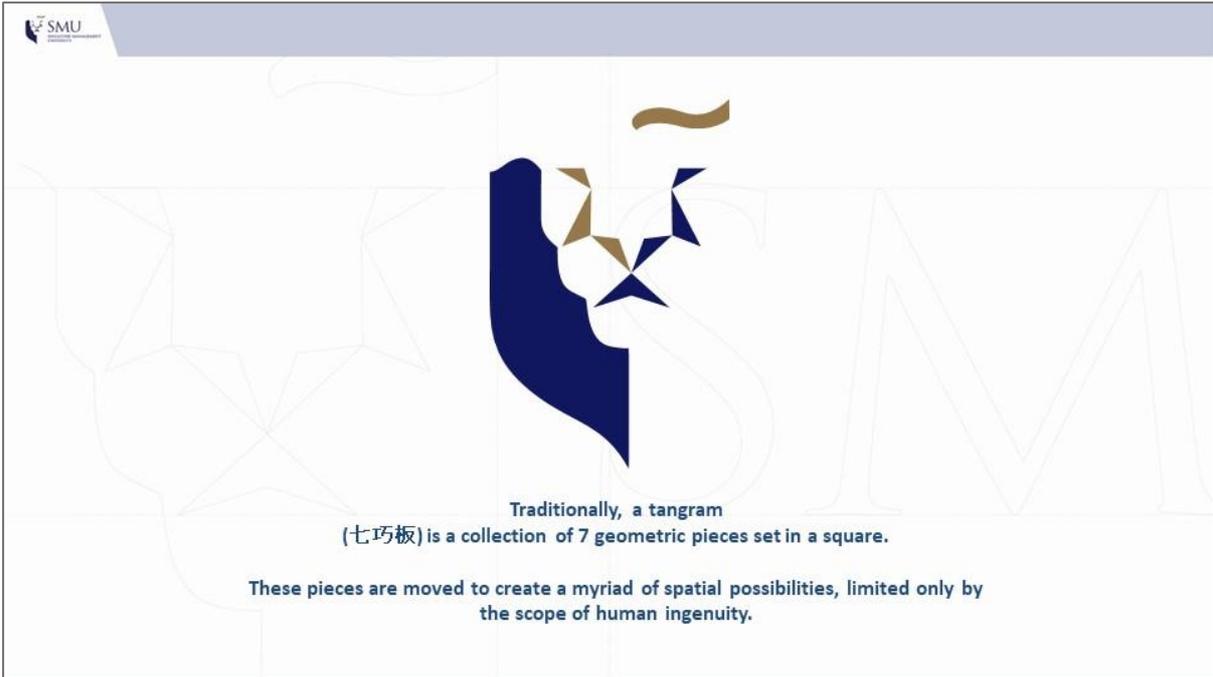
47. How would each and every one of us, whether faculty or staff, make meaningful impact through the work that we do? Whether it's through influencing and nurturing

students or taking our expertise out into the world through our research, how are we contributing to the vision of our garden?

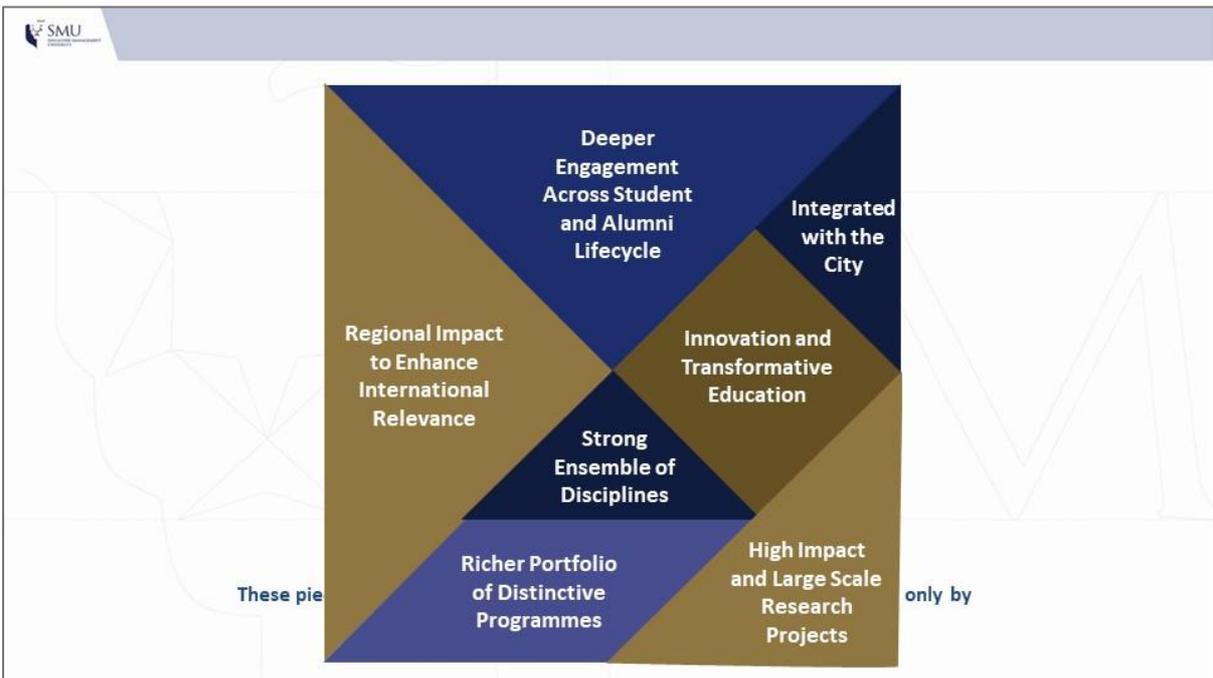
*Cultivating our garden for the next phase*



48. If making a meaningful impact is what we want to do, how have we gone about doing it? We have articulated Vision 2025 in terms of the seven building blocks you see here. And immediate past President Arnoud de Meyer has shared with us in his last State of the University Address how far we have come on each of these fronts. We can be justly pleased with our collective efforts while recognising that there is more to do. In the next phase of realising Vision 2025, what must we focus our energies on, to accelerate our journey towards the garden we envisage?



49. Let me just pause a moment in the narrative, and remind ourselves of the SMU logo. You will see how the lion's features are made up of a tangram, which, as you know, is a collection of seven geometric pieces set in a square. The pieces can be moved around to create a myriad of visual possibilities in the design. The only limit of possibilities, is the limit of the human imagination and ingenuity.



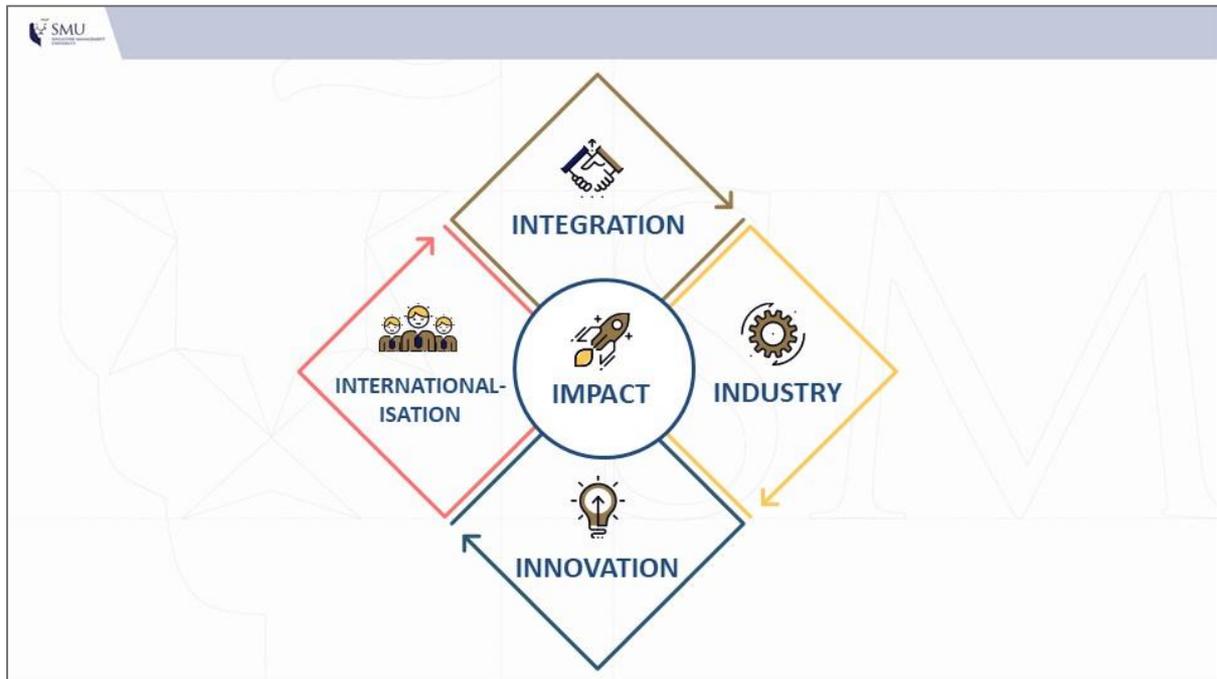
50. The seven building blocks coincidentally map onto the seven pieces of the tangram. And so the metaphor allows us to see how our seven building blocks could be rearranged, with different emphases at different points in time, with different hues, making different designs, depending on the context and situation. We are limited only by our imagination.

51. So as the path to our garden changes, as weather conditions alter, let us think about how the tangram pieces need to be moved around in imaginative ways, and how our garden is to be cultivated in the next phase.

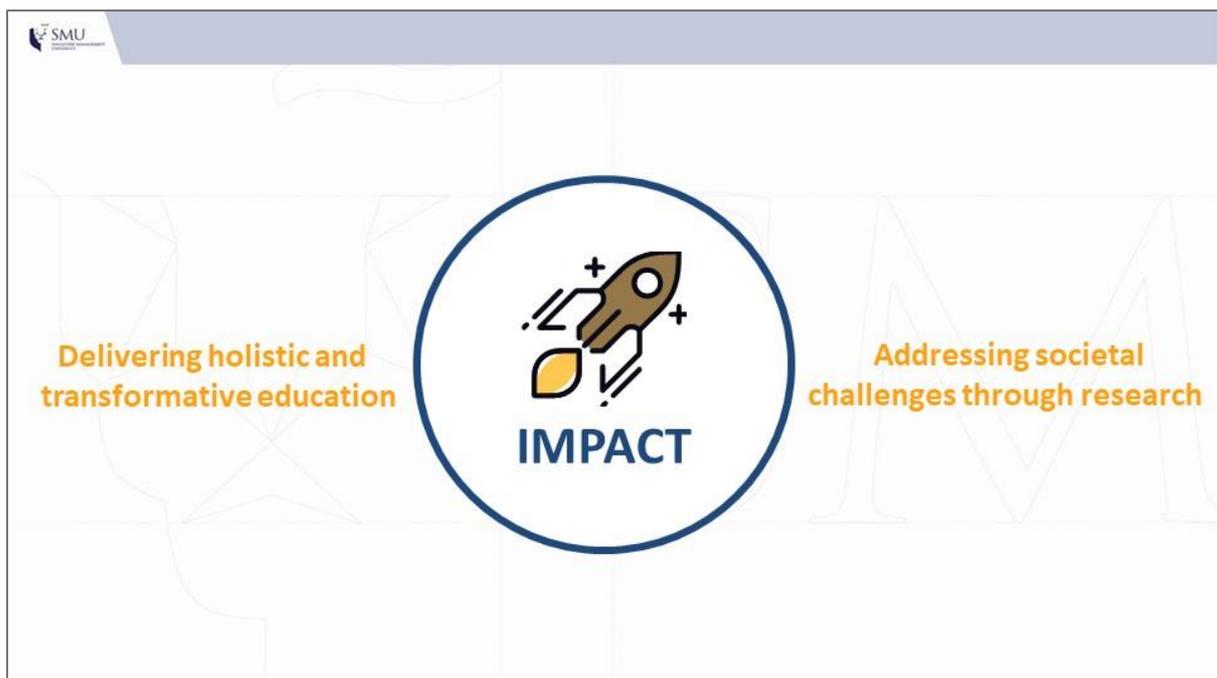


52. What we hold fast to is our shared vision. However, as we take stock, we are aware that conditions have changed over the years in the macro environment.

A “4 ‘I’s strategy”

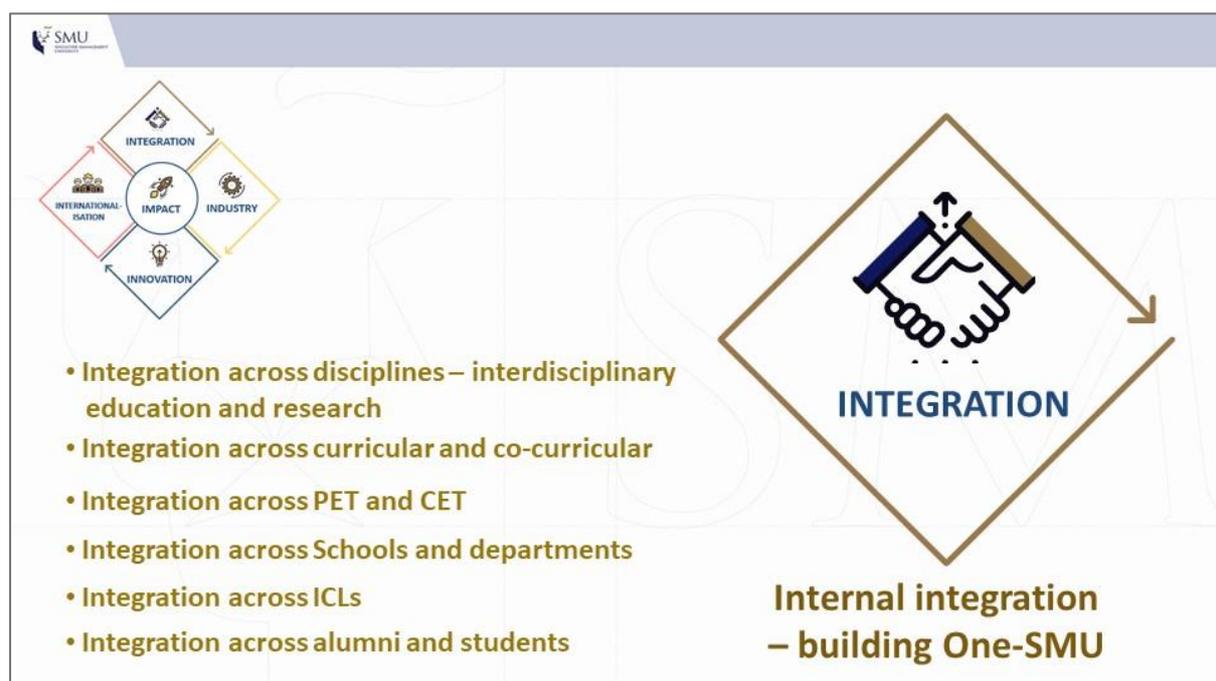


53. Our garden and our journey of purpose is ultimately about achieving meaningful impact. With this in mind, let us distil the concept of our building blocks into a model I call the “4 ‘I’s strategy”, in which we emphasise ‘integration’, ‘industry’, ‘innovation’ and ‘internationalisation’.



54. I have spoken at some length earlier about what it means to make meaningful impact – through the examples of our students and graduates, and our faculty and staff. **Impact** is about delivering a holistic and transformative education which then enables our students and graduates to make a meaningful impact on the world. Impact is also about addressing societal challenges through research, which produces knowledge, insights and methods that contribute to improving our world.

### Integration



55. The first key strategy that will help us to achieve that impact is through ensuring greater **integration within the university**, integration across disciplines, across curricular and co-curricular, across pre-employment and continuing education and training, across Schools and administrative departments, across our research institutes and centres, and across alumni and students.

56. First, we must continue with our efforts at integration across disciplines, come together to deliver inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary educational and research programmes. We have started some of that. In the last two years, we have launched Politics, Law and Economics; we have started Smart City Management &

Technology; Real Estate Economics and Finance; and Health Economics and Management. We will continue with the momentum.

57. In fact, we might go a step further. Remember that the jobs of the future are not all existent today. Perhaps we might take a leaf from Stanford University's exercise of imagining the world in the year 2100, and then looking back to the year 2025 when a shift became apparent. This is a shift towards purpose learning where Stanford students began declaring missions, not majors. Let's consider our own version, where a small number of very bright and committed students might be allowed to take our exciting revamped core curriculum, hone their capabilities, and broaden their thinking about communities and civilisations. They then put together a case to define their mission. It might be to pursue sustainable business and economic practices, or use social entrepreneurship to address some of the social problems confronting Singapore and the region, or to enter into conflict resolution to intermediate in some of intercommunal conflicts that confront the world. How then might these students, with mentorship from faculty, devise their own integrated majors, drawing from multiple disciplines, to prepare them to fulfil their mission?

58. This integrated multi- and interdisciplinary approach extends to continuing and professional education. In the executive education space, for example, SMU ExD does not reside in any one school, but is located at university level because it should be able to draw expertise from different schools and different disciplines in order to deliver executive development that is much more holistic and rounded, with expert views and thought leadership across the university. We must leverage that even more.

59. In research, we have engaged colleagues in discussions in the last several months, and we now define five societal challenge areas as our areas of focus. Each calls on inter-disciplinary and multidisciplinary contributions in order to make significant difference and impact. I am happy to launch today our new website that declares "Our Research Tackles Societal Challenges", and the five challenge areas are in: interpreting economies and financial markets, strengthening social fabric and quality

of life, navigating boundaries and borders, managing for sustainability, and advancing innovation and technology.

60. Second, we must press on with **integration across curricular and co-curricular**. We believe nurturing the whole student cannot be delivered by one school, or one unit, but requires the sum total of efforts across our various academic support units as well as our disciplinary schools. As much as academic learning is important, so too is the learning that occurs through global exposure, residential living, participation in sports, societies and clubs, internships, and community service. Through the revamped core curriculum, we have integrated the curricular and co-curricular, and will press on with implementation. It is through such an integrated approach that we have a chance of nurturing graduates that have the four Ts – high Talent, of course, in their domain of choice; high Touch, where they understand human behaviour and human motivations; high Trust, where our graduates are trustworthy; and high Tech, where they understand technology, work with it and manage it.

61. Third, how might we better integrate Pre-Employment Training (PET) and Continuing Education and Training (CET)? We can work on stacking up our courses, such that there is continuity between PET and CET, and education therefore does not end when students graduate with a Bachelors degree. We can also help our students continue to map their competencies from the time they are students to well beyond graduation, so that they are conscious of their skills and skill gaps. Think about the example of work being done in the School of Information Systems, where the competencies of students are systematically mapped through a Competency Analytics System. Even when they graduate and are in the workforce, they can continue to map the competencies gained in the workplace, recognise their skills gaps, and thereby identify the training they need in order to move to different jobs.

62. Fourth, it is important that we have good integration across schools and administrative departments, so that we are not working in our silos, and are willing and able to see the larger picture, engaging in give-and-take. I will return to this theme later. For now, I would like to share a concrete example of a new initiative

we will undertake, which will demonstrate the value of collaboration across different units. We will soon be launching EDGE, or EdTech Greenhouse, an exciting initiative where identified technology-enhanced learning (TEL) projects undergo an incubation process and then systematically translate to campus-wide IT solutions. Such projects are not within the means of any single unit to scale independently and would often require multidisciplinary skillsets to develop, implement, review, scale and support. Initiated by the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE), cross-functional teams across CTE, IITS and Schools, will work to produce unique and better approaches to TEL, within the framework of our TEL strategy. They will support personalised, interactive and experiential learning – the three pillars of our pedagogical approaches. More details about EDGE will be available in due course.

63. Fifth, we can be still more effective with greater integration across Institutes, Centres and Labs (ICLs). We have more than 20 ICLs at the moment. The research support team in the Provost's office, under the leadership of Steve Miller, has embarked on discussions on how to cluster the ICLs around cognate areas, such as Law & Technology, where our Centre for AI and Data Governance might come together with the and Applied Research Centre for Intellectual Assets and the Law in Asia (ARCIALA) as well as potential new ones with overlapping interests, in a meta-structure. Other potential areas for clustering or meta-institutes are in AI and Data Analytics, which might bring together several of the ICLs in SIS; and in Competition, Innovation and Transformations which might draw together several of the ICLs in LKCSB. We should aim to leverage the synergies so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Steve and the team will continue to develop the concept and discussions with those involved.
64. Sixth, we should be conscientious in our integration across the alumni and student bodies. This means that we must be deliberate in reaching out to alumni so that they remain our 'students' forever, because we continue to contribute to their learning journeys. We must ensure that our programmes, be they postgraduate, executive development or skills training, are relevant and accessible to our alumni. But the integration of the alumni and student bodies is also about how our alumni

contribute to the nurturing of our current students, through offering internships, SMU-X and XO (SMU-X Overseas) projects, and work-study options, and through service as mentors. We can develop deliberate approaches to enabling this.

65. And so, there are many ways in which we might integrate – crossing boundaries, working together internally, so that we are building “One SMU”.

### Industry



- External integration – university & city
- “Industry” as metonym
- Education: Expand SMU’s experiential learning
- Research: Expand and deepen partnerships
- Outreach: SMU City Dialogues

66. I would now like to turn our attention to a different type of integration – that is external integration between the university and the city. Here I use “industry” as a metonym for the public, private and people sectors – the city in its multiplicities. As a university located in the city, we must continue to be integrally involved with the city – contributing to its development and well-being, and drawing energy from it. We can do this through education, research, and outreach.

67. In education, we have done a great deal, through internships and SMU-X. We have begun to deepen that engagement, embarking on SMU-X and entering the work-study space. Some of you will have read recently about our partnership with

SingHealth, so that our students taking the Health Economics and Management major will spend four days a week interning at SingHealth, for six months, coming back one day per week for classes. You may also know that we have just announced our tie-up with Google Asia in the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme. It is Google's first tie-up with any university and our students will be able to enjoy a work-study arrangement with Google partners like Grab, Expedia and Carousell. We will continue to deepen the work-study space.

68. In research, we do have our relationships with industry, but I think we can and must do a lot more. As part of being in the city, we want SMU to be the university where it is natural for "industry" to turn to us to develop ideas, lend thought leadership and offer solutions. We will therefore seek to strengthen our strategic relations with leading private sector corporations and SMEs, as well as with public sector and social sector organisations. They should benefit from access to world-class research, while our researchers should benefit from a first-hand understanding of the needs of industry.

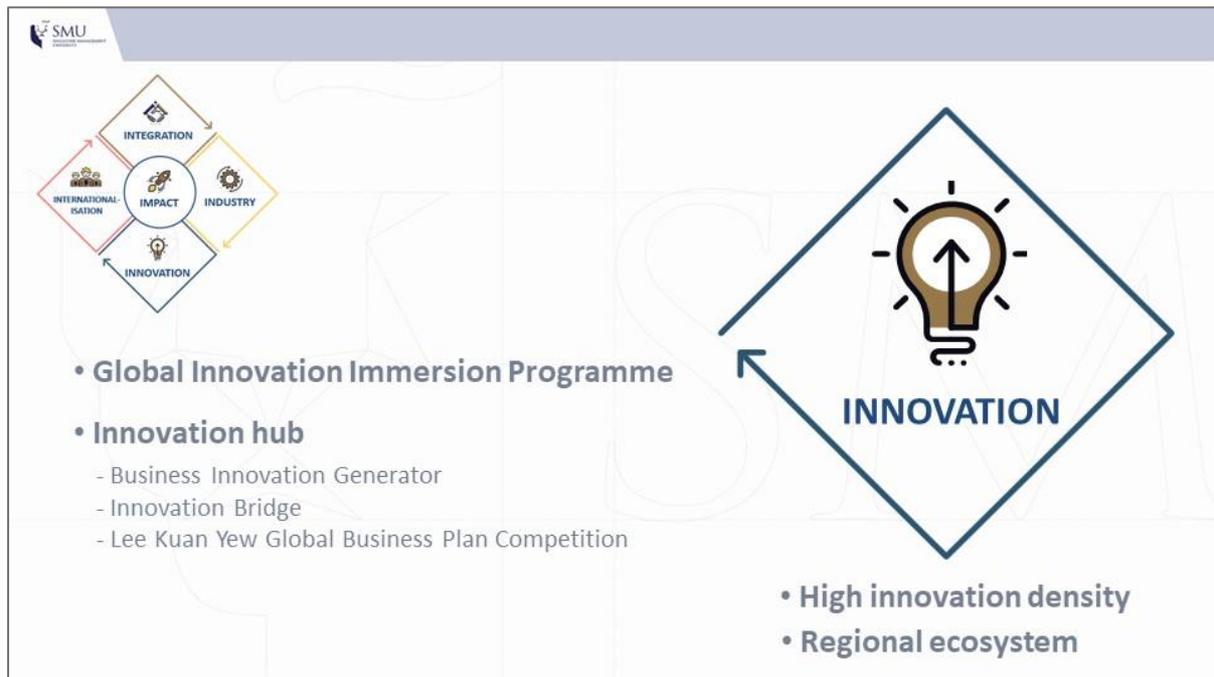
69. Collaboration in the Fujitsu-SMU Urban Computing and Engineering (UNiCEN) Corp Lab is a good example of this. UNiCEN is part of the Urban Computing & Engineering Centre of Excellence – a public-private partnership between Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), Fujitsu Limited (Fujitsu) and SMU. As part of the Corp Lab scheme supported by the National Research Foundation, corp labs enhance the collaborative partnerships between universities and industries and enable researchers, faculty, PhD and post-doctoral students to work alongside companies on programmes that have direct relevance for industry. This will support the effective translation of research for the marketplace. Are we up to the challenge of developing other corp labs?

70. The Corp Lab model is not the only way to engage industry. Our Retail Centre of Excellence serves to galvanise retail innovation in Singapore and beyond, through research, undergraduate and postgraduate education, leadership training and masterclasses for industry stakeholders and C-suite executives. They thus enable

both bricks-and-mortar and online retailers to tackle key retail industry challenges for their businesses. It has so far attracted prestigious regional and international partners: DFS, DBS, Decathlon, Harvey Norman, IKEA, Microsoft, Popular, and Tiffany & Co., which work with the Centre to champion retail industry progression today.

71. Whichever model it is, we can replicate them, with different partners in different areas, for meaningful impact. Perhaps it might even be conceivable to house some companies on campus, where they benefit from the buzz and ideas inherent in the university, while students benefit from interning with these companies.
  
72. Our integration with the city, through education and research, must also have an outreach component. We must be a university that has a reverberating voice in the community, contributing thought leadership and ideas. We therefore encourage good representation of faculty and alumni on the boards of corporations and public sector agencies, as ambassadors demonstrating our research expertise. But more than that, we must be the place in the city where there are compelling ideas discussed and debated, relevant and refreshing for the community. One idea for enhancing our outreach to the broader community in Singapore is therefore to establish a series of **SMU City Dialogues**. These would be compelling dialogue sessions demonstrating SMU's thought leadership on topics that matter to the 'city' – such as reducing inequality or remaking the economy, for example. They might be co-branded with and subsume some of our existing seminar series, or they might include events sponsored by industry or media partners who bring expertise, reputation and resources that are complementary to our own. Our Office of Corporate Communications and Marketing is working on these ideas and will share them in the months ahead.

## Innovation



73. Let me turn now to the next “I”. This is the “I” of Innovation. As I mentioned earlier, universities have increasingly become drivers of innovation and national competitiveness. Universities have developed educational programmes to stimulate and support would-be entrepreneurs, set up makerspaces, incubators, and innovation-driving business accelerators. At Patron’s Day 2019, our Patron, Singapore’s President Madam Halimah Yacob, commented that she observed SMU students to be “more innovative”. How can we support our students to sharpen their innovative and entrepreneurial instincts and spirit, where such individuals will become increasingly crucial for our economy and country?

74. Our Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship will be central to this. We aim to cultivate I&E talent, enable venture-backed start-ups, and convene major iconic events that bring exciting ideas to the fore.

75. First, we will step up our efforts to cultivate I & E talent by scaling up our Global Innovation Immersion Programme, getting students out to other cities to be immersed in different, perhaps challenging environments. They attend

masterclasses on innovation and entrepreneurship, receive mentorship from industry leaders, intern with an innovation entity (and that might well be entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship opportunities), as well as be exposed to networking opportunities, where they might be deeply engaged in emerging and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems, gaining insights into global opportunities. Some of our students are already spending at least three months in Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Manila, Shanghai, New York, San Francisco, Atlanta, Copenhagen, Leuven and Freiburg. We will continue to enlarge and deepen the opportunities.

76. Second, we will step up our efforts to support venture-backed start-ups through our Business Innovations Generator (BIG for short). We have had about 1000 applications for incubation, incubated about 200 start-ups, and raised about S\$45 million since 2008. The combined valuation of SMU high growth innovative companies is in excess of \$3 billion, counting amongst the successful stories Reebonz and Ninja Van. We have a real opportunity to do more, with the building of the Tahir Foundation Connexion and the bridge that links the new building to our School of Law, in front of the Fort Canning Tunnel. The "Innovation Bridge" and other parts of campus will create a vibrant buzz, increasing our "innovation density" – because the multi-purpose space of the Bridge for co-working, brainstorming, talks, and meetings, will connect people with ideas, funding and expertise; different skills, different talents coming together and making innovation and entrepreneurship happen. The planned and serendipitous encounters will help to catalyse innovation and entrepreneurship when those with ideas run into a venture capitalist or an IP lawyer, or when a new entrant connects with serial entrepreneurs, current students with successful alumni. Right in the heart of the city, SMU has the potential to be a thriving innovation hub, and the **Innovation Bridge**, currently under construction, will symbolise for SMU and Singapore the bridge between the University and the city in the Innovation & Entrepreneurship space.

77. Third, we will continue to be a major convening platform for the best minds to come together through the Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition. In 2017, the latest edition drew almost 2,000 participants, 550 submissions, 310 participating

universities from 68 countries. In the midst of many business plan competitions around the world, this is certainly a significant one in Asia, drawing teams from Oxbridge, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Columbia, Berkeley, Tsinghua, KAIST, KTH and more.

78. Yet, there is no denying that Singapore is a very small market. It is therefore imperative that we also engage with the region, if not beyond, in innovation and entrepreneurship. I would thus like to turn to my fourth and final “I”, Internationalisation.

### Internationalisation



The diagram features the SMU logo in the top left corner. It consists of two diamond-shaped structures. The left diamond is divided into four quadrants: 'INTEGRATION' (top), 'INDUSTRY' (right), 'INNOVATION' (bottom), and 'INTERNATIONALISATION' (left). A central circle labeled 'IMPACT' is surrounded by icons representing a globe, a gear, a lightbulb, and a group of people. The right diamond is a solid red outline containing an icon of three stylized people and the text 'INTERNATIONALISATION' below it. A red arrow points from the top of the right diamond towards the top of the left diamond. Below the diamonds is a list of five bullet points.

- Enlarge and enrich global education opportunities
- Develop and deepen ambitious cross-border research collaborations
- Engage and expose to innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in the region
- Serve as a regional hub of education and ideas
- Develop SMU Global Centres to enlarge our footprint

79. Let me begin by sketching the case for internationalisation. Internationalisation should enlarge and enrich global education opportunities for our students. While we have more than 260 partner universities at the moment, this is largely for our undergraduates. We have purposefully weaved in global exposure as a graduation requirement and milestone for 100% of our undergraduates, and are committed to enabling and supporting them in learning from these overseas experiences. We have begun to embed global exposure for some of our postgraduate programmes. Even

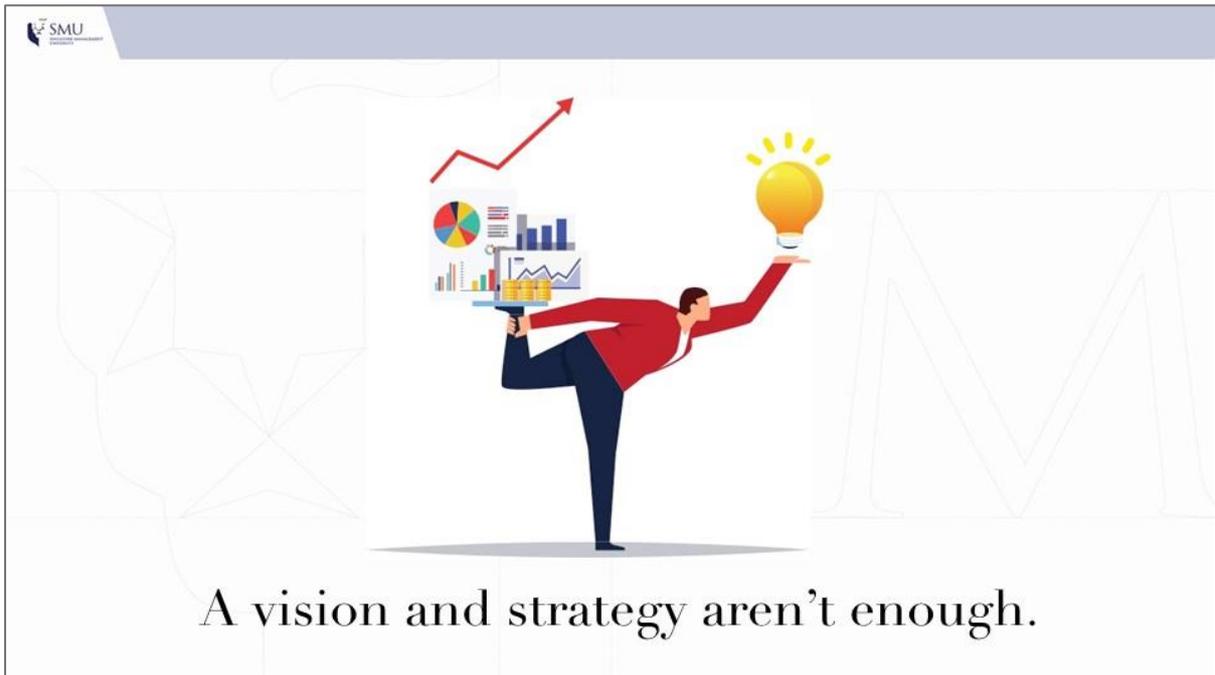
for the non-traditional students in our SMU Academy, we have begun to offer programmes that help to internationalise the Singapore SME. The ESG-SMU China Ready Programme is a case in point. It has exposed participants to the vibrancy, cultural heritage, business environment and new opportunities that are available in Chengdu, currently the fastest growing city in China, and home to more than 260 Fortune 500 companies. Executive Development has also strongly internationalised. As at end Q3 FY2018, international clients accounted for 81% of all SMU-ExD's clients, coming from the US, Japan, Indonesia, Ghana, Austria, Vietnam and UAE.

80. To ensure that we have the opportunities at hand for our students, we need to develop strong partnerships with universities and organisations.
81. We should also be internationalising because, through relationships with other universities and research institutes, we can develop research collaborations that better enable us to address issues of the day and inform the future.
82. We should further be internationalising because it allows us to engage and be exposed to the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in bigger markets, bringing our students out and giving them the opportunities to learn and contribute.
83. While internationalisation is about going out into the world and forging partnerships, it is also about internationalising at home, by bringing others here. We should be a regional hub of education and ideas, where the brightest prospective students interested in the social sciences, management and computing look at us as the place to enrol because it is where their futures can be best made. We should be the site of innovation and ideas, so "industry" wants to partner us because we have a community with the quality of mind that generates ideas and solutions, where regional corporations also look to us for executive development, and training and upskilling their workforces.
84. To enable SMU to take the next step in internationalisation, we are now exploring the development of **SMU Global Centres** in selected cities that will help to enlarge

our footprint. Where might these global centres be? We will start with exploring the feasibility of Bangkok, Manila, Ho Chi Minh City and Jakarta. We have particularly identified Southeast Asian cities, recognising the potential in this region that has over 650 million people, about twice that of the United States. What will these centres do? They will be our footprint in these cities, helping to seek out the opportunities, co-ordinate and curate our activities. They will coordinate our growing student activities overseas – internships, innovation immersion, SMU-XO, community service, and so on. They will be the base from which we develop opportunities to offer executive education programmes and skills training to the corporates around the region. By contributing to the betterment of the workforce in the region, we enable the rising tide to raise all boats. The centres will facilitate the link ups between SMU researchers and partners for collaboration, contributing cross-border perspectives to any one issue. They will help to facilitate our continuing relations with our International Advisory Councils in the region, made up of leading businessmen and women who help us understand their countries and open up opportunities for us. They will keep us connected with our growing alumni in the region. They will help us to forge relationships and partnerships with the incubation spaces in these cities.

85. Together, the Global Centres have the potential to contribute to our international presence and form a network of centres which SMU can leverage to raise our profile, engage, cooperate with and build relations with global communities.

The importance of execution: the how and who questions



86. So we envision our garden to be verdant and flourishing, and we have a strategy and roadmap for what to do to get there. Nevertheless, “a vision and strategy aren't enough.



87. The long term key to success is execution. Each day. Every day” (Richard M. Kovacevich).



88. How will we get there, and what might get in the way? Put another way, I ask how might we cultivate that spirit that will enable us to execute well, and how red are our risks?



89. How do we cultivate our spirit? We need to move from “ego” to “eco”, where we recognise that, single-handedly, we cannot tend the garden we want. We need to work together synergistically and collaboratively, as a well-functioning ecosystem does. In other words, we need to move from “me” to “we”. It should never be about individual glory, one upmanship, or self-aggrandisement, but about collective purpose and endeavour, with the strength of our collective intelligence.
90. We need to move from “tourist” to “founder” mentality. A tourist is one who is just passing through, looking for the next destination to visit or settle, or to go home somewhere else. A founder has a deep sense of ownership, identity, pride and belonging, and cares about the institution and its well being. In an organisation as large as SMU, it is inevitable that we will have some tourists. This is just being realistic. But for us to succeed, we need a significant majority that has a founder mentality.
91. We need to minimise the disengaged amongst us, motivate them to become engaged, and celebrate the efforts of what they do for the collective.
92. And we need to move from protecting to sharing. We need to help one another move from a mindset of protecting boundaries, job scopes, information, and experience, to a willingness to share with one another, and across our organisational boundaries, for the greater good (Just parenthetically, however, please do not inappropriately share or expose data that is not supposed to be leaked!).
93. I would like to invite each and every one of us in this room to ask ourselves: what two to three critical behaviour changes might we hope for from a colleague or another department, and what two to three critical behaviour changes might we contemplate for ourselves, individually, that we can move the needle towards becoming a collaborative, forward-looking and fleet-footed organisation? I will be most happy to hear from you, either later today in this session, or else, feel free to write or talk to me – you know I set aside every first Friday morning of the month for anyone who wants to see me. I have only one request: I ask that you do not answer

the first question about changes you would like to see in others, without also addressing the second question about changes you could contemplate for yourself or your own unit.



### How red are our risks?

**People:**  
Are we fully aligned and engaged?

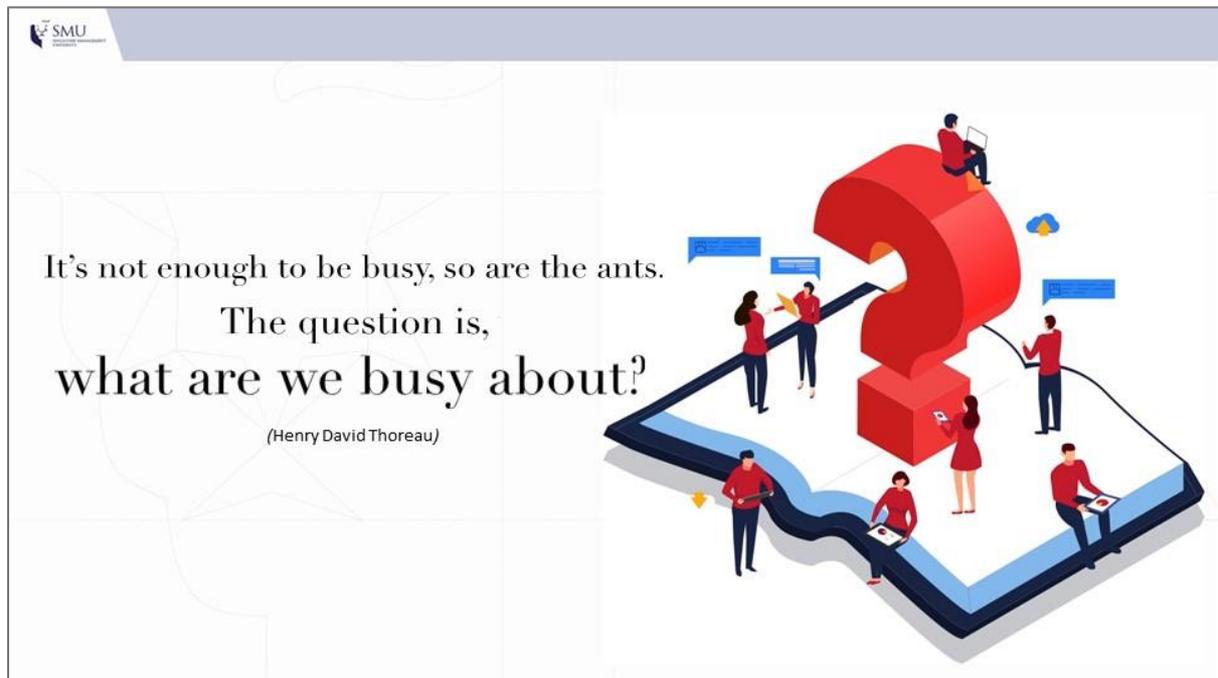
**Plan:**  
Do we have robust plans and clear lines to execution?

**Implementation:**  
How strong are we at implementing and executing effectively?

94. Let me turn now to the second question relating to how we will get to our garden, and this is a question about what might get in the way. How red are our risks?

95. First, relating to “people”. Are we fully aligned, and in particular, is the leadership fully aligned? In other words, do we all have a vision of the same garden, or are we cultivating different gardens and getting into each other’s way? I learnt as an undergraduate about the varied aesthetics of different cultural traditions. The Japanese garden has as its major design aesthetic a simple, minimalist natural setting, aimed at inspiring meditation and reflection. English landscape tastes point towards the picturesque and bucolic. The aesthetic goals of a Chinese garden are again quite different. So are we aligned, and if so, are we all engaged in cultivating and nurturing the garden?

96. Do we have robust plans and clear lines to execution? Does our strategy cascade through the university? Is the strategy informed by a deep understanding of execution?



97. How strong are we at implementing and executing effectively? The best plans can fall apart without strong execution. Here, I would remind ourselves that, as Henry Thoreau said, "It's not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is, what are we busy about?"




## How red are our risks?

**People:**  
Are we fully aligned and engaged?

**Plan:**  
Do we have robust plans and clear lines to execution?

**Implementation:**  
How strong are we at implementing and executing effectively?

**Impact:**  
Is activity mistaken for outcomes and impact?

98. In other words, “Is activity mistaken for outcomes and impact?” What matters is results, after all, and not whether we put in a lot of hours to achieve them.




There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently  
that which should not be done at all.

(Peter Drucker)

99. And are our efforts well directed? As Peter Drucker reminds us, “There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.” To execute our plans effectively, we need to focus on what really matters.

100. So I now direct the following questions to all of us: what two or three things are we doing that we need not be doing at all, or which we can be doing differently? Here, I am almost afraid to invite you to write or talk to me. I could be overwhelmed. And so I invite you to work with the Office of Business Improvement! And again, don't just point the finger at someone else or some other department. Start with ourselves and our own departments. Charity begins at home, and so does cleaning up!



101. Let me turn now to my final set of questions. Who is going to make change happen (and who will support them)? Returning to the metaphor of the garden, what we need is a team to cultivate and nurture the garden. Some will be digging, some sowing, some feeding and watering, some harvesting, some weeding and pruning. Some will work on laying paths, some making seats and building arbors and pavilions. We all have our various roles.



**'Spine'**

Who is our spine?



**'Suit'**

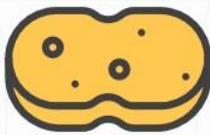
Do the people suit the roles?



**'Sponge'**

How much more can our sponge absorb?

102. Who are our chief gardeners and builders? Who is the spine? Might it be that, for different projects, the spine of the team is different, and different colleagues step up to take leadership for different projects? Do we have the appropriate individuals in roles that fit their strengths, so that we get the best from ourselves and help others do their best?



Can we have a  
**bigger piece of sponge?**

What initiatives **are we going to start?**

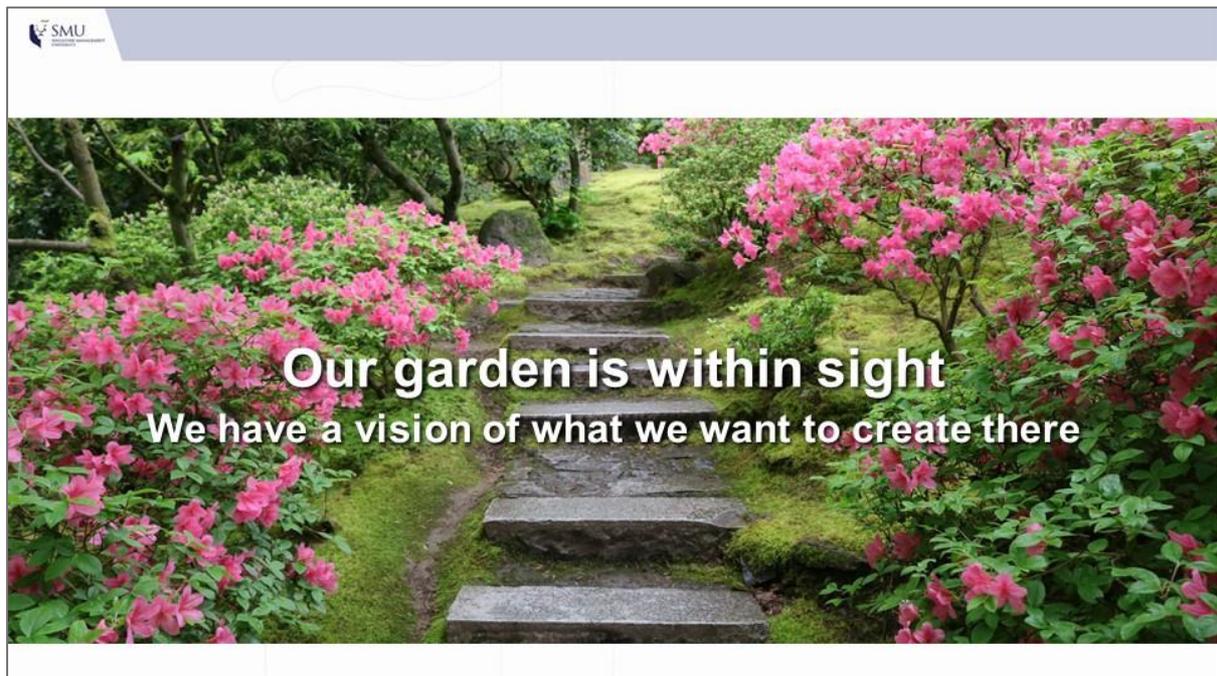
What initiatives **are we going to stop?**

How can we deliver existing initiatives **differently?**

103. At the same time, I am also cognisant that we have many ideas, many initiatives, many demands on our colleagues. How much more can our sponge absorb?

104. As we look at our garden, which flowers, vegetables and trees shall we plant ... for a sustainable future? Are there weeds growing that we need to pull out, or tall plants starving seedlings of light? How can we get bigger vegetables from our soil and sweeter fruit from our trees? Or how can we make our garden more colourful, attractive and bountiful for ourselves and for others?

Our garden is within sight





**It will be more fruitful and more beautiful if we all work together**

Using our own special skills, learning new ones to take on the challenges



**One team, one SMU.  
Making meaningful impact, as we...**



105. Our garden is within sight. We have a vision of what we want to create. It will be more fruitful and more beautiful if we all work together, using our own special skills and learning new ones to take on the challenges. One team, one SMU. Making meaningful impact, as we imagine a better world.

Thank you.