



Remarks by
Professor Arnoud De Meyer, SMU President
at the signing of an MOU between SMU and the
University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City
Friday 27 April 2018

Your Excellency, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and his delegation.

Professor Nguyen Dong Phong, President of the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City; and his colleagues.

Ladies and gentlemen.

The University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City – or UEH – is one of Vietnam’s leading universities for economic and business management education. Aiming to advance the quality of Vietnamese businesses and entrepreneurs, UEH has for many years implemented a range of academic and practical integrated programmes on innovation, training programmes in collaboration with Ho Chi Minh City’s Young Businessmen Association, and several programmes in conjunction with companies such as Suntory PepsiCo and VinaCapital, as well as with other prestigious local and international universities and institutes.

In line with the Prime Minister Nguyen’s call for a Start-up Nation spirit and the Vietnamese Government’s priority to support the young entrepreneur community and apply new technologies in the country, UEH is working with SMU to improve the start-up ecosystem in Vietnam.



SMU IIE-UEH MOU SIGNING: REMARKS BY PROF ARNOUD DE MEYER

The incubator that we brought Prime Minister Nguyen around earlier is under our Institute of Innovation & Entrepreneurship, which fosters innovation and entrepreneurship excellence on campus.

To highlight just some of the successful projects from IIE, let me mention Protégé Ventures, the first student-led venture fund in Southeast Asia, which announced its first investment earlier this month. Under the Incubator, our more successful start-ups include regional tech media company, Tech in Asia, and on-demand caregiving platform, Homage. In fact, our emcee was co-founder of Homage, but he has since left to create another start-up, Wellderly, which he was describing to the PM earlier in the incubator.

IIE itself operates under the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, or LKCSB, which offers double degrees and interdisciplinary courses in conjunction with SMU's five other schools.

UEH and LKCSB are alike in both specialising in management education, with a strong interest in innovation and entrepreneurship. Both run large-scale competitions in entrepreneurship and innovation, such as the annual Dynamics competition at UEH and the Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition at SMU by IIE. The Lee Kuan Yew Competition, which is the biggest of its kind in East Asia, allows us to convene some of the best talents and ideas from around the world. With SMU and UEH partnering together, we will be even greater than the sum of our parts and have the potential to make a large joint impact in Vietnam and across Southeast Asia.



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That is why we are all here for the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding, which have been greatly facilitated by Vina Capital. The first MOU is between SMU, UEH and Vina Capital for the establishment of a Joint Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Ho Chi Minh.

This Joint Institute will allow us to learn from one another and combine our expertise – to offer training courses to the Vietnamese business community and accelerate the growth of start-ups in or expanding into the Vietnam market. Vina Capital is launching a new \$100 million tech fund, which will support start-ups under the Joint Institute as well as supporting promising tech start-ups across Vietnam.

The second between SMU, UEH and the Private Sector Development Committee is to conduct an analysis and prepare a report regarding Vietnam's start-up ecosystem and provide recommendations on how Vietnam can leverage on its strengths to become a start-up hub for the region.

SMU will also explore the possibility of running leadership training courses together with the Ho Chi Minh City's Young Businessmen Association.

Thank you again. We look forward to a long and productive partnership.