

**SMU Academic Year Opening Ceremony  
School of Law Building, Friday 17 August 2018**

**REMARKS BY SMU CHAIRMAN HO KWON PING**

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Mr Lim Chee Onn, Pro-Chancellor of SMU;  
Members of the Board of Trustees;  
Professor John Niland;  
SMU faculty and staff;  
Students and alumni;

Good evening and welcome to the Academic Year Opening Ceremony and Convocation Ceremony for SMU.

This is only the second occasion on which we have held this form of event. Before, there was only a Convocation ceremony which was almost entirely for freshmen. However, last year, for the first time, we combined Convocation with a new Academic Year Opening Ceremony – bringing together freshmen, continuing students, alumni and other members of the SMU community.

This gives greater context for everyone involved – providing a sense of continuity, heritage and legacy.

As this will be the last such ceremony which Prof Arnoud De Meyer will attend as SMU President – I think it is a fitting occasion on which to give a glimpse of the legacy that his Presidency leaves to all of us.

In the past eight years as President, Arnoud led SMU through a new phase of growth and excellence.

SMU has continued to deliver a transformative education experience, producing graduates who are highly sought after – as attested by the continued success of SMU graduates in landing meaningful global careers and securing competitive starting salaries.

During his two terms of office, postgraduate programmes, executive development and continuing education units have all expanded very significantly. The University has attracted world-class faculty who created impactful research centres and institutes, several of which are at the cutting edge of knowledge and thought leadership. In addition, the University has forged strong linkages, collaboration and partnerships with academia, industry, government, social organisations and the community at large.

Arnoud has also driven the expansion of the SMU campus with the development of the School of Law building, where we are right now. Campus Green was given an impressive upgrading, new study spaces were created and a three-storey gym introduced.

He has led internationalisation and reputation-building efforts – particularly in China, India, Southeast Asia and Europe – which have helped SMU to build a global reputation and renown.

“SMU-X” and its overseas version were both the brainchild of Professor De Meyer. They have gained a global recognition for innovative experiential learning – and are becoming an integral

part of SMU's pedagogical DNA and which will distinguish SMU from other leading institutions. Therefore, I am delighted that Arnoud has agreed to continue to be involved with this after he steps down.

Shortly, we will also be paying tribute to Professor John Niland – a founding member of SMU's Board of Trustees who served as an architect of the foundations of SMU's university administration. John served on the Board for 12 years, including 4 years as Deputy Chairman. I will be reading a citation later which details his enormous contribution to the success of SMU.

#### Conclusion: building on your legacy

All of us here are greatly indebted to the legacies of Professor Niland's and Professor De Meyer's leadership. Neither were concerned with becoming a "legend". They do not work to be remembered; they work to leave a legacy of lasting achievements that contribute to a greater good.

In turn, we have a duty not to waste their legacy; but to build on it. Everyone here tonight has an advantage in life, individual excellence in one form or another. You may be blessed with academic brilliance, entrepreneurial flair or sporting prowess or artistic gifts.

Whatever your age or status in life, it is never too soon or too late to think about the legacy that you will leave. Use your special gift to make a meaningful impact and leave a greater legacy for those who follow after you.