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SMU welcomes 15th batch of undergraduates for Academic Year 2014

Singapore, 13 August 2014 (Wednesday) – Singapore Management University (SMU) welcomed its **15th cohort of 1,940 freshmen at its Convocation Ceremony** held at Suntec Convention Centre today. Starting 18 August, the new cohort will pursue degree programmes in accountancy, business management, economics, information systems management, law and social science.

Ms Yong Ying-I, Permanent Secretary (Public Service Division), Permanent Secretary (National Research Foundation), and Chairman of the Infocomm Development Authority was the Guest-of-Honour and delivered the Keynote Address. SMU Pro-Chancellor Mr J Y Pillay, SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping and SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer were also present to grace the event.

SMU, A Different U

At the Convocation Ceremony, SMU Chairman, Mr Ho Kwon Ping, said that SMU has, from its conceptualisation, set out to be different in terms of intellectual approach, educational model and personal development. He articulated some key principles. "We will continue to provide a holistic education that produces well-rounded graduates; we will continue to teach business ethics through action, by making community service a compulsory requirement; we will continue to encourage overseas exposure through overseas community service and internships, business study missions and student exchanges," he said.

Chairman Ho also outlined **SMU's strategic plan, called Vision 2025**, which includes SMU evolving into a more comprehensive university, rooted in the social sciences; a newly revised curriculum which more closely integrates academic development, personal development, and community engagement; infrastructural enhancements; development of a residential facility for project-based learning; and providing a stimulating environment to promote world-class research and increase research-based teaching.

SMU's holistic admission criteria ensure that its annual intake of freshmen is made up of individuals who possess diverse skills, talents and demonstrate aptitude as well as leadership quality, in addition to academic excellence.

At the same time, SMU aims to provide equal opportunity for every student to take up at least one global exposure programme so that they can expand their horizons and immerse themselves in different environments.

Professor Arnoud De Meyer, President of SMU, said “Last year, **86% of the graduating cohort had experienced some form of global exposure** during their time here. They travelled to countries ranging from Chile to Russia, and including China, Nepal, Kazakhstan, the US and Middle East. We aim to ensure that 100% of students experience global exposure within the next three years. We encourage this because studying or working overseas will open their eyes to a world of possibilities, develop their cultural awareness, make them more adaptable – and therefore also more employable.”

Such perspective-broadening experiences complement SMU's interactive pedagogy and broad-based curriculum, which include fulfilling a compulsory 10-week internship and an 80-hour community service requirement.

Blazing a trail with several firsts

The new academic year will see the **inaugural batch of 26 students in the SUTD-SMU Dual-Degree Programme start their first course at SMU on 18 August.**

These students will have the unprecedented opportunity to pursue an engineering degree from SUTD and a business management degree from SMU concurrently. Students will spend time at both campuses, and will take SUTD and SMU courses from the first academic year, thus benefitting from a uniquely integrated and interdisciplinary learning experience over four years of study.

Starting this year, SMU undergraduates will take several new courses in a revamped common curriculum. SMU's common curriculum serves as a fundamental body of knowledge to broaden students' understanding of various disciplines and issues outside their area of specialisation. While the number of modules remains at 16, the common curriculum has been refreshed to provide sharper focus, greater depth and wider range of topics, thereby enhancing SMU's distinctiveness and preparing our students to be future-ready. For example, students will have to take up at least one module from the Asian Studies Cluster and one from Globalisation Studies Cluster so as to give them an appreciation of Asian historical experiences and development in tandem with global developments and issues. New to the curriculum, the Modes of Thinking Cluster draws from several disciplines to equip students with diverse thinking processes, and will also include a course in Managing Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. The new common curriculum will be implemented in full in 2015.

In another first, SMU freshmen at the Convocation Ceremony were each given a journal called *SMU LifeLessons Pathfinder*. SMU LifeLessons, launched in 2013, is a values-based, out-of-classroom programme developed in tandem with SMU's four-year undergraduate academic programmes. Its aim is to define, prepare, and inspire SMU students to be their very best for others. This aim translates into several learning outcomes, such as a deeper understanding of personal and shared values, one's purpose and vision in life, teams and team dynamics, and larger community and global issues.

The *Pathfinder* is a tool, modelled after a journal, to provide SMU students the resources and questions to help each student find his/her own way through reflective practice. By encouraging our students to take a deliberate pause to reflect and

articulate their thoughts, we hope to deepen their understanding of their personal values and motivations, relationships with their peers, and roles in the communities they belong to.

Financial assistance and scholarships

SMU practises a 'needs-blind' admission policy where no deserving student will be deprived of an education because of financial hardship. Grants, bursaries, loans and scholarships are available for needy students, so that they can focus on their studies and enjoy an enriching educational journey at SMU. The University will set aside a total of \$2.3 million in financial aid to help all students through the SMU Financial Grant, SMU Bursary, Work Study Grant, SMU Education Loan and SMU Student Computer Loan. Including donor-supported bursaries available to SMU students, **the total financial aid available to needy students amounts to \$2.84 million.**

On average, **one in 12 freshmen of the new intake will also stand a chance to be awarded a scholarship by the University.** There are 160 scholarships which freshmen can apply for. Some of these give preference to students with financial needs. All scholarships are bond-free.

Shaping students with a heart

Even ahead of the academic year, **SMU freshmen have already participated in a series of community service projects during the orientation period in July 2014.** At ***starringSMU***, freshmen, together with their seniors, carried out a charity carwash and held a bazaar at Holland Village where handmade friendship bracelets were sold. To commemorate International Friendship Day, booths were set up to promote the signing of friendship day pledges by the public, which were then pasted onto a huge art piece depicting the main icons of Holland Village. Through these efforts, **the freshmen helped to raise more than S\$38,000 for 'My Buona Vista Place'**, a one-stop centre for community integration and social welfare programmes reaching out to over 20,000 residents.

In another initiative, ***Kiddleidoscope 2014***, SMU freshmen reached out to children and youths under CARE Singapore through various activities to help them take steps to realise their dreams and aspirations. The project culminated in a fashion show where tie-dyed or silkscreened T-shirts designed by the beneficiaries were showcased to raise awareness. Through ***Inspirar 2014***, which aims to foster interaction between students and senior citizens, SMU freshmen developed a 'Resistance Band Exercise' for the seniors to help them lead a healthy lifestyle. They also organised a carnival at Toa Payoh East Community Club where the senior citizens relived the past through six traditional games and enjoyed performances by SMU students.

As part of the SMU tradition, all freshmen attended the University's unique team building camp in July and August. The camp was led by senior student facilitators with the objective of introducing freshmen to SMU's collegial environment and inculcating the University's 'CIRCLE' values of Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership and Excellence.

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Enclosures:

- Speech by Ms Yong Ying-I, Permanent Secretary (Public Service Division), Permanent Secretary (National Research Foundation), and Chairman of the Infocomm Development Authority
- Speech by Mr Ho Kwon Ping, Chairman, SMU Board of Trustees
- Speech by Professor Arnoud De Meyer, President, SMU

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About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. It is known for its interactive and technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to over 8,300 undergraduate and postgraduate students, SMU comprises six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law and School of Social Sciences, offering a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in various disciplines.

With an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India as well as with partners in the business community and public sector through its research institutes and centres. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with the business and wider community. www.smu.edu.sg