



**Welcome Remarks by
Mr Ho Kwon Ping, SMU Chairman
SMU Patron's Day 2019
SMU Hall
Friday 25 January 2019**

Excellency, President of Singapore and Patron of SMU, Madam Halimah Yacob

Mr J Y Pillay, Chancellor of SMU

Members of the SMU Board of Trustees

Distinguished guests

SMU faculty, staff, alumni and students

Good evening.

The exhibition, which many of you viewed outside the hall earlier, invited us to imagine the “unlimited possibilities when passion meets empowerment”. If you didn’t have the opportunity to see it, I hope you will take some time to view it before you leave.

It draws on the realisation that we all have dreams of changing the world, but we often doubt that we are able to achieve them, or just don’t know where to begin. So we procrastinate. These ambitions are put on the backburner, perhaps with the hope that we will be better able to pursue them in the future. As a result, too many of our hopes and dreams are forgotten, never to be pursued in earnest.

One of the goals of an SMU education is to break this cycle of disillusionment and apathy. Just as SMU broke the mould of what it was thought a University should be when it was established in 2000, we still seek to attract and enrol students and faculty members who challenge the status quo and imagine being able to change lives for the better. Then we provide them with the tools and opportunities to create meaningful impact and see their dreams of a better world become a reality.

Our exhibition shines the spotlight on the meaningful impact that SMU has been making in the community. From research collaborations to student-led projects, it showcases meaningful impact in action through our various initiatives. There is also a small selection of the many thousands of local and overseas community projects that students have undertaken to improve the lives of those who are less privileged.



It also traces the footprints of our International Advisory Councils and Overseas Alumni Chapters through which we are able to provide opportunities for regional impact and create international relevance for SMU and our stakeholders. We are committed to making meaningful impact through education, and SMU has collaborations with the private and public sectors that will glean new insights and approaches to impact humanity for the better.

An SMU education transcends simply academic excellence. SMU students are given an education that prepares them to be change-makers. Through global exposure, community service, internships, experiential and collaborative learning, it equips students with the knowledge to tackle the complexities of the world and the confidence to challenge orthodoxy.

I am delighted that our Patron Madam Halimah Yacob and SMU President Professor Lily Kong both dared to dream and achieved things that were perhaps unimaginable when they started their careers. Both broke through the gender glass ceiling, with Madam Halimah becoming the first female President of Singapore and Professor Kong becoming Singapore's first female university president. Their successes serve as an inspiration for everyone not to be limited by convention, but to always 'imagine better'.

I always find it especially poignant that Patron's Day falls during January, between the calendar New Year and Chinese New Year, when so many in Singapore are filled with a sense of optimism about new beginnings. Patron's Day is a time to give thanks to Patrons past and present who represent the collective leadership of the nation that nurtured our University. Therefore, it is a time to reflect on our past with gratitude and respect to our founders and our pioneers; whilst keeping alive their spirit of always wanting to achieve more and build something new and better.

With the wisdom of our Patron, guidance from the leaders and Deans of SMU, and support from the SMU community which you all represent this evening, I am confident that SMU is able to pursue its vision of being an iconic global-city university in Asia that excels in tackling the world's complexities and impacting humanity positively.

Thank you all for being here tonight and have a good evening.

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