



**Embargoed until 3pm (Singapore time) on 3 April 2018**

Media Release

### **SMU appoints Professor Lily Kong as fifth President**

*Singapore 3 April 2018 (Tuesday)* – The Singapore Management University (SMU) is pleased to announce that top academic leader, and award-winning researcher and educator, Professor Lily Kong, will be the University's fifth President. Professor Kong, who currently holds the position of SMU Provost and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences, is slated to succeed Professor Arnoud De Meyer on 1 January 2019.

Professor Arnoud De Meyer, who has served as President since September 2010, will step down when his current term concludes on 31 December 2018, by which time he would have served as SMU's longest-serving President, for a period of more than eight years.

Mr Ho Kwon Ping, Chairman of the SMU Board of Trustees, said, "I express our warmest gratitude to Professor De Meyer for his visionary and excellent leadership as President for the last eight years. It was during his watch that the SMU Vision 2025 – a bold 10-year vision for the University – was conceptualised, developed and unveiled in 2013. SMU Vision 2025 sets out our aim to be a great and iconic global-city university in Asia that excels in tackling the world's complexities and impacting humanity positively, and in producing leaders of tomorrow through its transformative education and multi-disciplinary research to provide insights in solving these problems."

Under Professor De Meyer's stewardship, the SMU brand has grown significantly, as have its endowment fund, campus and building infrastructure, and quality of faculty, programmes and students. SMU's outreach and advancement activities have also progressed very significantly during his term. He was directly involved in the areas of SMU's internationalisation and reputation-building efforts, particularly in China, India, Southeast Asia and Europe; and in transforming SMU from a 'single product' university to a 'multi-product' university, through significant growth in SMU's postgraduate programmes. SMU-X – the brainchild of Professor De Meyer – has also gained much traction and become a buzzword for experiential learning.

"This award-winning innovative pedagogy, which is now well on its way to becoming an integral part of SMU's pedagogical DNA, will be viewed as a defining step in the University's progress and development. This will be an important blueprint in SMU's developmental map and will distinguish SMU from other leading institutions," Mr Ho added.

After stepping down as President, Professor De Meyer will assume, on a part-time basis, a primary and executive role in continuing to help SMU to shape and shepherd SMU-X through its critical formative stage.

Commenting on Professor Kong's new appointment, Mr Ho said, "In our global search, we were seeking a highly competent and accomplished university leader as SMU's fifth President, to continue to lead the University in our exciting journey towards becoming a great university. We are very pleased that our seven-month search process culminated in the University appointing, for the first time in its history, an internal candidate and a social scientist as President. Professor Kong's candidature stands

out from a longlist of over a hundred candidates and an impressive shortlist of a handful of highly qualified candidates.”

In her current appointment as SMU Provost, a role held since 1 September 2015, Professor Kong has been highly instrumental in leading and driving many successes in all major academic aspects of the University – enhancing SMU’s student and faculty quality, developing educational programmes, and growing research impact.

Among her major achievements and contributions, she implemented major revamps to the University’s undergraduate admissions process, including the introduction of ‘Discovery Day Sessions’, which has led to prospective students rating their admissions experiences even more favourably, and successfully raising the quality of student intake. On the academic programme front, she established and led the Blue Ribbon Commission for Undergraduate Education to deliberate and recommend, inter alia, revisions to the curriculum structure and the delivery of a distinctive core curriculum. She has also championed the introduction of new interdisciplinary majors and tracks, including the very popular Politics, Law and Economics; Smart City Management and Technology; and Healthcare Economics and Management. From August 2018 onwards, SMU will introduce residential living and learning at the revamped Prinsep Street Residences, a key project that Professor Kong has led.

In 2017, Professor Kong also led the successful establishment of the SMU Academy, which has since received from SkillsFuture Singapore more than \$20 million in funding over three years to enable SMU to offer skills upgrading courses for working adults in critical and emerging areas identified.

Within the short space of two-and-a-half years that Professor Kong has been with SMU, she has also helmed the strategic SMU brand refresh – ‘In Pursuit of MEANINGFUL IMPACT – A Journey of Purpose’ and co-led the conceptualisation of the theme for the University’s capital campaign – ‘IMAGINE BETTER’.

“As Provost, Professor Kong has worked tirelessly and collaboratively with the senior leadership team within the University, as well as with SMU faculty and staff, in making all these significant achievements. I am confident Professor Kong will ably lead SMU, and proactively engage SMU’s wide spectrum of stakeholders to deliver on SMU’s Vision 2025 and the University’s trajectory into its third decade,” said Mr Ho.

Professor Lily Kong, Provost and President-designate of SMU, said, “I am deeply honoured to be appointed the fifth President of SMU. I look forward to the extraordinary opportunity to lead the university into its third decade, and am committed to do so with energy and enthusiasm. It is with personal humility and institutional ambition that I approach this immense honour and responsibility.”

### About Professor Lily Kong

Professor Kong has 27 years of solid experience as a distinguished educator, prolific researcher and senior academic leader. She has extensive experience in academic management and significant international experience. The first woman to be appointed provost of a publicly funded university in Singapore, Professor Kong had served in several senior academic positions at NUS in both the Provost’s and President’s offices, before joining SMU as provost from 1 September 2015.

Well-known internationally as a social, cultural and urban geographer, Professor Kong is widely regarded as a thought leader in the study of social and cultural change in Asian cities. An award-winning researcher and teacher, Professor Kong has received five international fellowship awards, including the Commonwealth Fellowship Award and the Fulbright Fellowship Award. She has also won an award from the Association of American Geographers for her contributions to the study of religion.

Professor Kong has extensive experience and a strong international reputation for her academic work, having served or serving as co-editor or member of international editorial advisory boards for more than 15 journals. She is frequently sought after as keynote speaker for international conferences. A prolific writer, she has 19 books and monographs to her name, as well as over 150 papers in international refereed journals and chapters in books.

Professor Kong sits on numerous boards, committees, commissions and councils locally and internationally. Locally, these include the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony, Public Service Commission, Housing and Development Board, National Heritage Board, A\*STAR, Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore Art Museum and Mt Alvernia Hospital. Internationally, she has participated in external assessment and review panels for universities ranging from the University of Auckland to National Taiwan University and Waseda University, as well as served on the United Nations University Council and advisory boards of numerous research institutes and centres in Germany and Australia.

- End -

Enclosure:

- Professor Lily Kong's CV and photographs

---

### **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 to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU is comprised of 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. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU's 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. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

---

### **Media Contact**

HUANG Peiling (Ms)  
Senior Assistant Director, Corporate Communications  
SMU Office of Corporate Communications & Marketing  
Tel: (65) 6828 0964 / (65) 9845 3361  
Email: [plhuang@smu.edu.sg](mailto:plhuang@smu.edu.sg)