



PRESS RELEASE

SMU launches International Advisory Council to foster and deepen SMU's engagement with Vietnam

Holds inaugural Industry Leaders Dialogue in Vietnam on human capital development and the competition for talent

Ho Chi Minh City, 8 December 2017 (Friday) – Singapore Management University (SMU), a premier university in Asia internationally recognized for its world-class research and distinguished teaching, has today launched its International Advisory Council in Vietnam to establish, strengthen and deepen SMU's collaboration and engagement with the government, academic and business communities in the country.

The SMU International Advisory Council seeks to collaborate with and involve friends of SMU and its alumni to reach out to corporates and grow the friends of the SMU community in overseas countries. The Council will provide platforms for active engagements between SMU's overseas alumni, international students, and the local business community and academia.

In conjunction with the launch, SMU also hosted its inaugural Industry Leaders Dialogue in Vietnam to discuss human capital leadership, as well as the challenges of finding, managing, and retaining talent.

About 100 business, government and academic leaders from Vietnam, SMU senior management and SMU alumni in Vietnam, were present at the event which was held at Sofitel Saigon Plaza. Among the dignitaries present were Ms Leow Siu Lin, Consul-General of Singapore in Ho Chi Minh City who gave the welcome address, and SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer who delivered the introductory address.

SMU's International Advisory Council in Vietnam

Professor De Meyer said, "SMU is stepping up our engagement with countries in the region through a series of initiatives, and we are keen to foster closer ties with Vietnam. To guide and aid us in our effort, the International Advisory Council comprising prominent and esteemed business leaders from Vietnam and Singapore has been established to support SMU's overall efforts to build its international reputation as a premier university in Asia. We look forward to having their advice and guidance to further develop our engagement with Vietnam.

"The success of this Industry Leaders Dialogue and launch of the International Advisory Council in Vietnam come on the heels of our successful effort in Myanmar in July and the Philippines in October this year. Over the next few months, we plan to roll out similar initiatives to other countries in the region

where we have a sizable alumni base and established relationships with local academia, businesses and governments.”

SMU’s International Advisory Council in Vietnam, chaired by Mr Don Lam, comprises the following members:

- (1) Mr Don Lam, CEO and Co-founder, VinaCapital
- (2) Mr Zulkifli Bin Baharudin, Executive Chairman, Indo-Trans Corporation
- (3) Dr Duong Nhu Hung, Head of Finance Department, School of Industrial Management, HCMC University of Technology (a member of Vietnam National University)
- (4) Mrs Le Mai Lan, Vice Chairwoman, Vingroup
- (5) Mr Phua Koon Kee, CEO and Co-founder, Acquarius Vietnam
- (6) Mr Arthur Tay, Chairman and CEO, SUTL Enterprise Ltd
- (7) Ms Tieu Yen Trinh, Founder and CEO, TalentNet Corporation
- (8) Mr Kien Phuoc Nguyen Tan (SMU alumni, MBA, Class of 2016), Managing Director, The 360 Creative Group, Vietnam

The members of the SMU International Advisory Council (Vietnam), in their roles as ambassadors of the university, will lend support to SMU’s activities in Vietnam. These activities will include dialogues and panel discussions to raise awareness of SMU’s thought leadership and our areas of excellence, as well as alumni showcase/gatherings and networking sessions. The members may be invited to be panelists, or nominate and help to invite suitable persons to participate in such dialogues and discussions or networking sessions.

SMU Industry Leaders Dialogue

At the Industry Leaders Dialogue, Dr Rick Smith, Professor of Strategic Management (Practice) at SMU Lee Kong Chian School of Business, gave a speech on ‘Human Capital Leadership for the Future’. In his speech, Professor Smith outlined the need for firms to develop both internal and external human capital systems to address the intense competition for talent in Vietnam. The external system involves alliances with talent providers, suppliers, customers, and others to create an ecosystem for building and nurturing talent. The internal system involves structures, culture, leadership, and talent management to create strong human capital for the organisation.

Professor Smith then moderated a panel discussion on ‘War for Talent’. The panel members were Mr Don Lam, CEO and Co-founder of VinaCapital; Ms Tieu Yen Trinh, Founder and CEO, TalentNet Corporation; and Mrs Le Mai Lan, Vice Chairwoman, Vingroup. The panel discussed issues pertaining to competition for key talent sectors, the ability to create external alliances to create an impact, and the challenge of building an organisation culture in a fast-paced business environment. The panelists all agreed that human capital is affecting business outcomes and that new approaches are needed to pave the way for business success in Vietnam.

Professor Arnoud De Meyer added, “Vietnam is one of the fastest-growing nations in the world. Economic and political reforms over the last 30 years have transformed Vietnam significantly. On 10 November 2017, its National Assembly passed the 2018 socio-economic development plan with the aim to achieve annual growth of 6.5%–6.7% by boosting exports and investment. About 70 percent of Vietnam’s population is of working age, unemployment is low, domestic demand is robust, and an ever-increasing inflow of foreign direct investment continues to support healthy export growth.

“To sustain Vietnam’s long-term growth and reach its goal of becoming an upper-middle-income nation by 2035, the development of human capital will be crucial. This Industry Leaders Dialogue is therefore timely and forms an integral part of SMU’s overall efforts to deepen our understanding and collaboration with Vietnam. The Dialogue serves as a platform for industry leaders, academia and

other stakeholders to share, discuss and debate ideas and issues about Vietnam that are current and relevant.”

SMU’s recent engagements with Vietnam

In the last few years, SMU has steadily increased its engagement with Vietnam. These include:

- **Technopreneurship Study Missions:** this is an 18-week course for entrepreneurially-inclined SMU students. The trip provided students with an understanding of the vibrant entrepreneurship scene in Vietnam. Students visited ten investee companies of IDG Ventures Vietnam which is the dominant early stage venture capital company in Vietnam for technology, media and telecommunication.
- **Overseas community service projects in Vietnam:** SMU students participated in more than 10 projects in Vietnam in partnership with local communities during Academic Year 2016/2017.
 - o *Project Hue Hope VII* (with local partner Hearts for Hue): taught English, hygiene and environmental conservation to children; constructed a courtyard.
 - o *Project Chong Chong* (with local partner Le Trung Linh): taught English and public speaking; organised Sports Day.
- **Executive education:** SMU Executive Development worked with VinMec International Hospital to build a customised programme around healthcare management for them.
- **Case Teaching & Writing Initiative:** SMU’s Centre for Management Practice (CMP) has conducted business case writing workshops at Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City and co-written articles with them. CMP has also written several case studies about Vietnam since 2012, including *“HappyTap: Encouraging Handwashing in Rural Vietnam”*. In March 2017, CMP has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Association of High Quality Vietnam Products Companies to develop case studies with the Association’s member companies.
- **Faculty visit:** Professor Gerry George, Dean of SMU Lee Kong Chian School of Business, led a faculty visit to Vietnam in October 2017 where they visited several companies including Minh Long, KOVA, Vietjet Airlines, Lam Soo Brands Vietnam, venture capitalist companies, and Econ Institute of Ho Chi Minh.
- **Working with Vietnamese universities:**
 - o In May 2017, the Applied Research Centre for Intellectual Assets and the Law in Asia at the SMU School of Law organised a Faculty Seminar “Patent Litigation in Vietnam”. Dr Nguyen Thai Cuong from University of Ho Chi Minh City was the invited speaker.
 - o At the Mastercard-SMU 2nd Research Seminar on Financial and Social Inclusion in October 2017, Associate Professor Truong Thi Nam Thang, Deputy Head of the Business Culture Department, Faculty of Business Management at the National Economics University was an invited speaker. She spoke about “Incubating Social Enterprises into Universities in Vietnam”.
 - o The Lien Centre for Social Innovation at SMU is currently undertaking a study “Social Entrepreneurship in Southeast Asia: Social Enterprise Incubation Programs and Higher Education Institutions in Selected Southeast Asian Countries” with Vietnam National University, National Economics University, Foreign Trade University and University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City.

- **Support for Vietnamese students:**

- *SMU International Scholarships*: supported by Mr Ean Kuok, a former member of SMU Board of Trustees, the scholarships aim to motivate outstanding undergraduates of Asian nationality, with demonstrated financial need, to achieve academic excellence for four academic years at SMU.
- *Kewalram Chanrai Group Endowed Scholarship*: aimed at motivating foreign students from developing countries to achieve greater heights of excellence by pursuing a university education.
- *Doris and Mick Aw Accounting Study Grants*: provide assistance to full-time School of Accountancy undergraduates participating in the Accounting Study Missions.
- *Wilmar Overseas Internship Grants*: supported by Wilmar International Limited, the grants seek to expose students to emerging economies of the world and inculcate in them a pioneering spirit, entrepreneurship vision and sharp business acumen.

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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. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, 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 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, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community.