



MEDIA RELEASE

SMU honours Professor Arnoud De Meyer with its highest appointment of University Professorship

SMU's longest-serving President lauded for his visionary leadership at farewell and handover ceremony

SINGAPORE, 16 November 2018 – Professor Arnoud De Meyer, Singapore Management University (SMU)'s fourth and longest serving President, has been conferred the University's highest honour - SMU University Professorship - at a farewell and handover ceremony held at SMU Hall today. He is the first in SMU to be conferred this title.

The SMU University Professorship is the highest appointment bestowed on a very select number of faculty to recognise significant accomplishments in research, eminent careers, and outstanding contributions to the University, the profession and the community. University Professors are recognised nationally and internationally for the importance of their scholarly and/or professional achievements. They will also have demonstrated the breadth of interest characteristically encompassed by the traditional role of scholar, teacher, and public servant. In addition, they will have brought distinction to the University resulting from these activities.

Gracing the ceremony were Singapore's President and SMU Patron Madam Halimah Yacob, SMU's Honorary Patron and Distinguished Senior Fellow Dr Tony Tan, Minister for Education Mr Ong Ye Kung, SMU Chancellor Mr J Y Pillay, and SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping. They were joined by about 300 guests including SMU Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumni.

At the ceremony, Prof De Meyer also ceremonially handed over the university presidency to Professor Lily Kong, currently SMU Provost and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences, who will become the 5th President of SMU on 1 January 2019.

In his citation speech, SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping said "Under Prof De Meyer's leadership, SMU has continued to deliver a transformative education experience to produce confident, versatile and well-rounded 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.

"The University's postgraduate programmes, as well as its executive development and continuing education outfits have all expanded very significantly during this period. SMU continues to grow from strength to strength – building its world-class faculty, and anchoring its research focus through its impactful research centres and institutes, several of which are at the cutting edge of knowledge and thought leadership.

“Through his sterling leadership, SMU has transformed itself from being, in his own words, a “single product” university to becoming a “multi-product” university. In the coming years, “SMU-X” (as well as its overseas version, named “SMU-XO”) – both the brainchild of Prof De Meyer and which have gained global recognition as innovative experiential learning — will become an integral part of SMU’s pedagogical DNA, and be viewed as a defining step in SMU’s progress and development.”

During Prof De Meyer’s tenure, SMU has also significantly raised its thought leadership profile through hosting speaking events for many world political leaders and renowned thinkers. In addition, the University has forged strong linkages, collaboration and partnerships with academia, industry, government, social organisations and the community at large.

Prof De Meyer led in the expansion of the SMU campus with the development of the School of Law building and the Kwa Geok Choo Law Library, which were officially opened in March 2017, as well as the redevelopment of Campus Green which added new learning, teaching and group study spaces, and sports facilities.

SMU’s outreach and advancement activities have also progressed well under his leadership — several significant gifts were received during this period. His leadership and direct involvement and support, notably in the areas of SMU’s internationalisation and reputation-building efforts – particularly in China, India, Southeast Asia and Europe – and SMU’s postgraduate programmes, have helped SMU to achieve impressive successes.

The University has also made important strides in its sustainability efforts, from improving energy and water efficiency, urban farming, food waste reduction, to the adoption of cutting-edge design and technology in new building projects.

Prof De Meyer’s contribution to the wider business community, and to Singapore, comes in the form of, among others, his Board Directorship at the National Research Foundation, Singapore International Chamber of Commerce, Temasek Management Services and Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

For his contributions to both SMU and to Singapore, Prof Arnoud De Meyer was conferred the Public Administration Medal (Gold) in the National Day Awards 2018.

In his speech, Professor De Meyer shared, amongst other things, the success factors of SMU. “One of the most important success factors of SMU is its governance system. The combination of the concept of an autonomous university with an excellent system of a demanding Board of Trustees and set of committees that always understood very well the distinction between governance and management, has determined the success of SMU.”

The choice to be a research driven university is another factor. “A university needs to develop thought leadership, and infuse its education with the results of the new insights developed by our researchers. I am proud that over the years, we have been able to combine top quality disciplinary research with a set of larger scale interdisciplinary research programmes, thereby making meaningful impact on our society,” added Prof De Meyer.

Other contributory factors to SMU’s success are: the willingness to innovate through its research and the continuous development of its educational concept; the openness to learn from others, teamwork in building the university, a clear focus which has increased its pace of development.

Prior to joining SMU, Prof De Meyer spent over two decades in INSEAD and served as founding Dean of INSEAD's Asia Campus in Singapore.

After stepping down as SMU President, Prof De Meyer will contribute part of his time as a faculty at 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 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 multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, 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.