



Media Release – **Embargoed until 9.15am on 27 August 2018**

***SMU expands city campus footprint with  
new sustainable development named Tahir Foundation Connexion***

*New building designed to support innovative SMU-X pedagogy and cultivate entrepreneurship*

*Singapore, 27 August 2018 (Monday)* – Singapore Management University (SMU) held a ground-breaking ceremony today for its latest development – a five-storey green building in the heart of the city designed to support the University’s innovative SMU-X pedagogy, as well as cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship. The S\$70 million development has been made possible by a donation from the Tahir Foundation and a grant from the Building and Construction Authority under the Public Sector Construction Productivity Fund (PSCPF).

SMU has named the building Tahir Foundation Connexion in appreciation of the Foundation’s contribution. The donation, the amount of which is undisclosed, is the second largest gift received by the University to-date.

The ceremony was officiated this morning by Guest-of-Honour Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development, in the presence of 150 guests, comprising SMU’s Board of Trustees, partners, as well as faculty, staff and student leaders.

Located between SMU’s School of Accountancy and School of Law, the new building will add over 8,600 square metres (sqm) of teaching-and-learning space to SMU’s city campus. It will enable seamless connectivity through the entire SMU city campus, as well as provide a sheltered link (aboveground and underground) from Bras Basah Road leading to Fort Canning and Armenian Street. Besides enhancing convenience for the SMU community, it will also benefit members of the public, who will have better access to the lush greenery at Fort Canning Park. With some of the new building’s spaces and facilities being open 24/7, it will also add vibrancy to the Bras Basah precinct.

To support the University’s SMU-X pedagogy, which focuses on experiential learning through real-world projects, the Tahir Foundation Connexion is designed to provide new-generation learning spaces that boast flexibility and future adaptability. These include active learning classrooms, brainstorming hubs, collaborative zones, a dining commons, integrated learning studios, makerspace and student lounges. The ample active learning spaces will enable students’ meetings with industry practitioners and faculty, as well as promote socialising. About 500 sqm will also be set aside as incubation spaces for start-ups to provide an environment that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship among SMU students and alumni.

In line with SMU's commitment towards developing a smart, green and sustainable campus, the Tahir Foundation Connexion is designed to meet the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) Green Mark Platinum certification and the international WELL Building Standard. Aside from being the city centre's first large-scale Mass Engineered Timber (MET) development, the building is also its first On-site Net Zero Energy Building, being self-sustainable with its own power generated from a photovoltaic system located within the same building. The building also boasts many green features and technologies, including an advanced passive displacement cooling, smart LED lighting and predictive smart building control systems.

**SMU Chairman, Mr Ho Kwon Ping, said,** "SMU is very fortunate to receive our second largest gift in the University's history from the Tahir Foundation, and we are honoured to name our latest development the Tahir Foundation Connexion in appreciation of this generosity. Since 2014, the Foundation has provided needy Singaporean, Singapore PR and Indonesian students with financial assistance so that they can focus on their studies and enjoy a fulfilling university life without worry. In 2016, the Foundation extended its support to a collaboration between SMU and Indonesia's Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia that covers academic, student and faculty exchanges and study missions. This year, Dr Tahir also agreed to chair SMU's International Advisory Council for Indonesia, which was launched in April 2018. These are testament of the Foundation's commitment to education, and SMU is grateful for its long-standing support."

Commenting on the gift, **Co-Chair of the Tahir Foundation, Dato Sri Prof Dr (H.C) Tahir, MBA, said,** "I am delighted to be a part of a cause that I hold dearly to my heart. Education is the basis for a better life and it gives me great joy to help lay the foundation of what I believe will be a remarkable hub for student experiences. SMU is renowned for its cutting-edge research and transformative education, and it is my wish that this gift will contribute to SMU's overall efforts to scale new heights of excellence in educating future generations of leaders."

**SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer, said,** "The SMU-X initiative has been lauded by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) as an 'innovation that inspires'; the Tahir Foundation Connexion will literally help us build on this success, where industry partners, students and faculty all play an active role in collaborating to tackle real-world challenges. Slated to be a key co-study/work/learning hub, the new building, with its myriad of new-generation learning spaces, is envisaged to be a lively and conducive environment for meaningful, multi-disciplinary experiential learning and to nurture innovation."

"With its many 'firsts', and the advanced green features and technology integrated into its design, this distinctive building also represents SMU's commitment towards building a smart, green and sustainable campus. These efforts stand true to the essence of SMU's ethos and is yet another way through which we give back to the community," he added.

The Tahir Foundation Connexion is designed to be experimental in architectural expression, while tastefully and seamlessly blending in with the existing SMU campus, the lush Fort

Canning Park and the historical buildings in its vicinity. Construction will begin this month and the building is slated to be completed before the end of 2019.

The Public Sector Construction Productivity Fund helps public sector organisations to procure innovative and productive building solutions, which may come with an initial cost premium, so that these solutions can enter and gain traction in the market. In particular, for Tahir Foundation Connexion, the Fund supports the adoption of structural steel and MET.

- End -

Enclosures:

- Annex 1 – Fact Sheet: Tahir Foundation and SMU
- Annex 2 – Fact Sheet: About SMU-X
- Annex 3 – Fact Sheet: About the Business Innovation Generator located at Innovation Bridge @ Fort Canning
- Annex 4 – Fact Sheet: Sustainability Features of Tahir Foundation Connexion
- Annex 5 – Artist’s impressions (with captions)

---

**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 post-graduate 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. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

---

**Media Contact**

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

## Annex 1

### Fact Sheet: Tahir Foundation and SMU

- The Tahir Foundation has been supporting SMU since 2014 when it gifted SMU with the Tahir Indonesian Scholarship to provide financial assistance to Indonesian students studying at SMU, and also as a means to further enhance the good relations and understanding between the people of Indonesia and Singapore. In 2015, the Foundation doubled its support with another Scholarship, this time for the financially needy Singaporean and Singaporean PR students studying at SMU.
- In 2016, it extended its support to a collaboration between SMU and Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia by contributing towards the establishment of the Tahir SMU-UGM Management and Faculty Development Programme. This programme focusses on collaborative academic initiatives, student and faculty exchanges, and study missions.
- In April 2018, SMU also launched the SMU International Advisory Council (IAC) for Indonesia with Dr Tahir as the chair of a panel comprising eminent members from the Singapore and Indonesian business community as well as SMU alumni. IAC Indonesia, along with other SMU IACs in the region, including Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Thailand, is part of its overall efforts to strengthen SMU's international network, and to guide SMU in its endeavours to foster and deepen our engagement with the government, academic and business communities in the countries of this region.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Annex 2

### Fact Sheet: About SMU-X

#### What is SMU-X?

- SMU-X is an experiential learning framework where students tackle real-world challenges by taking on projects from corporate, non-profit and government-sector organisations. Pioneered at SMU in 2015, it represents a paradigm shift which focuses on learning as opposed to teaching, as well as a mind-set shift to get the University to collaborate both internally and with its external stakeholders.
- SMU-X has been lauded by global accreditation body Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) as an ‘innovation that inspires’.
- The SMU-X curriculum combines academic with **experiential learning** through the **heavy use of projects** from partner organisations. SMU-X courses challenge students to use their knowledge and skills to recommend solutions through **interdisciplinary approaches**. Partner organisations and faculty are involved in **active mentoring** so that students benefit most out of this deep relationship.
- The result is a **tripartite learning loop** – students get a better understanding of what it means to use theory learnt outside the classroom; our faculty learn how real-world adapts theories; and our partners deepen their own learning through the findings and recommendations by SMU faculty and students. This inculcates in all parties the value of continuous learning which is imperative given today’s rapidly changing economic conditions.
- In 2017, the University ramped up its offering of SMU-X courses to give every SMU student the opportunity to take at least one SMU-X module during their university education. Riding on the success, SMU is now expanding its partnerships to give students the opportunity to engage in SMU-X projects with companies and NGOs *outside* Singapore.
- These **SMU-X Overseas** projects will give students a realistic experience working with partners abroad, and/or managing regional and global projects in their future workplace. In the next two years, SMU plans to offer SMU-X Overseas modules in Indonesia, Laos, Taiwan, Thailand, The Philippines and Vietnam

#### Latest statistics

- The University has conducted 48 unique SMU-X modules (equivalent to 180 course-runs) together with more than 300 partners since the pedagogy was introduced in 2015. More than 6,000 students have benefitted from the SMU-X pedagogy and delivered about 900 projects with partners from the public sector (12%), private companies (73%) and NGO (15%).
- In the current Academic Year 2018-2019, at least 30 SMU-X modules will be offered and another 2,500 students are expected to partner with organisations across all sectors.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Annex 3

#### Fact Sheet: About the Business Innovation Generator located at Innovation Bridge @ Fort Canning

- Housed within the Tahir Foundation Connexion will be a business incubator established by the University's Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) to help aspiring entrepreneurs build companies that can create significant value to this world.
- Established in 2009, IIE's Business Innovation Generator (BIG) provides various incubation services for entrepreneurs and start-ups, and is open to all SMU students, alumni and staff, and other third parties, such as the recipients of Startup SG Founder Grant and aspiring founders from Southeast Asia and globally.
- When Tahir Foundation Connexion is completed, BIG will be located within the Innovation Bridge @ Fort Canning, a two-storey link building (500 sqm) that spans across the Fort Canning Link and physically connects Tahir Foundation Connexion and the School of Law building. The new premises will replace its current 300 sqm space located at the basement of SMU School of Accountancy. The new space will provide a permanent, physical event/networking venue for SMU start-up founders, mentors and partners in SMU's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. It will be able to accommodate at least 80 start-ups per year, up from the current 40 annually.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Annex 4

### Fact Sheet: Sustainability Features of Tahir Foundation Connexion

The Tahir Foundation Connexion is designed to meet the **BCA Green Mark Platinum** and **On-site Net Zero Energy Building standards**. The building also aims to achieve the international **WELL Building Standard**, thereby reinforcing SMU's unique character as a green city campus.

The BCA Green Mark building rating system by the Singapore Building and Construction Authority (BCA) that evaluates a building for its environmental impact and performance, with an aim to promote sustainable design, construction and operations practices in buildings. BCA Green Mark Platinum is the highest tier certification that sustainable buildings can achieve.

The WELL Building Standard, which is administered by the International WELL Building Institute™ (IWBI™), a public benefit corporation whose mission is to improve human health and well-being through the built environment. The WELL Building Standard™ (WELL) marries best practices in design and construction with evidence-based medical and scientific research, and sets performance requirements in seven concepts relevant to occupant health in the built environment – air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind.

Responding to the Government's drive towards increased adoption of Design for Manufacturing and Assembly (DfMA) technologies, Tahir Foundation Connexion will be the **first large-scale Mass Engineered Timber (MET) development in the densely-built city centre**. It will also be the **first On-site Net Zero Energy Building in the city centre**, i.e. the building is highly efficient and will only use as much energy as it generates from a photovoltaic system located within the same building.

The building also houses many unique **green features and technology**, including optimised natural ventilation, advanced passive displacement cooling (new air-conditioning technology without the use of air handling units and fan coil units), dimmable LED lights with networked sensors, the harnessing of on-site solar energy, as well as predictive and responsive smart building control systems. The long-term tangible energy cost savings will be more than 500MWh of electricity per year.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Annex 5

### Artist's impressions (with captions)




<p><u>Image 1</u></p>  <p><i>(View from National Museum of Singapore)</i></p>	<p>Artist's impression: <b>Tahir Connexion Foundation - The Solar Verandah</b></p> <p>The open space between the Tahir Foundation Connexion and the existing SMU School of Accountancy is transformed into a vibrant campus boulevard, which will form a new hub for student life on campus.</p> <p>The café, together with key circulation nodes, are strategically located on the ground floor to activate this linear space, keeping it active and vibrant 24/7. Balconies and terraces are introduced at strategic locations to enable inter-floor connectivity and visual transparency, adding to the overall vibrancy of the campus. This street is sheltered by a canopy of photovoltaic (PV) cells, reflecting SMU's strong commitment towards sustainability.</p>
<p><u>Image 2</u></p> 	<p>Artist's impression: <b>Tahir Connexion Foundation (view from junction of Fort Canning and Stamford Road)</b></p> <p>The new building will enable a seamless, sheltered connection that is open to the public – from the Bras Basah and Bencoolen MRT stations through SMU's basement concourse, to School of Accountancy (building on the right – partially shown), Tahir Foundation Connexion (centre) and School of Law (building on the left – partially shown), leading to Fort Canning and Armenian Street.</p>
<p><u>Image 3</u></p> 	<p>Artist's impression: <b>The North Plaza</b></p> <p>The North Plaza is a distinctive urban space within the Tahir Foundation Connexion which celebrates SMU's unique character as a city campus. It has been carefully designed to integrate seamlessly with Fort Canning Park and enables the cityscape to form the backdrop for campus life and activities within SMU. Historical elements, such as the gateway pillars of the former National Library are sensitively integrated within the space, enriching the overall spatial experience of the place. The construction system is exposed within the Plaza space, reflecting the X-perimental nature and character of the SMU-X initiative,</p>
<p><u>Image 4</u></p> 	<p>Artist's impression: <b>Boulevard Link</b></p> <p>Tahir Foundation Connexion is connected to the School of Accountancy via the Boulevard Link. Key facilities such as active learning classrooms and seminar rooms are located at this common level to facilitate shared use of common resources and encourage inter-disciplinary interaction and collaboration. It also serves as a viewing gallery, enabling participation and appreciation of activities along the campus boulevard under the sheltered Solar Verandah.</p>



Image 5



*Artist's impression: Collaboration Spaces*

The Tahir Foundation Connexion is seen as a central learning hub within the SMU campus, with extensive informal learning zones complementing formal learning spaces. Collaboration spaces strategically located on levels 3 and 4 are designed to have different sitting configurations and settings to suit a variety of uses. The strategic location of open staircases facilitate inter-floor connectivity and provide opportunities for chance encounters and exchange, so as to foster community-bonding and strengthen the spirit of collegiality and collaboration.

Image 6



*Artist's impression: Integrated Learning Studio*

The Integrated Learning Studio is a unique space which will enable 24/7 learning, where students can work in teams as part of their SMU-X projects to solve real-world issues. It is designed to have maximum flexibility, with open floor plates that can be adapted to accommodate new learning modalities and future needs. Different spaces will be defined through the creative use of innovative furniture, to ensure a sense of openness and transparency within the building and to safeguard future flexibility.

Image 7A and 7B

7A



*Artist's impressions:*

**(a) Innovation Bridge @ Fort Canning**

Tahir Foundation Connexion has a two-storey link building that spans across the Fort Canning Link. Providing a physical connection between the new building and the SMU School of Law, this link building will house SMU Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship's (IIE) incubator – Business Innovation Generator (BIG). The Innovation Bridge @ Fort Canning thus serves as a strong symbol of SMU's unique qualities as a city campus that continually forges meaningful relationships between academia and industry.

7B



**(b) IIE Business Innovation Generator**

The BIG's new premises is housed within Tahir Foundation Connexion. It is designed to be an open, welcoming and vibrant workplace that is conducive for start-ups and entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into viable businesses. The Welcome Gallery, a two-storey flexible space, is strategically located at the entrance and designed to optimise inter-floor connectivity and visual transparency. It serves as a presentation space as well as a networking venue for students, academics, business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Image credit: Singapore Management University

\*\*\*\*\*