



**Welcome Remarks by
SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at the Talk by US Ambassador to Singapore Mr Kirk Wagar on
*“Prospering through Diversity:
50 Years of American and Singaporean History”*
Wednesday, 24 February 2015, 7pm
SMU Administration Building, University Lounge**

His Excellency Mr Kirk Wagar, the United States Ambassador to Singapore,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening, and welcome to this talk hosted here at SMU. We are very honoured to have His Excellency Ambassador Wagar here with us to share on the theme, *“Prospering through Diversity: 50 Years of American and Singaporean History”*.

It is an appropriate time to reflect on the importance of diversity as we conclude five decades of history and relations between the United States and Singapore, and look ahead into the next 50 years. We also celebrate racial harmony as the US marks the National African American History Month, in February.

There are similarities for the United States and Singapore, in terms of facing significant challenges in integrating a diverse population, in both nations' history in the last half century. Managing diversity was and still is a common thread – it has been essential and critical to both nations' survival and prosperity. I will let Ambassador Wagar elaborate more on this through his talk.

SMU also places great emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Diversity is part of our DNA – we have always been proud to be Daringly Different. Three years ago, I had

set up a Diversity & Inclusion function – D&I as we call it in short – at SMU. We are the first educational institution in Singapore to initiate a full D&I function in Singapore. The function covers diversity in many aspects for students, staff and faculty. The D&I unit is helmed by the Office of Global Learning, which prepares students for an increasingly globalised world through its focus on three pillars – inclusion, integration and internationalisation. It is only by embracing differences amongst ourselves on campus that we learn to become culturally sensitive citizens of the world. We hope that SMU’s transformative and all-rounded education approach helps students become better global citizens.

In the highly interconnected and globalised world today, diversity is a reality that all of us, not just students, have to face. As a young and different university, SMU believes that we have a big part to play in bridging communities and in championing a broader culture of openness and consciousness. And we believe that harnessing the richness of diversity gives us unique strength and identity to continue to innovate and excel for the benefit of society and humanity.

Once again, I thank all of you for joining us today. Without further ado, let’s welcome Ambassador Wagar. Your Excellency please.

- End -