

SMU students' book on S'pore Constitution launched

By THAM YUEN-C

STUDENTS from the Singapore Management University have written a book to explain the country's Constitution and its underlying concepts to those who are not legally trained.

The 41-page book, written by six students from the college's law school, describes how laws are made and also looks at the electoral system and political parties here.

Titled *The Singapore Constitution: A Brief Introduction*, it was launched by Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yacob yesterday.

She said that it is especially important to increase the general population's understanding of the Constitution as it secures citizens' fundamental liberties.

As Singapore's supreme law, the Constitution sets out the structure of the Government and the roles of Parliament and the judiciary. It is also the basis for all other laws here.

Given the increased interest in political discourse, more knowledge in this area would aid discussions, Madam Halimah said, pointing to misinformation she has seen online.

An example was the confusion over the separation of powers between Parliament and the executive, she added.

"Parliament is the prime symbol of democracy in Singapore... Yet, do many people really know how laws are passed and how Parliament fits in the overall scheme of the Singapore government?" she asked.

It was this general lack of awareness about public law and institutions that sparked the project.

The book's editor Dierdre Grace Morgan, 23, recalled how some had, in debates about the 2011 presidential election, erroneously claimed that the president could "make policies on his own".

The book is available online at www.smuapolitical.com for free. The SMU has also printed 1,000 copies which will be distributed to schools and public libraries.

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