

**Speech by Mr John Lim**  
**SMU Appreciation Event, 2 October 2017**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Thank you, Professor Arnoud De Meyer, for the warm welcome.
2. Scholars, colleagues from ARA, ladies and gentlemen - A very good morning to all of you and a big thank you to the SMU team for organising this event. It's great to see all of you scholars, SMU staff, ARA colleagues and my family here today for a meaningful cause that is very close to my heart.
3. Most of you here know that I place a lot of importance on education because I believe that it has the best social multiplier effect and the ability to change hearts and minds.
4. This is why nine years ago, ARA, together with my Foundation, the Lim Hoon Foundation, embarked on this partnership with SMU. The intention I had was very clear: I wanted to help students of the 'sandwich class' to get through their tertiary education without having to worry about finances.
5. At the same time, I didn't want to just write a cheque – that would be the easy thing to do. To me, it is important that the program is sustainable and will help our scholars beyond finances.

**FINDING A LIKEMINDED PARTNER IN SMU**

6. We were very fortunate to find a like-minded partner in SMU which shared the same vision as us. Since we started, SMU has not only been very supportive of our ideas, but has also been proactive in suggesting ways to engage our scholars.
7. Looking at how the program has evolved in the past nine years, I think that the partnership has definitely been very fulfilling for both parties and more importantly, for our scholars.

## **ARA AND LIM HOON TO INCREASE SMU SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT TO S\$4 MILLION**

8. This year, as Professor Arnoud has mentioned, we will increase the endowment fund by another S\$1 million to bring it to a total of S\$4 million, inclusive of dollar-for-dollar match by the government.
9. Considering that we started with a modest S\$60,000 to fund three<sup>1</sup> students through their four year of studies back then, this is another significant milestone for us.

## **VIEWS ON PHILANTHROPY**

10. In my view, what is more satisfying beyond creating wealth from our business is the ability to put it to good use through philanthropy.
11. My belief is that as individuals, we cannot change the world, but we can still make an impact by doing meaningful things. It has been my guiding principle and I try to lead by example both at work and at home.
12. This is also the reason I started Lim Hoon Foundation in 2008 to make a difference to other people's lives through education. Other than the scholarship program with SMU, the foundation has worked with both Jurong Spring and Mountbatten CCCs to give out over 700 awards in the last nine years to benefit the underprivileged primary, secondary and tertiary students in the two constituencies.

## **THE ARA-LIM HOON SCHOLARSHIP**

13. The ARA-Lim Hoon Scholarship program, which we established in 2009, is not like any other. Besides being bond-free, we involve you in our corporate events like the annual Chinese New Year Cocktail, Group CEO Open House, CSR activities and provide internship opportunities with ARA so that you are well-prepared for the working world.

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1. two students from ARA, one from Lim Hoon

14. This year, we have also invited all of you to join us in our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala dinner on 3 November. You are invited to all our events because we see our scholars not only beneficiaries of the scholarship, but also an extension of the ARA family.
15. In fact, my son, Andy, whom many of you are very familiar with, is like an 'uncle' to all of you, as he has become quite popular with some of you with his mentorship and advice.
16. All we ask in return is something very simple – that you will take this act of kindness and pay it forward. As the Chinese saying goes, 取诸社会用诸社会, just as you have received a gift or help from the society, you should contribute back to it eventually.
17. Many of you have been involved in some of our CSR initiatives, including the bursary award ceremonies with Jurong Spring and Mountbatten CCCs just a couple of months back. We had educational tools and game booths at those events – the younger primary and secondary school kids had fun and learnt from all of you.
18. I would like to thank the past and present Chairpersons of the Committee – Joyce, Roy and now, Angeline, for stepping up to this role and playing a proactive part in organizing these activities. I hope that our new batch of scholars can also take their lead.
19. Even as you graduate and go on to pursue your careers and dreams in life, I hope you will continue to give back actively to society in your own meaningful ways.
20. We have also set up an alumni group for all our scholars to stay connected after they graduate. My dream is that in 10, 20 years' time, all of you will bring your own children to our gatherings, or involve them in CSR activities together with us. I know that not everyone will make it that far with us, but as long as we have 10, 20% of you at that time, it is gratifying enough.
21. Later today, you will also watch a video that highlights the work of the Foundation together with ARA. This video was the initiative of our scholars and it is a wonderful piece of work, so a big thank-you to all of you who helped made it possible.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

22. As with all journeys, it is the people who walk with us that matter the most. We would not have achieved so much without the support of our scholars and Professor Arnoud and the SMU team.
23. On behalf of ARA and Lim Hoon Foundation, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for this very meaningful partnership. I look forward to continue closely with you in the years to come.
24. With that, I wish everyone here great success in your journeys.

Thank you.

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