

**Welcome remarks by SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at the Signing Ceremony between SMU and the University of Oregon**

Friday, 27 June 2014, 10.00 am

SMU Administration Building, Level 14, Meeting Room 14-2

Good morning.

First of all, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Michael Andreasen, Vice President for University Advancement at the University of Oregon, and Mrs Andreasen, to SMU.

I would also like to welcome Richard Seow, Chairman of Sport Singapore, and Bill Lee, Partner with Ernst & Young Singapore. Both are proud alumni of the University of Oregon.

And of course, my SMU colleagues who have gathered here to witness this exciting event.

Out of classroom learning experience

I am pleased to officiate, together with Michael Andreasen, the signing ceremony between SMU and the University of Oregon for a five-year Student Exchange Agreement that will enable students from both universities to learn from the academic and sporting cultures of the two countries. Students from both universities can expect a good grounding in business and the social sciences, and, on top of that, practical insights that will take them out of the classroom and give them opportunities to put their learning into practice, particularly in sports and sports management – two areas with much potential for growth and development in Singapore.

Interest in the sports industry growing among SMU students

SMU currently offers two courses in sports, namely the *Principles of Coaching in Sports* and *Introduction to Sports Management*. They were offered to our students for the first time in 2013, and have proven to be very popular, with about 90 of them enrolled into the two courses.

Interest has been growing among SMU students in seeking career opportunities in the sports industry. Therefore, this collaboration with the University of Oregon is significant as there will be more opportunities for

our students to take up specialised and niche courses in sports management and sports marketing, in addition to those currently offered at SMU, thereby expanding the scope and offerings available to our students.

Mutually-beneficial relationship

Through this exchange programme, Oregon students can select from over 200 courses across any of SMU's six Schools – Business, Economics, Accountancy, Law, Social Sciences and Information Systems. These include Management, Political Science, Marketing, Trading, to name a few. In addition, SMU also offers the Asian Studies Programme for exchange students that allows students to take interdisciplinary courses with a focus on Asia to enhance and deepen their understanding of this region.

For SMU students, they will have access to the renowned Warsaw Sports Marketing Centre at the University of Oregon which is known for its sporting excellence. They will study the best practices of the sport industry in the US, and experience the sports culture at Oregon which is among the most vibrant in the US. Our students will benefit from the multidisciplinary programmes offered by the Warsaw Sports Marketing Centre which blends

concepts in business, such as finance, marketing and leadership, with that of real-life sports practice.

Unique international student exchange programmes like this underpins the holistic education experiences promised at both universities.

Grooming global citizens

At SMU, we aim to nurture our students to become global citizens who are not only intellectually and technically competent, but also aware of cultural sensibilities. Indeed, global exposure has become a unique proposition of SMU's pedagogy. In the near future, we hope to have 100% of our students experiencing some form of global exposure.

SMU has long recognised that multicultural learning has to take place both on campus and through overseas immersion. Every academic year, close to 1,000 SMU students take up opportunities to study abroad for a semester at over 200 partner universities around the world.

Together with the University of Oregon, SMU enjoys very close relationships with several top universities in the United States. The US has

always been one of the top 3 destinations for our students, and we receive a high level of interest from students from the US.

Meeting personal aspirations and supporting national initiative

In a recent pilot survey of some 1700 undergraduates in the Asia Pacific region, including SMU students who have completed an exchange programme, 70% of those interviewed agree that a semester abroad has helped them in securing their first jobs. This agreement with the University of Oregon is part of SMU's continuous efforts to enhance the expertise of our students, thereby providing them with a competitive edge in their careers of choice.

With the opening of the Singapore Sports Hub , there will be an increasing array of sports activities, programmes and events in Singapore that cater to all demographics to experience sports. The Singapore government's continued investments in sports programming and infrastructure aims to turn Singapore into the next sporting centre of Asia. Examples of this include the annual Formula One Singapore Grand Prix, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Finals featuring the top 8 singles players and

doubles teams which will come to Asia Pacific for the first time this year till 2018, and the biennial Southeast Asian (SEA) Games which will take place from June 5 to 15 in Singapore next year. Indeed, there is so much potential for growth and development in sports and sports management in Singapore.

This partnership with University of Oregon will help our students realise their personal career aspirations; at the same time, the sports industry in Singapore will stand to benefit from the training that our students receive from SMU and University of Oregon.

I would like to close by congratulating the teams from both universities for working so hard to make this agreement possible. I would also like to thank Michael Andreasen for specially making a trip to SMU for this ceremony.

I would now like to invite Michael to say a few words.

Thank you.