

**Speech by SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer
at the Launch Ceremony of
MERCU- SMU Excellence Scholarship
12 Nov 2015 (Thursday), 11.00am, Function Room at Level 6**

A very warm welcome to our Guest-of-Honour Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information, Minister-In-Charge of Cyber Security & Minister-In-Charge of Muslim Affairs

Mr Azmi Muslimin, Chairman of MERCU Learning Point

Mr Azmoon Ahmad, Chairman of Association of Muslim Professionals

Mr Anuar Yusop, Executive Director of AMP

Friends from AMP & MERCU,

Students and colleagues from SMU,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Thank you very much for joining us today to mark the official launch of the MERCU-SMU Excellence Scholarship.

This gift of \$600,000 will support, in perpetuity, 3 scholarships for Singaporean Malay students every year, commencing this academic year. It is open for applications by full-time Malay Singaporean undergraduates in year two to year four, who are enrolled in any of the six schools at SMU, and will fund the recipients' school fees and other study-related expenses. I understand the campaign to get more support will remain open, which means the positive impact and number of beneficiaries will increase when we find more donors.

On behalf of SMU, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to MERCU Learning Point and the two individual Singaporean donors who prefer to remain anonymous, for establishing this first-of-its-kind scholarship at SMU. This Scholarship will help us ensure that no deserving Malay student misses out on the opportunity of an SMU education because of financial need. I have no doubt it will also help SMU attract more talented Malay youths to our university. Your generous support will take them on an educational journey that is holistic and enriching, giving them the opportunity to maximise their full potential and achieve their career goals.

I hope this gift will inspire other community and industry leaders to similarly contribute to building a richer and more vibrant educational environment for all SMU students.

Prior to the establishment of this Scholarship, SMU has already been working with the Association of Muslim Professionals to conduct a financial literacy programme for youth beneficiaries aged 12 to 18. The programme equips these youths with essential financial knowledge to give them a firm foundation in managing their money, as well as adopt good financial habits at an early stage in their lives. Since its launch, 60 AMP youth beneficiaries have attended the programme in 2014 and 2015, and discussions are currently underway to continue this collaboration in 2016.

In closing, I would like to once again express our sincere appreciation to Minister Yaacob Ibrahim for gracing this ceremony today. Our special thanks also go to MERCU Learning Point and the two donors for your generous support. The generosity of donors like yourselves have contributed much to the growth and development of SMU, as well as help nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs, business and community leaders for Singapore. We look forward to your continued support.

Thank you.