

Planning in a Rapidly Changing Environment

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1. Welcome Michael Fung, Sim, Lim Chuan Poh
Welcome to Singapore Management University to all delegates.

2. I know you are going to discuss planning. I would leave the topic of planning to specialists in the audience, but as a President of a young University I'd like to share with you a few points on what I see as the Rapidly Changing Environment.

3. Universities have in essence three roles: research, education and service to the society. In each of these I see significant changes. Let me just suggest five:
 - a. Education (1): the way young people learn is very different even ten years ago. They have all information at their fingertips and our role as educators is not anymore to share knowledge, but to help them structure knowledge. There is also a lot more emphasis on project or experienced based learning.

 - b. Education (2): half of the jobs today did not exist ten years ago. One thing is for sure. Many of the jobs that will exist ten years from now don't exist today. We need to prepare our students for a life of ongoing learning. And we need to offer academic educational products and services that will accompany citizens in their on-going learning journey.

 - c. Research: we move towards more interdisciplinary research aligned with the needs of society. We are under pressure to shorten the time between discovery and practical utilisation as in

policy making or commercialisation. We need to address in our research the real issues with which society is confronted.

- d. Service to society: society makes significant and ever rising investments in higher education and basic research. Universities used to be 'ivory towers' somewhat disconnected from their immediate environment. This becomes less and less acceptable and we need to open up the universities to their immediate environment.
- e. Underpinning to all this is that we have seen worldwide the cost of University education rising at higher rates than growth in GDP plus inflation. This is not sustainable, and we need to find (a) new sources of revenues and (b) ways to enhance productivity in our operations. No doubt that technology will play a major role, but that cannot be the only answer.

4. What do we do about it at SMU:

- a. Invest in SMU-X, a space that supports eXperience based learning. If you have the time to visit it do not hesitate to do so.
- b. Expand the reach of our programmes beyond the traditional portfolio of UG and PGP.
- c. Focus on five areas of excellence / hope for good support from the newly announced Social Science Research Council – this is a significant evolution for Singapore.
- d. SMU is par excellence an open University (not in the British sense), constantly inviting others to participate in our activities.
- e. Investment in new sources of revenues (research contracts, continuing education), blended learning and OBI.

5. I wish you a great conference.