

**Opening Remarks
by SMU President Professor Lily Kong
at the signing of Collaboration Agreement
for SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme**

**SMU HALL, SCHOOL OF LAW
THURSDAY 31 JANUARY 2019, 11.30AM**

Mr Tan Kiat How, Chief Executive of Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore

Ms Stephanie Davis, Country Director of Google Singapore

Distinguished guests

Colleagues, students and alumni of SMU

Parents, teachers and students

Good morning

A very warm welcome to the Singapore Management University for this special event to celebrate the partnership between SMU and Google to offer the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme to SMU's undergraduate students.

SMU and analytics programmes

• **Undergraduate**

Today, analytics is applied to an increasing number of areas, in both the public and private sectors. SMU's School of Information Systems, or SIS, is what I would consider

a pioneer in business analytics education in Singapore. It had introduced an undergraduate specialisation in Business Intelligence & Analytics more than a decade ago, in 2008.

Over the last ten years or so, SIS has deepened and expanded its analytics curriculum, ahead of the growing importance of analytics.

In 2013, in response to the call from various industries and government agencies to make the analytics training available to a wider base of students, SIS introduced Analytics as a second-major, available to undergraduate students from across the university.

When SIS rolled out its revised undergraduate curriculum in 2017, Business Analytics was one of six tracks which our Year 3 and 4 students can choose to specialise in. This track teaches students the concepts and methods in data analytics, and enables them to apply that knowledge to develop business strategies and solve real-world issues.

In the same year, our Lee Kong Chian School of Business started offering the Finance Analytics Track under its Finance Major, Marketing Analytics Track under its Marketing Major, and Operations Analytics Track under its Operations Management Major.

Last year, our School of Accountancy launched a second major in Accounting Data and Analytics for undergraduates. This is a first in Singapore to groom the next generation of accounting professionals who will be expert users of emerging technologies and adopters of smart software and analytics.

In August this year, the School of Information Systems will offer a new degree programme in Computer Science. The programme, which aims to equip students with technical skills to build computing products and solutions, will have Statistical Thinking for Data Science as a core course.

- **Postgraduate**

At the postgraduate level, the Master of IT in Business Analytics Track, offered by our School of Information Systems, is Asia's first professional masters programme to meet the increasing demand for well-trained data analytics professionals. Launched in 2011, the Analytics track remains a leading programme in analytics training due to its wide and deep coverage of different topics. Last year, the revamped Master of IT in Business introduced a new Financial Technology & Analytics track to train students in blockchain, crypto-currencies, smart contracts and big data.

The School of Accountancy has also launched the new Master of Science in Accounting (Data and Analytics) last year. This is the first Master degree programme in Asia specialising in accounting data and analytics.

- **Continuing education**

As for continuing education and training, the SMU Academy provides learning opportunities for adult learners in analytics, such as Data Analytics for Managers; Accounting Data and Analytics; Interactive Business Analytics; and Harnessing the Power of Predictive Analytics, to name a few.

SMU and Google

Over the last few years, Google has partnered SMU in a number of student-related activities. Since 2012, Google Singapore has offered summer internships to SMU students across different schools. It has also conducted career talks at SMU, as well as recruitment talks for its Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme. To date, 27 SMU graduates have completed this programme. I am pleased to welcome two of them back today, Yi Jun (怡君) and Jordon, who will be on the panel later to discuss the future of the data industry in Singapore.

SMU students have also been invited to coding sessions organised by Google, and to events such as Women Techmakers Global Event Series which featured panel discussions with female technology leaders. In October last year, about 80 SIS students

had the opportunity to visit Google Singapore's office where they were introduced to machine learning and participated in a career panel discussion.

Today, we are very happy to further strengthen this partnership with Google with the signing of an agreement to offer the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme to SMU's undergraduates. This partnership marks the first time that Google is extending its Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme under IMDA's TechSkills Accelerator initiative specifically to the undergraduates of a local university. The aim of this Programme is to nurture future-ready analytics talent to meet industry demand.

This partnership with Google is among the first work-study opportunities to be offered by SMU to our students. SMU announced in September last year that we will begin piloting a work-study elective for selected programmes. This is in recognition of the value of longer internship durations, which enable students to better interlace institution-based learning with structured on-the-job training, and also facilitate more substantial and impactful work opportunities within the attachment company.

Through this SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme, not only will our students be able to apply their classroom knowledge to real-world problems during their internships with Google's partner companies, they will also gain valuable experience and obtain a better understanding of the demands and opportunities in these industries. We believe that the programme will prepare our students to go on and create impact for these industries and the economy.

The inaugural batch of some 25 students who were admitted into the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme have completed the Analytics Foundation course in November 2018. They have embarked on the Digital Analytics Technology course this month, and will commence their six-month internship with a Google partner company in May 2019. About 50 students are expected to be enrolled in the second run of the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme.

On completing the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme, SMU students will receive a certificate awarded by SMU and Google.

At this juncture, I am pleased to share that in support of the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme, IMDA will sponsor the TeSA Awards under its TechSkills Accelerator (TeSA) initiative to be given to the top student for each class over three years to 2021 to recognise their outstanding achievements in this Programme.

Closing

In closing, I would like to express our appreciation to Mr Tan Kiat How for gracing this occasion as our Guest-of-Honour, and to IMDA for your strong endorsement of the SMU-Google Squared Data & Analytics Programme.

Our gratitude also goes to Ms Stephanie Davis and to Google for partnering SMU in this very important initiative, and to Google's partner companies for being here with us today to share with our students about your company and career opportunities.

I would also like to congratulate the inaugural batch of SMU students admitted into the Programme. I am confident that you will benefit much from the experiential learning that the Programme provides.

Once again, please accept my sincere thanks to Google, to IMDA, and to all involved for turning the idea into reality. Thank you.