

**Address by Prof Lily Kong,
at the SMU President's Farewell and Handover Ceremony,
SMU Hall, Friday, 16 November 2018**

Madam President

Dr Tony Tan

Minister Ong Ye Kung

Mr J Y Pillay

Mr Ho Kwon Ping

President De Meyer

Let me begin by joining all present in thanking Arnoud for his leadership over the last eight years. He has led the university to become the research intensive university that it is today, one that also gave deep attention to the delivery of education in service of the nation.

On the personal front, Arnoud has been extremely supportive to me as President. In the last three years that I have been Provost, his openness and willingness to let me run with the academic initiatives has allowed me to develop many ideas and initiatives together with colleagues. It has been deeply gratifying to introduce many new programmes and develop multiple research fronts. For all that, I would like to say a personal thank you to Arnoud.

Next, I would like to thank the Board for the faith and trust in me for appointing me the fifth President of SMU. It is a tremendous honour and privilege. I am deeply aware that with it comes responsibilities - the responsibility of shaping young people and their futures, of developing

those who need upskilling and reskilling, and of creating knowledge that benefits economy, society and polity.

So I take the occasion to call on my colleagues to put our minds and hearts to this collective endeavour and responsibility. Together, we will strive for excellence, but it will not be excellence without a soul. We will strive to be innovative in what we do as we navigate new challenges, but it will not be innovation without discipline. And we will strive for difference, for we have prided ourselves from the beginning in being “A Different U”, but it will not be difference for its own sake, without meaningful impact.

I will outline the strategic directions and goals for SMU at the start of the new year, when I address our internal community in January. I will draw from the many conversations and engagements sessions I have had in the last few months with many across campus. As we leave our teenage years as a university and approach the start of our third decade, I invite all of you, internal and external stakeholders and friends of the university, to work together so that SMU can do still better.

This is an evening to thank and honour Arnoud, therefore I shall keep my remarks short and not stand between you and dinner. It remains for me to invite you to join me once again to thank Arnoud in the usual manner except with much more gusto than usual.

Thank you.