

**FOREWORD PENNED BY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT HALIMAH YACOB**

# SMU students develop primer on Constitution

*Guide explains separation of powers among executive, legislature and judiciary*

**SINGAPORE** – The Republic's Constitution forms the basis of all laws passed

in Singapore, but misconceptions exist now and then over what it encompasses. The powers of the elected President were hotly debated in the lead-up to the 2011 Presidential Election, for instance, as some candidates held a more expansive interpretation of the role compared to their rivals.

● The book is a project of the SMU Apolitical Club. The views of law academics Eugene Tan and Jack Lee were also sought.

Some 1,000 copies of the booklet, which uses diagrams and flowcharts to aid readers' understanding of the Constitution, will be distributed to secondary schools and tertiary institutions. They will also be made available at national libraries.

The public debate spurred a group of students studying constitutional law at the Singapore Management University (SMU) to develop a book which serves as a primer on the Constitution. The 41-page guide, titled *The Singapore Constitution: A Brief Introduction*, seeks to explain the concept of separation of powers among the executive, legislature and the judiciary, as well as how laws are made in Parliament.

Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yacob, who penned the foreword for the book, launched the publication yesterday. She commended the students' efforts in developing an "easy guide" and said it will be useful for every citizen to know the Constitution, including the roles of the judiciary and Parliament as well as the structure of the government.

"Young people might not be immersed in society yet, so it (Singapore's Constitution) can be a very abstract notion for them. What we need to do is to make it simple, demystify it so that they can understand it better," said Mdm Halimah, who also suggested that SMU undergraduates could organise small discussion groups among the youth to raise awareness and interest in the Constitution.

Ms Dierdre Grace Morgan, who spearheaded the project, felt there is "a greater interest in the electoral process and how the government works in general" in the new climate of domestic politics.

"We also frequently come across misconceptions of the Singapore system, especially in the online sphere. Having studied constitutional law in university, we decided to put our knowledge to good use by coming up with this primer, which will hopefully benefit many others in society," said the fourth-year law undergraduate.

**NG JING YNG**