

EMBARGOED UNTIL 28 JULY 2026, 1430HRS

Media Release

SMU Honours Yip Pin Xiu with Honorary Doctorate at Commencement 2026

Singapore, 28 July 2026 – Singapore Management University (SMU) today conferred an **Honorary Doctor of Laws** on **SMU alumna and Singapore's most decorated Paralympian, Ms Yip Pin Xiu**, in recognition of her exceptional sporting achievements, leadership in advancing inclusion and accessibility, and outstanding contributions to society, as the University opened its Commencement 2026 celebrations.

Across five days of ceremonies, SMU will graduate 3,857 students, comprising 2,298 Bachelor's degree graduates, 1,424 Master's and Juris Doctor graduates, and 135 Doctorate graduates. Forty-nine Bachelor's graduates completed double degrees.

The opening ceremony, hosted by the SMU School of Economics, was officiated by **Guest-of-Honour Dr Leow Kah Shin, Co-Founder of Quantedge**, and attended by more than 1,000 graduates, award recipients, family members and guests.

Addressing the graduating class, **SMU President Professor Lily Kong** said a university education should develop not only professional capability but also character.

"The world will reward innovation and expertise, but it will also call upon your judgement, your integrity, and your empathy. What will distinguish you is not only what you know, but how you choose to engage with uncertainty, with difference, and with difficulty."

This year's Commencement also marks two academic milestones.

SMU celebrated the inaugural cohort of 36 graduates from its **Bachelor of Science (Software Engineering), the University's first SkillsFuture Work-Study degree programme**. The four-year programme combines classroom learning with a year-long industry apprenticeship, equipping students with software engineering, DevOps and AI capabilities. As of June 2026, **about seven in 10 graduating students had secured full-time employment**, with employers including ByteDance, Google, JP Morgan, NCS, UBS and Accenture.

SMU also celebrated the first 30 graduates from its **Master of Sustainability programme**. The interdisciplinary programme equips graduates with expertise in sustainability strategy, management and policy, preparing them for roles in consulting, professional services and the public sector. For MST students who graduated in 2025, **88% landed full-time roles within 6 months of graduation**.

SMU Chairman Mr Piyush Gupta encouraged graduates to build on Singapore's success by creating impact beyond personal achievement.

"Singapore's own journey illustrates this well. Economic success was essential. But what truly mattered was how that success translated into opportunity, resilience, and shared progress. Your generation now has the opportunity, and responsibility, to build on that foundation."

This year's **University Valedictorian** is **Ryan Lee Zong En**, who graduates with a Bachelor of Science (Information Systems). Alongside graduating with a perfect GPA, Ryan was recognised for his leadership and service to the SMU community, receiving both the Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Award and the CPI Valedictorian Award.

The University Salutatorian is **Jolie Cheng Yu An**, who graduates with a Bachelor of Business Management. A Lee Kong Chian Scholar, Jolie led consulting projects supporting charities and social enterprises and **contributed more than 235 hours of community service**, including a service-learning project in Laos.

SMU also recognised **12 recipients of the Ho Kwon Ping CIRCLE Award**, presented annually to students who exemplify the University's values of Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership and Excellence through academic achievement, leadership and service.

The graduating Class of 2026 is also supporting the SMU Circle Fund, the University's annual graduating class giving initiative that supports financially challenged students. Over the past five academic years, the campaign has brought together more than 500 alumni, raised over S\$190,000, and funded bursaries for 17 undergraduates, reflecting a growing culture of philanthropy among an alumni community now spanning over 20 years of graduates.

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Annex 1 - Honorary degree recipients – past and present

About SMU

Singapore Management University (SMU) is Asia's premier global city university at the nexus of management, social sciences and technology. Established in 2000, the University's vision foregrounds its DNA in driving innovations, transcending boundaries and transforming lives. SMU's mission is to nurture a community of independent lifelong learners and change agents, enable world-class researchers to address societal challenges, harness partnerships to serve as gateway between Asia and the world, and transform lives to create sustainable futures.

Recognised for its award-winning pedagogy, SMU's interactive, collaborative and practice-oriented education prepares graduates to be agile, adaptive and ready to create meaningful impact across business, government and society. SMU graduates are consistently ranked among the most employable in Singapore, and command one of the highest mean starting salaries.

SMU offers a future-oriented suite of undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes through six schools and two colleges: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong

Pung How School of Law, School of Social Sciences, College of Integrative Studies, and College of Graduate Research Studies. Their programmes include multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary pathways that reflect the complex challenges of today's world.

SMU's research is rigorous, high-impact and interdisciplinary, addressing globally relevant issues from an Asian perspective. Its faculty also collaborates with leading researchers, universities, industry, government and community partners to advance knowledge, shape policy and practice, and deliver real-world solutions.

Located in the heart of downtown Singapore, SMU's city campus strengthens its strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community, enabling the University to turn ideas into action and create impact where it matters.

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Annex 1

Honorary Degree Recipients – past and present

S/N	Student Name	Programme	Classification	Degree Award Date
1	YONG PUNG HOW	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	14 July 2007
2	LEE SENG GEE	Doctor of Humane Letters	Honoris Causa	14 July 2007
3	JOHN SEELY BROWN	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	25 July 2013
4	CHAN SEK KEONG	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	25 July 2013
5	RATAN NAVAL TATA	Doctor of Business	Honoris Causa	17 March 2014
6	SELLAPAN RAMANATHAN @ S R NATHAN	Doctor of Letters	Honoris Causa	15 July 2014
7	KATHERINE ANN SCHIPPER	Doctor of Accountancy	Honoris Causa	15 July 2014
8	JOHN RODNEY NILAND	Doctor of Letters	Honoris Causa	17 August 2018
9	TONY TAN KENG YAM	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	26 July 2022
10	J Y PILLAY	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	25 July 2023
11	HO KWON PING	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	30 July 2024
12	KUOK KHOON HONG	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	29 July 2025
13	YIP PIN XIU	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	28 July 2026