



MEDIA RELEASE

SMU holds in-person Commencement ceremonies to celebrate the graduation of the Class of 2020

Singapore, 15 December 2021 (Wednesday) – Singapore Management University (SMU) kicked off six days of graduation celebration for the Class of 2020 today at the Opening Ceremony of SMU Commencement 2020. The in-person ceremony, which was graced by Guest-of-Honour Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Defence, was held on SMU campus today with 258 persons in attendance. They include SMU senior management, faculty, guests, graduates, award winners, as well as family of the graduates.

The physical ceremonies are organised following the specially curated Virtual Graduation and Career Fair which was held for the Class of 2020 in July last year in light of the Covid-19 situation.

The 2021-strong Class of 2020 comprises 1884 Bachelor's degree graduates, 989 Master's degree and Juris Doctor degree graduates, and 48 Doctorate degree graduates. Among the Bachelor's degree graduates, 56 of them will be receiving double degrees. Together, they represent SMU's 17th batch of graduates since the University was established in 2000.

The occasion marks the graduation of the inaugural batch of students from the following programmes:

- Master of Science in Accounting
- Doctor of Philosophy in Computer Science

Mr Ian Mah Hao Ran, who graduates from the Yong Pung How School of Law, was named the Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian & SPH Valedictorian, while Mr Gabriel Manuel Sidik from the School of Computing and Information Systems was named the SMU Salutatorian. Both stood out with their outstanding leadership skills, significant contributions to co-curricular activities and the community-at-large, good character records and excellent academic results (both achieved Summa Cum Laude).

Addressing graduates from the School of Economics who were conferred their degrees this afternoon, Guest-of-Honour Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen said, "Graduation marks a major milestone, even a transformation – a "commencement" - where doors and opportunities open wide. To quote Shakespeare, the World is now your oyster, with which your sword will easily open. A time to step out onto your own, to claim your stake for what life has to offer, to build and call it your own."

In his Welcome Remarks, SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping said, "Completing your programmes, taking exams and seeking to commence your careers during a period of

unprecedented disruption tested the resilience, resourcefulness and creativity that SMU had sought to develop in you. Your graduation is a testament to these qualities in you. Your cohort will not be defined by what you missed out on, but by how you overcame these challenges. They helped you to graduate and will be defining characteristic of your generation.”

Mr Ho added, “The world has changed since you graduated and so has your future in it. You face a world of economic and social challenges, a world where the status quo is being challenged and disrupted by circumstances...I urge you to stay positive and open to career opportunities around you. Take a long-term view of where you would like to see yourself as you embark on your career journey and enjoy the adventure as you are likely to take on different roles. Remember, careers are now rarely linear, so broad experience and evidence of drive will always be recognised. And stay curious, keep on learning and build up your treasure trove of knowledge, skills and experience.”

In her remarks to the graduates, SMU President Professor Lily Kong said that the University has identified three Strategic Priorities - Digital Transformation, Sustainable Living and Growth in Asia - that will help SMU to achieve its Vision 2025. By applying similar strategies, they can also help the graduates reach for their dreams. “First, digital transformation. Just as SMU is transforming itself through enhanced digitalization, so too must you be willing to constantly transform yourself. Just like institutions and businesses, you need to be proactive in updating yourselves – develop new skillsets, learn new knowledges, and acquire broad experience. At SMU you have learned how to learn. This is our best gift to you. It prepares you not just for your first career, but for future careers. You will be well placed for marketplace transformations and will be well able to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing world if you take that spirit of lifelong learning with you through your entire journey,” said Prof Kong.

“Second, through our Strategic Priority of Growth in Asia, SMU strives to offer a deep understanding of Asia’s economy, polity and society, contribute to the region’s growth and manage the ensuing impacts. Most of us here, including the Class of 2020 are Asians, and those who are not have, by being here, generally gained an understanding and appreciation for the continent, its cultures and economies. The 21st Century has been forecast to be the “Asian Century”, with the projected dominance of Asian politics, economic change, and cultures. Perhaps it is still to be, even with COVID. So, although SMU has given you global exposure, you should consider how you can contribute to and benefit from being here in the heart of Asia.”

Prof Kong added, “SMU’s third Strategic Priority is Sustainable Living. Our university strives to practise what we preach, and have achieved remarkable success in our efforts at being a green campus. Much more, of course, can be done, and that will be part of our sustainability plan moving forward. But sustainable living is more than being green, important as that is. It entails the creation of sustainable futures -- for yourselves, for Singapore, the region, and the world -- through ensuring economic, social, cultural and, yes, environmental sustainability. It begins with you. You and your cohort are the future leaders of business, government, academia and private enterprise – and I believe SMU has given you the perspectives you need to ensure a sustainable future.”

Each year at the Commencement ceremony, SMU also recognises students from each School who have embraced the values of Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership and Excellence with the CIRCLE Awards. Winners of the CIRCLE Awards are also distinguished by their all-round excellence in Student Life, Student Leadership, Community Service and Academic Studies. They have been actively involved in serving and giving back to

SMU and the community at large. In addition, they have demonstrated leadership abilities, are upright in character, and well-respected by peers, staff, and faculty.

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For more information, please contact

Teo Chang Ching (Mr)
Senior Assistant Director
Corporate Communications
DID: 6828 0451
Email: ccte@smu.edu.sg

About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 11,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg