



## Media Release

### **SMU appoints new Deans for School of Economics and School of Social Sciences**

*Singapore, 1 August 2024 (Thursday)* – Singapore Management University (SMU) today announced the appointment of **Lee Kong Chian Professor of Economics Li Jia as the new Dean of the School of Economics (SOE)** effective 1 July 2024 and **Professor Kenneth Benoit as the new Dean for the School of Social Sciences (SOSS)** effective 1 August 2024. Both appointments are for a period of four years.

Expressing his gratitude to the two former Deans, SMU Provost Professor [Timothy Clark](#) said, “I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Hoon Hian Teck and Professor Chandran Kukathas for their unstinting commitment and valuable contributions to SOE and SOSS. Upon stepping down as Deans on 30 June 2024, both of them have stayed on with their Schools as Professor of Economics and Professor of Political Science respectively. My thanks too to Professor Forrest Zhang who served as SOSS Interim Dean before Professor Benoit joined SMU.”

Professor Clark had led the international search for the new SOE Dean and new SOSS Dean, whose appointments are strongly supported by SMU Board of Trustees, SMU President, their respective School faculty and other key stakeholders, and their appointments follow after an extensive and rigorous global search that started in February 2023.

In introducing the new Deans, Professor Clark said, “Professor Li Jia is an accomplished academic standing whose research interests lies in econometrics with a specialisation in financial applications. He has published extensively in the leading economics, statistics, probability and finance journals, and is internationally recognised as a leading scholar in Econometrics, as reflected in his editorial roles in several leading journals. Professor Li is also an experienced educator and has contributed significantly to the School in various leadership roles. He has been instrumental in formulating an ambitious plan for SOE’s next phase of growth including faculty and resource management, developing new programmes as well as fostering stronger international collaborations.

“Another strong leader, SOSS Dean Professor Kenneth Benoit is a world-leading academic whose research interests lie in natural language processing and the use of large language models (LLMs) in classifying and scaling text for political statements. He is a widely recognised research leader, well-respected educator and as an institution-builder has co-founded/served on several prestigious associations and councils and served as the Director of LSE Department of Methodology. As SOSS Dean, Professor Benoit will lead in the development and driving of the School’s strategy as well as position the School’s education and research so that it is positioned to help address some of the important challenges of contemporary society in Singapore, Asia, and beyond.”

On his appointment as the new SOE Dean (经济学院院长), Professor Li Jia said, “I am deeply honoured and grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by the senior management and faculty. As the new Dean of SOE, I am committed to leading our school in maintaining our tradition of excellence in teaching, advancing our innovative academic research, and enhancing our translational societal contributions. Together, we will continue to uphold the highest standards and make meaningful impact on our community and beyond.”

In accepting the appointment as the new SOSS Dean (社会科学学院院长), Professor Kenneth Benoit said, “I could not be more excited about taking on this new role and joining the vibrant and growing community at Singapore Management University. As Dean of the SOSS, I will work hard with colleagues across several science disciplines to establish a strong presence for the social sciences within SMU that both strengthens our social science disciplinary bases and builds important interdisciplinary ties with other units within SMU. Only through understanding the social sciences can we tackle some of the world’s most pressing problems and I want SOSS to make a direct contribution to this effort.”

#### About Professor Li Jia (李嘉教授)

Professor Li graduated with a PhD in Economics from Princeton University and started his academic career at Duke University as Assistant Professor of Economics in 2011. Subsequently, he attained his full professorship at Duke University in 2020 before joining SMU in 2021 as a full tenured Professor of Economics. In the same year, he received the Lee Kong Chian named professorship.

An accomplished academic, Professor Li’s research interest lies in econometrics with a specialisation in financial applications. He has published extensively in leading economics, statistics, probability and finance journals such as *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Annals of Statistics*, *Journal of the American Statistical Association* and *Annals of Applied Probability*. Internationally recognised as a leading scholar in Econometrics, Professor Li has served as editor in a number of leading journals including as Co-Editor, *Econometrics Theory* since 2021, Associate Editor, *Econometrica* since 2018, Associate Editor, *Journal of Financial Econometrics*, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics* and *Journal of Econometrics* since 2017.

Professor Li is also an experienced educator who has taught in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. During his tenure at Duke, he managed the admission work of PhD students from China, as well as sat on various recruitment committees. Since joining SMU, he has contributed significantly to the School in various roles including Econometrics Lead of the SMU Urban Institute, Programme Director of Master of Science in Financial Economics, a Member of the Promotion, Tenure and Appointment Committee and a Member of the University Research Evaluation Committee. His leadership also extends to other important areas in terms of formulating a plan for SOE’s next phase of growth, managing resources and budget, designing of new revenue generating postgraduate professional programmes, fostering industrial collaboration, identifying peer and aspirant Universities for benchmarking, establishing a new journal list for School ranking, managing the performance targets and evaluation of faculty. His applied work in macroeconomics, monetary economics, labour economics and international finance has equipped him with a comprehensive understanding of other research areas important to SOE.

#### About Professor Kenneth Benoit (肯尼思.贝诺特教授)

Professor Benoit obtained his PhD from Harvard University, Department of Government. His most recent appointment was as Professor of Computational Social Science and Director of the Data Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). From 2010 to 2018, he was the head of the Department of Methodology at LSE. Before joining LSE, he was also Professor of Quantitative Social Sciences and Head of Department of Trinity College at Dublin.

A world-leading academic, Professor Benoit’s research interests lie in natural language processing and the use of large language models (LLMs) in classifying and scaling text for political statements, social media and end-user feedback, as well as the use of GPT-class LLMs as a replacement for human

“experts”. Besides his accomplished publication record, Kenneth is a widely recognised research software developer and has won several awards which includes the 2020 Society for Political Methodology Statistical Software Award. He has also secured significant grants over €3.3 million.

Professor Benoit has taught in undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive courses and developed the MSc in Applied Social Science Data at LSE, as well as developed and served as programme director for the LSE Summer School Programme in Research Methods, Data Science and Mathematics. He is a well-respected figure in his profession. He is the co-founder and Executive Director of European Political Science Association (EPSA) and has served on the EPSA council as well as on the council of the American Political Science Association. In addition, he has been an associate editor for *Political Science Research & Methods* and for the *American Political Science Review*.

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Enclosures:

Professor Li Jia’s detailed bio: <https://faculty.smu.edu.sg/profile/li-jia-1046>

Professor Li’s profile photograph

Professor Kenneth Benoit’s detailed bio: <https://faculty.smu.edu.sg/profile/kenneth-benoit-7891>

Professor Benoit’s profile photograph

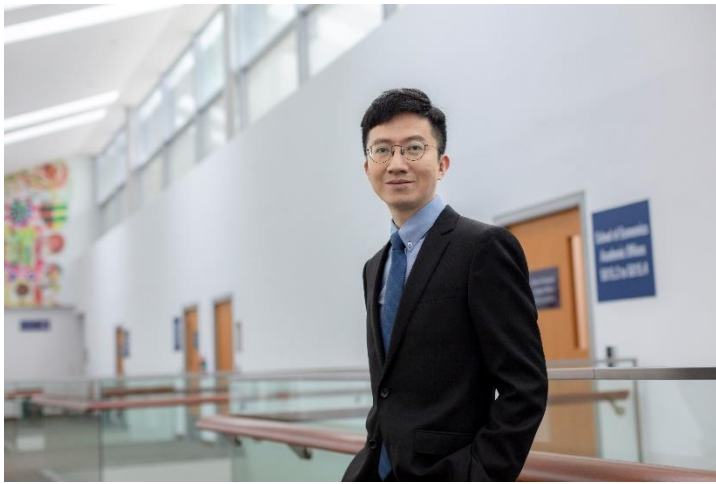
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**About Singapore Management University**

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research that addresses issues of global relevance, impacting business, government, and society. Its distinctive education, incorporating innovative experiential learning, aims to nurture global citizens, entrepreneurs and change agents. With more than 13,000 students, SMU offers a wide range of bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with six of its eight schools - Accountancy, Business, Computing, Economics, Law and Social Sciences. Its seventh school, the SMU College of Integrative Studies, offers degree programmes in deep, integrative interdisciplinary education. The College of Graduate Research Studies, SMU’s eighth school, enhances integration and interdisciplinarity across the various SMU postgraduate research programmes that will enable students to gain a holistic learning experience and well-grounded approach to their research. SMU also offers a growing number of executive development and continuing education programmes. Through its city campus, SMU focuses on making meaningful impact on Singapore and beyond through its partnerships with industry, policy makers and academic institutions. <https://www.smu.edu.sg/>

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**Enclosure**



[Professor Li Jia](#)

Dean, School of Economics



[Professor Kenneth Benoit](#)

Dean, School of Social Sciences