

**SMU Commencement for Class of 2024,
Opening Ceremony
SMU Hall, 30 July 2024
Speech by SMU Chairman Mr Piyush Gupta**

Guest-of-Honour, Mr Sherman Kwek, Group CEO of City Developments Limited;

Chancellor of Singapore Management University, Mr Lim Chee Onn;

Pro-Chancellor, Mr Eddie Teo;

Former Chairman of SMU and Honorary Degree Recipient, Mr Ho Kwon Ping;

Members of the Board of Trustees;

SMU President, Professor Lily Kong;

Faculty, staff, and the Class of 2024;

Parents and guests

Welcome to SMU Commencement 2024.

Today marks a significant milestone in the lives of many of you as we gather here to celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2024 and celebrate the incredible journey you have undertaken at SMU. As the Chairman of this prestigious university, it is both an honour and a privilege to stand before you today.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the faculty members and staff who have dedicated themselves to imparting knowledge, guiding, and mentoring our students throughout their time at SMU. Your commitment and passion to an education that encourages our

students to apply themselves towards addressing real societal issues have played a vital role in shaping the bright minds we see before us today.

To our graduates, I congratulate you! This is indeed one of the most important milestones in your life, perhaps also in the life of your parents, so embrace the success and savour the sense of accomplishment. I want you to take a moment to reflect on the incredible transformation you have undergone during your time at SMU. You have worked tirelessly, overcoming challenges, and embracing opportunities, all in pursuit of knowledge and personal growth. Today, as you stand on the threshold of a new chapter in your lives, I encourage you to always embrace integrity, excellence, and a passion for lifelong learning, and make a positive impact in whatever field you have chosen to build your career.

It is my great pleasure to introduce our distinguished Guest-of-Honour, Mr Sherman Kwek, Group CEO, City Developments Limited. Mr Kwek was once a fresh business graduate, like many of you will be shortly – so please listen and learn from his story.

He graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and has worked in New York, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore.

Prior to joining CDL, Mr Kwek was the CEO of City e-Solutions Limited, a Hong Kong-listed company that was formerly a subsidiary of the Group, and before that, the Chief Operating Officer of Thakral Corporation Ltd. and an Executive Director of HL Global Enterprises Limited, both listed companies in Singapore. In the earlier part of his career, he had worked in technology venture capital, investment banking, hospitality management and real estate private equity.

Mr Kwek assumed his current role as CDL's Group Chief Executive Officer in January 2018 and was appointed as an Executive Director in May 2019.

Since 2019, Mr. Kwek has served on two Business China subcommittees. He joined the Board of Trustees of the Chinese Development Assistance Council in June 2020 and became a member of SingHealth's Property Committee in 2021. In 2022, he was appointed to the Board of IREIT Global's "Manager" and the Advisory Board of the National Youth Achievement Award. By October 2023, he joined the Board of SingHealth, and in January 2024, he became Chairman of SingHealth's Property Committee and a member of MOH Holdings' Healthcare Infrastructure and Planning Committee. So a long list of achievements and a great variety of different career opportunities.

Graduates, as you embark on your respective journeys, I hope you will learn from Mr Kwek's example. Do not expect or even seek a linear career path. Build your career portfolio by expanding your career horizons – in different roles, different industries, and even different countries, if good opportunities arise. Each and every one of you possesses unique talents and abilities that can help you thrive and make your mark wherever you go to and in whatever you do. Embrace your individuality, harness your strengths, trust the spark within you, and always aim to make a positive impact beyond yourselves.

In conclusion, I would once again like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Class of 2024 – and to the faculty, friends and family members who have supported you. You have not only earned a degree, but you have also gained invaluable experiences and forged relationships that will last a lifetime.

Now, please join me in extending a warm welcome to our Guest of Honour, Mr Sherman Kwek, who will impart his wisdom and inspire us with his remarkable journey.

Thank you, and may your futures be filled with purpose, success, and fulfilment.