Speech by Professor Pang Hwee Hwa
Dean, School of Computing and Information Systems
Singapore Management University
15 January 2021

SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping and members of the Board of Trustees

SMU President Professor Lily Kong,

Provost Professor Timothy Clark,

Members of the Board of Advisors of the School of Computing and Information Systems

Faculty, staff and students of SMU

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

Today marks a significant milestone for our School. Our new name – the School of Computing and Information Systems - reflects our inherent strengths as well as the aspirations of our students, faculty and staff. It also aligns us even more closely with SMU Vision 2025 of tackling the world's complexities and impacting humanity positively.

Strengthening our curriculum

Since inception, our School has graduated more than 3000 undergraduate students and 1100 postgraduate students. We were the first Institute of Higher Learning in Singapore to make Cybersecurity a required topic in the Information Systems curriculum. We are also a pioneer in business analytics education in Singapore, having introduced an undergraduate specialisation in Business Intelligence & Analytics back in 2008. In 2013, our School introduced Analytics second major as a university-wide programme that is open to all students pursuing a bachelor's degree from any of SMU's six schools.

Our education programmes have gained a reputation for quality and rigour among employers and prospective students. Our graduates are much sought after and have achieved very good employment outcomes. They have gone on to carve out thriving careers in various industries. Many have started their own companies.

To meet the needs of Singapore and industry, we are lifting our annual enrolment of undergraduates from 276 students in 2016 to 520 students by 2021, and growing our Master of IT in Business or MITB degree from an annual intake of 190 students in 2018 up to 270 students in 2021. We have been strengthening our undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes in anticipation of changes in technology and the nature of jobs. We want to ensure that our graduates are trained in computing technology as well as practical solution development. This has taken us beyond Information Systems, into the science of computing, hard-core programming, and technology development.

As mentioned by Professor Lily Kong, in recent years, our School has launched interdisciplinary programmes that combine computing with disciplines in other SMU schools, created new

programmes that train students in deep technical skills, and modernised the Digital Transformation major in our Information Systems degree to equip students with business and technology skills to create value for businesses and society.

In August this year, we will commence a second major in Digital Business in partnership with SMU Lee Kong Chian School of Business, and add a fourth track in Digital Transformation to the MITB degree.

Fostering Research

In research, our School had positioned Cybersecurity as our first research area way back in 2004. We have over the years succeeded in securing multiple awards and grants to establish our research in several areas including data analytics, intelligent systems & optimisation, pervasive and mobile systems.

Going forward, our research will place twin emphasis of Academic Scholarship in Computing Technology and Practice Scholarship in Solution Development. Our Academic Scholarship is focused on three selected areas, namely Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, Human-Machine Collaborative Systems, and Information Systems and Technology.

At the same time, to achieve practical impact, we emphasise Practice Scholarship in solution development which entails integrating different technologies, integrating technology with business models and processes, addressing usability, and ultimately, fulfilling user and organisational needs. The application areas that we direct our Practice Scholarship to are: Education Pedagogy, Urban Systems and Operations, Active Citizenry and Communities, and Safety and Security.

To meet all these growing needs in education and research, we will be expanding our number of faculty from 70 currently to 90 in two years' time.

Closing

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to members of our board of advisors, our faculty, students, alumni, donors and partners. It is the collective effort and support of everyone that has brought the School of Computing and Information Systems to where it is today. I look forward to your continued strong support so that the School may achieve even greater heights of excellence as we advance ahead.

Thank you.