



Press release

SMU School of Law responds to COVID-19 with webinar series, community outreach and academic discourse

Singapore, 29 April 2020 (Wednesday) – Economies around the world have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments around the world have also had to respond with new legislation, and many in the community are being affected. As the broader impact of the virus outbreak are beginning to be felt, the need for relevant legal information and advice becomes increasingly important for not just corporates, but also the man-in-the-street.

The Singapore Management University (SMU) School of Law aims to contribute to the community by sharing its knowledge and expertise with the law fraternity and the community-at-large, through multiple platforms and channels. First, the School will run a webinar series targeted at the legal profession from 30 April, and raise funds to help its law students and their families who have been affected by the pandemic. Second, it will set up an online law portal to enable affected individuals to obtain relevant information and answers. Third, in the longer term, with the aim of addressing the impact of the outbreak on different segments of society by contributing its legal expertise, the School of Law will introduce a virtual academic series that will examine, in a scholarly fashion, the legal implications of COVID-19.

Professor Goh Yihan, Dean of SMU School of Law, said, “COVID-19 is an unprecedented event that has shaken the world and affected diverse groups in our community. Many, including front-line workers, have contributed immensely to the community. While we may not be able to contribute in as direct a manner, we at the SMU School of Law hope to play our part by leveraging our legal knowledge and sharing it with the legal profession, businesses and individuals impacted by the pandemic; and putting together initiatives to aid those affected. We are thankful for the support we have received thus far in our endeavours.”

SMU Law Academy Covid-19 Seminar Series

SMU Law Academy will host a webinar series featuring expert speakers and targeted at the legal profession to address in a practical manner legal and commercial issues arising out of COVID-19. This series will be accredited so that participants can obtain public Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points. The webinar series, which will deal with contractual, insolvency and legal technology-related issues arising from COVID-19, fills a gap in the market for a more deliberated and practical prognosis of what concrete steps commercial parties should consider as the global economy reels from the impact of COVID-19.

Scheduled to kick-off on 30 April 2020, the first webinar (which has 350 confirmed participants as of 29 April 2020) will feature a panel of experts who will discuss and examine a number of important contract law issues that have arisen in Singapore and English law as a result of the pandemic. The panellists will address not only the application of fundamental doctrines and unprecedented legislation, such as the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act 2020 in contract law, but also offer their carefully deliberated prognoses and suggest concrete steps which commercial parties may consider taking in these uncertain times (Please see Annex 1 for more details).

Two more webinars have been scheduled for 12 and 28 May 2020 and will discuss insolvency issues arising from respectively technological ramifications attendant on the COVID-19 pandemic. More information, when available, will be released here - <https://law.smu.edu.sg/events>. The registration fee for each two-hour webinar session is S\$150. Net proceeds raised will go towards SMU's efforts in supporting its law students whose families have been affected by COVID, as well as ongoing and future initiatives to help the wider community impacted by the pandemic.

Community Outreach and Pro Bono Service

Leveraging the collective expertise of the School of Law's faculty members, students and alumni, the SMU Pro Bono Centre will set up an online law portal to address legal issues that have arisen from the impact of the virus outbreak. The portal will allow members of the public to learn about the regulations that have been introduced in response to the virus outbreak, through articles, FAQs, podcasts, short videos and even webinars on topical issues.

The portal will also provide virtual avenues for members of the public to seek specific legal advice. It is hoped that the access to free legal information will assist in the amicable settlement of employment and business disputes arising from the outbreak.

In addition, the Pro Bono Centre's Legal Clinic continues to serve the community by providing free legal advice (subject to eligibility criteria) via an email format from 15 May 2020 onwards. Applications for this service can be made by via email - probonocentre@smu.edu.sg.

Academic Conference

Apart from playing its part towards the broader community, the School of Law will convene scholarly discussions on the legal impact of COVID-19. In this regard, the School will introduce a virtual academic series themed 'Global Public-Private Law Approaches to COVID-19' that will deal with the legal implications of COVID-19 in a scholarly fashion. The academic series will include research seminars and a flagship academic conference, with expert speakers hailing from Singapore and abroad.

The legal issues to be covered by researchers will include public and private laws from regional and global perspectives. The findings will contribute to the research on the role of the courts in norm-setting and power-checking in public health emergencies, new challenges to international legal frameworks for global health, the termination of contracts by force majeure and frustration, and the future impact of COVID-19 on commercial law.

A call for papers will be issued to attract more emerging scholars and expanded abstracts of conference papers will be published on Singapore Law Blog. Research and conference papers will be included in the SSRN SMU School of Law Research Series. The School will also explore publishing articles in a special issue or section of an academic journal or international law yearbook.

- End -

Enclosure:

- Annex 1 – COVID-19 Seminar Series 1 on '*Selected Issues in Contract Law*'

Annex 1

SMU LAW ACADEMY
Covid-19 Seminar Series

COVID-19 Seminar Series 1: Selected Issues in Contract Law

Date/Time: 30 April 2020 (Thursday), 2:30pm – 4:30pm
Venue: This event will be conducted as a live webinar
Website: <https://law.smu.edu.sg/newsletter/31946>

Synopsis

The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most serious public health emergencies the world has ever encountered. In its wake significant legal issues have required urgent resolution across the globe. In the first webinar to be held under the SMU Law Academy's **Covid-19 Seminar Series**, a panel of experts will discuss and examine a number of important contract law issues that have arisen in Singapore and English law as a result of the pandemic. The panellists look to address not only the application of fundamental doctrines (including frustration, force majeure and termination) and unprecedented legislation (such as the Covid-19 (Temporary Measures) Act 2020) in contract law, but also to offer their carefully deliberated prognoses and to suggest concrete steps which commercial parties may consider taking in these uncertain times. Participants can therefore expect to join a highly relevant and current discourse that infuses practicality, theory and dispute resolution strategy.

Panellists***VK Rajah SC***

VK Rajah SC is a founding member of Essex Court Chambers Duxton, Singapore. He graduated from the National University of Singapore with several prizes for academic merit and later obtained an LLM (First Class) from the University of Cambridge. He was the Managing Partner of Rajah & Tann from 1987 to 2003 until his elevation to the Bench. In 1997, he was appointed Senior Counsel in the pioneer batch of appointments in Singapore. He was appointed a Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court of Singapore in January 2004, a Judge in November 2004 and a Judge of Appeal in April 2007. He assumed office as the Attorney-General of Singapore in June 2014 and retired from public service in January 2017. He is an Honorary Bencher of Middle Temple and a Distinguished Fellow of the Singapore Management University School of Law.

Toby Landau QC

Toby Landau QC is a barrister, advocate and arbitrator, and a member of the Bars of England and Wales, Singapore, New York, the BVI and Northern Ireland, with registration in the DIFC. Appointed Queen's Counsel in 2008, he is top-ranked across leading legal directories. As counsel he has argued hundreds of major international commercial, investor-state and inter-state arbitrations. He also has extensive experience sitting as presiding arbitrator, co-arbitrator and sole arbitrator in commercial

and investor-state disputes under most of the world's leading *ad hoc* and institutional rules. He holds a first-class law degree and a first class BCL from Oxford University (Eldon Scholar), and an LLM from Harvard Law School (Kennedy Scholar).

Daryl Chew

Daryl Chew is a partner in the International Arbitration practice and Head of the Singapore office of Shearman & Sterling. Recommended in all leading legal directories, he has advised and represented clients in arbitrations conducted under the ICC, LCIA, LMAA, AAA, HKIAC, SIAC and UNCITRAL Rules, as well as *ad hoc* proceedings. These involve a wide range of applicable laws and venues, arising from energy, construction, M&A, joint venture and general commercial disputes. He also serves as presiding arbitrator and sole arbitrator in institutional and *ad hoc* arbitration proceedings. He received his LLB (First Class Honours) from the National University of Singapore, where he was awarded the Chief Justice's Prize for best overall student.

Yihan Goh

Yihan Goh is Dean and Professor of Law at the Singapore Management University School of Law. His research focuses primarily on the law of contract and torts, with a secondary interest in the principles of statutory interpretation and the legal process. He has published numerous books, chapters and journal articles internationally and in Singapore, which have been cited on multiple occasions by the Singapore courts and the Federal Court of Malaysia. He has also been appointed as *amicus curiae* before the Court of Appeal and the High Court of Singapore. He obtained his LLB (First Class Honours) from the National University of Singapore on a University Undergraduate Scholarship, where he graduated as the top student in 2006, and subsequently obtained an LLM from Harvard Law School in 2010 on an NUS University Overseas Graduate Scholarship.

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 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, 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 multi-disciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and inter-disciplinary 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

About SMU School of Law

SMU School of Law proudly welcomed its first cohort of 116 students in August 2007. Taught by a dynamic faculty with postgraduate degrees from renowned universities, the School aims to nurture its students to become excellent lawyers who will contribute significantly to society. Trained with the ability to contextualise legal expertise and to think across disciplines and geographical borders coupled with SMU's interactive pedagogy, SMU's law graduates are confident articulate and analytically agile.

The SMU School of Law offers a four-year full-time Bachelor of Laws programme, a five-year double-degree programme which combines law with Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems or Social Sciences, a three-year Juris Doctor programme, a Master of Laws programme, as well as continuing legal education. The School has also set up legal research centres focusing on A.I. and data governance, computational law, cross-border commercial law, international dispute resolution and intellectual property. www.law.smu.edu.sg

Media Contact

Huang Peiling (Ms)
Senior Asst Director, Corporate Communications
SMU Office of Corporate Communications & Marketing
Tel: 6828-0964 / Hp 9845-3361
Email: plhuang@smu.edu.sg