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MEDIA RELEASE

SMU celebrates the graduation of its 18th and largest batch

Singapore, 24 August 2021 (Tuesday) – Singapore Management University (SMU) kicked off three days of graduation celebration for the Class of 2021 today at the SMU Virtual Commencement 2021. Specially curated by the University and held virtually for the second time in light of the Covid-19 situation, the event aims to commemorate an important milestone of the graduates' journey with SMU.

In addition to the virtual Commencement ceremony, the University hopes to be able to hold the physical ceremonies for the Class of 2020 and Class of 2021 in the fourth quarter of this year, if circumstances allow.

The 2978-strong Class of 2021 comprises 1908 Bachelor's degree graduates, 1009 Master's degree and Juris Doctor degree graduates, and 61 Doctorate degree graduates. Among the Bachelor's degree graduates, 52 of them will be receiving double degrees. Together, they represent SMU's 18th batch of graduates since the University was established in 2000.

This year, SMU will be presenting pioneer graduates from the following programmes:

- BSc (Information Systems) Smart-City Management and Technology major: 47
- Master of Science in Computing: 8
- Doctor of Philosophy in Business (Operations Management): 6

Mr Darien The Chun Yiu, who graduates from the Yong Pung How School of Law, was named the Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian and SPH Valedictorian. Mr Lucas Ethan Tiong Jun Wei from the School of Social Sciences 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).

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 SMU 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.

In his congratulatory remarks, Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong said that Covid-19 has been “a huge test of our resolve and solidarity... But we have continued to hold together as one people. We have looked out for one another, and helped those who are in need”. He urged the graduates to think of the many who have made countless daily sacrifices throughout the pandemic, including our frontline and essential services workers, and silent heroes who had gone out of their way to help the vulnerable in our midst. Minister said, “So as you pursue your dreams and chase the rainbow, always remember the responsibility you have to one another, and the things you can do to make a lasting difference in the community.”

SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping and SMU President Professor Lily Kong also offered words of advice and encouragement to the Class of 2021 in their pre-recorded speeches, and urged them to forge ahead to become the future leaders of business, government, academia and society.

Mr Ho Kwon Ping said, “As SMU graduates, we hope we have trained you not only in knowledge, but in how to think, how to look forward to the future, and how to take initiative and take control of your lives. We hope that we have prepared you for the post-COVID world so that you see the opportunities ahead. It is these opportunities that we hope will be able to give you hope and inspiration in the months and years ahead as you confront a totally changed landscape.” Mr Ho added that SMU has also trained the graduating cohort not just to be successful young men and women, entrepreneurs and senior managers, but to be true societal leaders. “As you graduate, you are no longer an SMU student, you become a young societal leader of Singapore. It behoves you to show to a whole new generation of younger people what Singapore can be and will be in the generations ahead.”

Professor Lily Kong highlighted how SMU’s holistic education has shaped the Class of 2021 into well-rounded individuals with broad-based learning and deep knowledge in areas of specialisation, a global outlook and a desire to make a meaningful impact in the world. “Above all, you have learned how to learn. This forms a critical foundation for a successful career or, more likely, a chain of careers in which you will have to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing world through lifelong learning as well as seizing and creating opportunities.”

Highlights of SMU Virtual Commencement 2021

In addition to the speeches, the other highlights of the virtual Commencement event are:

- (i) **Virtual Commencement 2021 microsite** (<http://virtualcomm.smu.edu.sg/>)
The microsite, which went live on 13 August, is a one-stop portal for the Class of 2021 to access information on the curated Commencement activities, School ceremony proceedings, and listen to the pre-recorded speeches of Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong, SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping, SMU President Professor Lily Kong, University Valedictorian and Salutatorian, and School Valedictorians.
- (ii) **School ceremony proceedings**
Up to nine ceremonies will be held sequentially each day from 24 to 26 August, with about 150 graduates attending each 30-minute ceremony. Each ceremony will be hosted by the Dean of the School who will deliver his welcome remarks. This is followed by the presentation of graduates one at a time, with a photo taken of the Dean and the graduate. The ceremony ends with a group photo of the Dean with all the graduates. Family and friends can view the virtual

ceremonies live via Youtube Live links, which are available on the Virtual Commencement microsite.

- (iii) **Virtual Photo Booth** (<http://virtualcomm.smu.edu.sg/>)
Class of 2021 graduates are able to take photos with friends and faculty virtually through selfie stickers. Users can download the photos and share them on social media platforms. The photos are published in real time on an online gallery which is on the Virtual Commencement microsite.
- (iv) A virtual **Dedication Wall** for the Class of 2021 to post congratulatory messages of appreciation and encouragement to their loved ones, peers, professors and the University. The messages are displayed on the Virtual Commencement microsite.

2021 Leave Your Mark campaign – supporting the education endeavours at SMU

“Leave Your Mark” is an annual donation drive especially for SMU’s graduating class, to rally together and make their very first gift to the University, in support of their peers. Since 2016, over \$245,000 has been raised by five graduation cohorts and their families. Through their generosity, 30 bursaries have been raised for undergraduates in financial need, enabling them to pursue the same SMU experience that has shaped our graduates during their university journey.

This year, “Leave Your Mark” continues the tradition of inviting the graduating cohort to pen a short message such as a ‘thank you’ note or an inspiring quote, to be engraved on to individual metal plaques alongside the donor’s name, and affixed permanently to the tables of seminar rooms. Over 300 meaningful messages from past graduates can be found in 6 different seminar rooms, serving as an inspiration for current and future students to continue to pay it forward.

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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