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Singapore Management University

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SMU celebrates its 8th batch of 1,819 graduates**

*Among the graduands, is the pioneer batch of 106 law graduates and 18 Juris Doctor graduates*

*Singapore, 29 July 2011 (Friday)* - The Singapore Management University celebrates the graduation of 1,819 graduands at the University's Commencement ceremony which began this morning at the Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre. This is SMU's eighth and largest batch of graduates. Among them is the pioneer batch of 106 law graduates who received their scrolls at the opening ceremony of Commencement 2011. The opening ceremony was graced by Guest-of-Honour, The Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong. Also present at the event was Education Minister, Mr Heng Swee Keat and SMU Chancellor, Mr Yong Pung How. This year's Commencement ceremony is held over two days with eight sessions.

According to a survey of the cohort, as well as information provided by Singapore's major law firms, the entire pioneer cohort of law students has secured practice training contracts three months before graduation, except for four who decided on a different path after graduation.

Of the 26 students from the pioneer batch of Singapore's first Juris Doctor programme, 18 have completed their programme. The American system of graduate legal education which SMU offers has enabled mid-career or fresh graduates in other disciplines to pursue a degree in law and to become lawyers qualified to practise in Singapore. (Please see the [Annex](#) for details.)

Admitted mostly in 2007, this batch of 1,819 students has seized the opportunities presented by an SMU education in the academic arena and beyond. Many had the chance to see and know the world as global exposure is a hallmark of the SMU education. Speaking at the event, SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer, noted the high proportion of students who have benefitted from global exposure during their time at SMU, "Many of you have spent a semester in a partner university for overseas exchange. You have also experienced overseas internships, community service projects, business study missions and taken part in overseas cultural programmes and CCAs. In fact, the percentage of students who gained such overseas exposure throughout their study at SMU has been steadily increasing from 66 per cent two batches ago to close to 75 per cent for your batch today. Three out of four spent a meaningful time out of Singapore."

This year's graduands comprise 1,531 bachelor degree graduates. (Please see the Annex for details.) SMU has also been steadily growing its postgraduate programmes, both at the master's and doctoral levels. It is conferring postgraduate degrees on 288 master's students, and SMU's first doctoral student, Dr Koh Noi Sian, who completed a PhD in Information Systems.

At the opening ceremony, SMU also presented the inaugural CIRCLE Award to 12 graduates from the 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. The CIRCLE values of Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership and Excellence are at the heart of the SMU spirit. They constitute an integral part of SMU's holistic approach to education. This Award is given to graduating students from each School who have demonstrated the SMU CIRCLE values during their tenure of studies. Winners of the CIRCLE Award are also distinguished by their all-round excellence in Student Life, Student Leadership, Community Service and Academic Studies. Each student received a trophy and prize money of S\$1000.

### **Valedictorian Russell Low Tzeh Shyian**

Awarded annually to the highest ranking student of each graduating cohort, this year's SPH Valedictorian Award goes to Mr Russell Low Tzeh Shyian (刘泽贤) who graduates Summa Cum Laude (the highest grade attainable) in 5 years with a double degree in Law and Business Management.

The SMU Scholarship holder's perfect 4.0 Grade Point Average placed him on the Dean's List in all his five years at SMU. Apart from winning the Top Law Student award for four years running, he also clinched the top awards for Corporate and Commercial Law, as well as Contract Law. Russell is also the winner of the inaugural Kwa Geok Choo Top Law Student Award and the inaugural CIRCLE award.

Russell's distinction goes beyond excellent grades. He was the founding Vice President of the SMU Law Society. He was also active in the SMU Mooting Club. With tenacity, wits and the ability to think on their feet, Russell and his team came in second at the LawAsia Moot in 2009, won the Best Exhibition Team at the Philip C. Jessup Mooting Competition in Washington DC in 2010, and were assessed in the latter to have written the best memorial in the national round. These achievements established SMU's name on the international stage, and provided the catalyst and inspiration for subsequent SMU moot teams in other prestigious moot court competitions.

Russell also has a flair for entrepreneurship. He founded his first company when he was 20, placing and training part-time staff for company events here and overseas. In 2009, Russell was part of the team which won the bid to operate a student-run cafe, "Colours", in school. Profits generated will be used to fund community service projects both locally and overseas.

However, what he is most proud of is the founding of SMU Roots in 2009. It started off as a club he co-founded to bond Singaporean and international students in SMU through activities such as concerts, host family dinners and tours around Singapore.

He took this a step further by organising the students to embark on a community service project in a home country of international students. This has taken the students to countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia. For its pivotal role in promoting integration and sustainable community service projects, SMU Roots won the Outstanding Achievement Award at the University Student Life Award ceremony in 2011.

His dedication to service has seen Russell co-organising several community projects, including a seven-day medical humanitarian mission to Bicol, Philippines in 2009. He was also involved in ROMP!09, a non-profit Sports Extravaganza to unite 5,000 youths from all races and walks of life in a wholesome sporting event. Russell was also the brainchild behind Singapore's first-ever bone marrow donor project targeted at minority races in 2007.

The well-rounded graduate, who enjoys performing with his guitar and plays pool and badminton competitively, has begun his training contract as a Justices' Law Clerk at the Supreme Court earlier this month.

### **Salutatorian Joel Ng Zhi Hao**

This year's recipient of the Salutatorian Award supported by SPH Magazines – given annually to the second highest ranking student from the graduating cohort – is Joel Ng Zhi Hao ( 黃至豪 ). He graduates *Summa Cum Laude* with a degree in Economics and Business Management (Operations Management), with an additional major in Applied Statistics.

During his years at SMU, he received the prestigious SMU Scholarship and eight other awards. His perfect 4.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) score placed him on the Dean's List in all his four years at SMU – from 2007 to 2011, including being named the top student each year for his cohort at the School of Economics. In his third year, he also received the Ministry for Trade and Industry (Economist Service) Prize.

Together with a fellow student and under the guidance of Assistant Professor (Practice) Lieven Demeester, both from the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Joel co-wrote an academic article on the principles and implementation of Sales and Operations Planning (S&OP) in innovation-driven, finish-to-order environments, which is currently awaiting journal publication. Joel has always been willing to offer his knowledge and assistance to his fellow students. He has served as a Teaching Assistant for seven modules, most notably assisting Professor Winston Koh in teaching the Game Theory course to undergraduate, master's and junior college students.

Outside of the classroom, Joel has been extremely active as a member of Caderas atinas and Ardiente, SMU's Salsa and Latin Ballroom clubs, and has performed and competed successfully at numerous local and overseas congresses and competitions. As the two-time Marketing Director of these clubs, he was instrumental in organising and performing for *Bailamos*, an annual inter-tertiary Latin Dance extravaganza bringing together Latin Dance aficionados from universities and polytechnics across Singapore, and *Para Empieza*, Singapore's first theatre-based production featuring only Latin Dance performances. Amidst these hectic activities,

he found time to travel to a village school in Cambodia over a summer break in 2008 to engage with the students, conduct English lessons and refurbish its classrooms.

As a new employee with Bloomberg L.P., he has recently completed the highly selective Global Data Training Programme in the United States, and looks forward to contributing in his new role as a Data Analyst.

### **DBS Bank School Valedictorian Award in Law, Joshua Lim Yong En**

This year's recipient of the School Valedictorian Award in Law supported by DBS Bank – given annually to the highest ranking student from the School graduating cohort – is Joshua Lim Yong En ( 林永恩 ). He graduates *Summa Cum Laude* with a double degree in Law and Business Management (Corporate Communication).

During his five years at SMU, Joshua was awarded the SMU Scholarship and the Goh Foundation Endowed Scholarship. He also received the Li & Fung Scholarship which funded his exchange programme at the Bucerius Law School in Germany in 2009. He also received the Ministry of Foreign Affairs DUO Exchange Fellowship Award. He has won awards each year including being on the Dean's List of both schools, winning the David Marshall Prize for Top Student in Criminal Law and clinching the Anthony Rose Inspirational Leadership in Corporate Communication Award.

In 2007, Joshua was among 12 SMU students who partnered five hearing-impaired youths on an SMU Dare to Dream expedition to Sikkim. He had to pick up sign language skills to communicate with the youths and in the process the group worked together to promote and protect the cultural and environmental heritage in the Sikkim region. "Being there in Sikkim and having the chance to work in an environment where I was surrounded by mountain ridges and clear blue skies was wonderful. The people I met were open and kind, and trekking to view Mount Kanchendzonga will be one of the most memorable experiences of my life."

Joshua is currently working in the Supreme Court of Singapore as a Justices' Law Clerk.

### **Senior Class Gift 2011**

The graduating class of 2011 is making a collective Senior Class Gift to SMU to celebrate their transition from students to alumni. This is a tradition started in 2004 by the pioneer batch of SMU graduates to encourage each graduating cohort to give back to their alma mater to help needy SMU students. This year, contributions from the Senior Class Gift will be channelled towards a new "Graduating Class of 2011 Scholarship". The award will sponsor the tuition fees of needy undergraduates for one year of study at SMU. About half of each year's batch has been contributing to the Senior Class Gift. This year's collection continues till October 2011.

### **About SMU Juris Doctor**

The Singapore Management University (SMU) launched today a new Juris Doctor (J.D.) programme to enable mid-career or fresh graduates in other disciplines to

pursue a degree in law, allowing them to become lawyers qualified to practise in Singapore. The first programme in a Singapore university to adopt the American system of graduate legal education, the SMU Juris Doctor programme will bring a diversified pool of talent from different disciplines and backgrounds into the legal profession.

Prospective applicants for the SMU Juris Doctor degree fall into three main groups: (a) Local and foreign graduates who hold university degrees in non-law disciplines; (b) Local and foreign graduates from law schools in civil law countries; and (c) Local and foreign graduates from universities in common law countries which are not gazetted under the Legal Profession Act. Leveraging the SMU pedagogy of small class sizes and interdisciplinary, broad-based learning, the three-year full-time SMU Juris Doctor offers a rigorous curriculum.

Similar to the undergraduate LL.B. programme, the SMU Juris Doctor programme is designed to provide contextualised teaching of the law with a view to producing lawyers ready for corporate and commercial practice as well as a wide range of other fields of practice. Candidates can expect to obtain practice-relevant legal knowledge and expertise and achieve the ability to think across disciplines and geographical borders. The programme will be characterised by SMU's signature participative and seminar-style teaching with individualised attention for students.

Upon graduation, candidates who achieve a Grade Point Average minimum of 3.0 can proceed to complete the Postgraduate Practical Law Course and a six-month Training Contract with a law firm for admission to the Singapore Bar. Career options for graduates of the Juris Doctor programme include corporate and commercial practice in local and international law firms; public prosecution and other government service; criminal and family law practice; Singapore Legal Service; public interest law with non-governmental organisations and in-house legal counsel in local and transnational corporations.

## **ANNEX**

<b>School</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Graduands</b>
LKCSB	Bachelor of Business Management	680
SOA	Bachelor of Accountancy	229
SOE	Bachelor of Science (Economics)	207
SIS	Bachelor of Science (Information Systems Management)	191
SOSS	Bachelor of Social Science	118
SOL	Bachelor of Laws	106
	<b>Total undergraduates</b>	<b>1531</b>
LKCSB	Master of Business Administration	45
LKCSB	Master of Science in Applied Finance	86
LKCSB	Master of Science in Finance	13
LKCSB	Master of Science in Management	7
LKCSB	Master of Science in Operations Management	9
LKCSB	Master of Science in Wealth Management	36
SOA	Master of Professional Accounting	26
SIS	Master of IT in Business (Financial Services)	25
SIS	Master of Science in Information Systems Management	2
SIS	PhD in Information Systems Management	1
SOE	Master of Science in Applied Economics	17
SOE	Master of Science in Economics	3
SOL	Juris Doctor	18
	<b>Total postgraduates</b>	<b>288</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1819</b>

This year, a total of 185 graduates or 12% of the undergraduate cohort are awarded double degrees in various combinations of business management, accountancy, economics, information systems management, law and social science.