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Singapore Management University

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## Media Release

### **255 students are the first to experience SMU's new residential learning-and-living concept**

*Prinsep Street Residences officially opens as a sustainable estate for co-living, co-learning and co-working, following a six-month refurbishment*

*Singapore, 11 October 2018 (Thursday)* – Singapore Management University (SMU) today officially opened the Prinsep Street Residences (PSR), which supports the University's new residential learning-and-living concept introduced from August 2018. Having undergone a six-month 'face-lift', PSR now features 23 large-sized apartments, purpose-designed communal spaces, and meaningful programming that serves to nurture a co-live, co-learn, co-work community; thereby enhancing collaboration, inter-disciplinary learning and inter-cultural exchange among its residents.

The launch event, which was held amidst celebration and fanfare, was graced by Ms Denise Phua, Mayor of Central Singapore District, and was attended by over 50 guests comprising SMU partners, students, faculty and staff.

The 255-strong resident population at PSR is diverse and comprises SMU undergraduates from all six SMU Schools, and across all four years of study, with the majority (two-thirds) being freshmen. There is also a good mix of Singaporeans (50%) and international students (50%). Together, the 255 residents represent 14 nationalities.

**Professor Lily Kong, SMU Provost, said,** "The SMU residential learning-and-living model is very much an extension of our holistic approach towards education, which has been a hallmark since SMU's inception in 2000. By providing a co-live, co-learn, co-work environment, PSR offers a space that is conducive to the students' development of an *independent* mind while being *dependable* in deeds; furthermore, as they curate and execute projects to benefit the community, students also learn to *think* deeply and broadly while *acting* to create value at home and abroad. These are certainly the distinctive identities we hope to nurture in our graduates."

Staying true to SMU's holistic pedagogy, PSR offers thematic programming focused on: community service, entrepreneurship / social entrepreneurship, leadership, and social integration and diversity. These themes are carried through a myriad of curated platforms and programmes developed with the intent of cultivating a co-learning environment amongst residents.

For example, in the short span of two months since they have moved in, about 70 residents are already committed to PSR-specific community service projects, both in Singapore and overseas. Other programmes specially designed for the residents include: self-discovery and topical workshops; fire-side chats and sharing sessions by industry guests; mentoring and career talks by alumni; and community trails. (*More details at Annexes 1A and 1B.*)

**Professor Paulin Straughan, Dean of Students at SMU, said,** "Through co-living with peers of various backgrounds and nationalities, residents will enhance their interpersonal skills and strengthen their inter-cultural knowledge. By working on student-directed projects together, they will also strengthen their project management, communication and teamwork skills. Overall, the University

envisages that PSR will provide a supportive environment that will nurture well-rounded students with strong *esprit de corps*, as they collaborate in projects and activities to make a meaningful impact in their immediate communities.”

#### SMU PSR – FRANK by OCBC partnership

The FRANK Residency @ Prinsep programme is one such platform through which students will be making a meaningful impact in their community. This new partnership between SMU PSR and FRANK by OCBC was officially announced today at a MOU Signing Ceremony that was represented by Professor Lily Kong and Mr Dennis Tan, Head, Consumer Financial Services Singapore, OCBC Bank.

As part of the programme, 10 students from the pioneer batch of PSR residents have been selected to be FRANK Residents @ PSR. FRANK by OCBC will sponsor one year of their residency at PSR as well as fund projects developed by them to benefit the community. The partnership aims to leverage the combined talents of the residents to bring about teamwork, innovation and meaningful impact for the community. The FRANK Residents @ PSR will also be digital ambassadors and role models for financial literacy education within the SMU student community. *(Please see Annex 2 for more details.)*

#### PSR – a sustainable project

Through sensitive design interventions, the external architecture of the 5,000 sqm PSR estate, which comprises three four-storey blocks of flats dating back to Singapore’s early pre-Housing Development Board days, have been successfully refreshed while retaining the original rustic flavour of the estate.

In line with SMU’s commitment towards developing a smart, green and sustainable city campus, efforts have been made to integrate green features into PSR to enable it to achieve the Singapore Building Construction Authority’s (BCA) Green Mark Platinum certification. The green features at PSR include an advanced passive displacement cooling system (new air-conditioning technology without the use of air handling units and fan coil units), dimmable LED lights with networked sensors, and an innovative smart building technology. The refurbished design also features biophilic elements, which integrates green materials, natural light and greenery into the environment.

Together, these efforts are expected to bring about energy savings of 50% annually. Notably, with PSR attaining the BCA Green Mark Platinum certification, the entire SMU campus has achieved 100% Green Mark Platinum status.

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#### Enclosures:

- Annex 1A: Fact sheet on programmes and activities at PSR
- Annex 1B: Fact sheet on PSR-specific community service projects
- Annex 2: Fact sheet on FRANK Residency @ Prinsep

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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 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and post-graduate 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 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](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

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## **ANNEX 1A**

### **Fact Sheet on programmes and activities at PSR**

Staying true to SMU's hallmark holistic approach to education, PRS offers thematic programming focused on: community service, entrepreneurship / social entrepreneurship, leadership, and social integration and diversity. These themes are carried through a myriad of curated platforms and programmes, which include the following:

- **Self-Discovery workshops**
  - These sessions aim to help orientate all residents going into the new term and/or the new school year.
  - For example, PSR Resident Seniors who started their academic term with an Authentic Conversation workshop went through a reflective session on how to engage residents through meaningful conversations, and found the session useful. In Term 2, as more residents form project groups, PSR will also organise a series of Value Conversation workshops that will help them identify shared values among team-mates and guide them in developing their team charters.
- **Topical workshops**
  - These are skills-based workshops covering a variety of topics to equip students in planning and managing projects.
  - For example, residents who are involved in PSR-specific community service projects get to learn about resource planning, how to measure the impact of their intervention etc. Residents who are interested in social innovation and entrepreneurship may look forward to similar workshops in the next term.
- **Fireside chats and sharing sessions**
  - These are platforms through which PSR invites external speakers to share life experiences with the residents.
  - For example, Mayor Denise Phua met with residents in early October where she shared and discussed the programmes with meaningful impact in Bras Basah – Bugis precinct.
- **Mentoring and career talks by alumni**
  - The PSR team has engaged SMU alumni who were previously student leaders and now work in a variety of industries. These alumni will be sharing their personal journeys with the PSR residents, and will discuss topics such as setting priorities, enhancing productivity and embracing personal strengths.
  - The sharing sessions by alumni will culminate in a fireside chat with an industry leader who will share insights into how organisations source for talents and the key employability traits that are being sought after.
- **Community trails**
  - There will be regular community trails within the precinct that PSR residents can sign up for to learn about their immediate neighbourhood.
  - For examples, through a community trail held in September, residents learnt more about the Bras Basah Bugis precinct. They visited some of the non-profit organisations in the precinct to find out more about their needs and challenges. The knowledge will be useful as they develop projects to benefit the Bras Basah community. This activity will be integrated into the orientation sessions for future cohorts of residents, so that they can understand the community needs from the onset and co-create solutions to create meaningful impact.

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## **ANNEX 1B**

### **Fact Sheet on PSR-specific community service projects**

#### **Background**

Since the inception of SMU in 2000, our students have contributed over 2.7 million hours of community service in total. In 2017 alone, SMU students were involved in 454 local community service projects, and 145 overseas community service projects across 15 countries. 70% of the group-based overseas projects have been organised for the 3<sup>rd</sup> or more consecutive years; 34 overseas projects have been organised for the 5<sup>th</sup> or more consecutive years.

While all students are required to complete at least 80 hours of community service as part of their graduate requirement, graduates from the Class of 2018 contributed, on average, 135 hours each.

PSR residents are strongly encouraged to participate in community service projects. Since moving in from August 2018, about 70 residents have already committed themselves to PSR-specific projects to give back to the local and overseas communities.

#### **PSR-specific community service projects**

Three local community service projects have been developed at PSR. They are:

- **Project SSUD (Stop Single-Use Disposables)**
  - This project focuses on understanding the consumer habits of the SMU Community, and hopes to reshape the Community's reliance on single use disposables.
  - The project team is partnering with SMU Grow, a university-wide urban farming and sustainability initiative that engages with the SMU Community as well as members of the public (including residents in the Bras Basah/Bugis area) to create awareness on sustainable urban living, food production and environmentalism.
  
- **Project HOP (Heart of Patience)**
  - This project supports the efforts of *Wellness Kampung* (<https://www.ktph.com.sg/wellness-kampung>) in promoting a mentally active lifestyle, using Mathematics as a base topic to create fun and engaging activities as part of early prevention of dementia.
  - The project team is partnering Wellness Kampung & Yishun Community Hospital.
  
- **Project WE (Women Empowerment)**
  - This project aims to help a small group of underprivileged women in Singapore to enable their home-based small business to become viable sources of supplementary income.
  - The project team is partnering Daughters of Tomorrow (<http://daughtersoftomorrow.org/>)

The Global Impact Scholars staying at PSR are also involved in the following two overseas community service projects:

- **Project Vikasa (India)**
  - Created in 2015, Project Vikasa is an overseas community service project that helps the community in Jaipur in India. It is organised in collaboration with I-India, an Indian-based NGO that reaches out to over 3,000 street children daily through their street schools, residential homes and vocational centres. The SMU team supports I-India's Gudri Women Empowerment Project, an initiative that offers women and adolescent girls from slum

districts a one-year comprehensive training programme to gain sufficient skills and knowledge for employment to become financially independent.

- A team of PSR residents will be embarking on the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of this project in December 2018.

- **Project Hua Tat (Vietnam)**

- A new initiative started in the Summer of 2018, this project partners Act Explorer to empower the people of Hua Tat Village in Vietnam to achieve self-sustainability through community-based tourism. Project Hua Tat covers a six-week duration, where three consecutive teams of SMU students each visit the village for two weeks. Each team would build upon the preceding team's efforts, thus enabling sustained engagement with the community.

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## ANNEX 2

### **Fact Sheet on FRANK Residency @ Prinsep**

#### About the partnership

SMU and Frank by OCBC have established a partnership whereby the latter will sponsor 10 students from the pioneer batch of PSR residents to be *FRANK Residents @ PSR*. Selected for their active co-curricular records and creative ideas for marrying the financial sector with community service and social enterprise, they are each supported with a one-year residency stay. They will also be required to work on team projects that benefit the community, and these projects will be funded by OCBC.

Leveraging on their combined talents, and through team projects focusing on the themes of entrepreneurship, social enterprise and/or community service, the *FRANK Residents @ PSR* will bring about innovation and meaningful impact for SMU, FRANK and the community. Upon submission of their project proposals and after approval, funds will be disbursed at intervals for two or more team projects in the year.

The *FRANK Residents @ PSR* will also be digital ambassadors and role models for financial education within the SMU student community. It is the vision of this SMU-OCBC partnership that through positive peer influence, more youths will become financially savvy and thus be better enabled to make meaningful impact for their communities even as they pursue their studies and careers.

#### First project by the FRANK Residents @ PSR

Every year, many student groups are formed at SMU with the purpose of raising funds to support a myriad of community service projects. For their first project, the *FRANK Residents @ PSR* will introduce FRANK's fintech applications into the process of fundraising. In doing so, they hope to replace the tedious and complex process of handling cash donations with more efficient mobile cashless payment methods. This will also enable project teams to track their funds raised more easily and accurately. As an added incentive, OCBC will also top up each project team's cashlessly raised funds by up to \$300.

#### Quotes

*"PSR allows me more independence and many opportunities to pursue my interests. Living with new-found friends from diverse backgrounds has broadened my horizons. I enjoy working and learning alongside them. As empowered FRANK Residents @ PSR, my team and I will strive to make meaningful impact for SMU, FRANK and the Community."*

- Jessica Lim Yi Ling, FRANK Residents @ PSR and 3<sup>rd</sup> year Business undergraduate

*"OCBC has been embedded within the SMU community for more than a decade, empowering students to take charge of their financial health, careers, and to care for the environment and the communities they are a part of. We believe youths have the passion to spark meaningful change, and we're excited to see how innovative these pioneering FRANK Residents @ PSR will get in making an impact through their community projects. FRANK by OCBC champions giving youths the platform and access to communities to pursue their passions – at the same time, we're enabling them to become digital ambassadors for their generation - helping to move the needle in Singapore's Smart Nation and cashless agenda."*

- Mr Dennis Tan, Head of Consumer Financial Services Singapore, OCBC Bank

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