



6th ASEF Rectors' Conference & Students' Forum (ARC6) 2017, Singapore

Future-ready Universities and Graduates: Quality Education Beyond the Horizon



Interview on Quality Education

Professor Arnoud DE MEYER
President
Singapore Management University

“Quality education, in the greater sense, should constantly evolve, changing the learning environment and approach so as to better prepare graduates to thrive amidst disruptions”

Professor Arnoud DE MEYER
President of Singapore Management University (SMU)
Co-organiser of ARC6

Interviewee



Professor Arnoud DE MEYER
President
Singapore Management University

Professor De Meyer is the fourth President of Singapore Management University. Previously, he was Director of Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge where he was Professor of Management Studies and Fellow of Jesus College. He was associated for 23 years with INSEAD where he held various senior academic and administrative positions, including founding Dean of INSEAD's Asia Campus in Singapore.

Professor De Meyer has a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering, MBA and PhD in Management from the University of Ghent in Belgium. He also pursued his studies as a visiting scholar at the Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA). His research interests are

in manufacturing and technology strategy; the implementation of new manufacturing technologies; the management of R&D; how innovation can be managed more effectively; project management under conditions of high uncertainty; management and innovation in Asia; the globalisation of Asian firms; the management of novel projects; and e-readiness in Europe.

Professor De Meyer has been consultant to a number of companies throughout Europe and Asia. Currently, he is an external director of Dassault Systèmes SA (France), as well as a board member of the National Research Foundation, Singapore International Chamber of Commerce and Temasek Management Services.

What does quality education mean for Singapore Management University (SMU)?

Nurturing globally responsible citizens ready for tomorrow's unpredictable and complex world is of key interest to 21st century educators and employers around the world. Universities need to be well-informed of emerging trends and constantly innovate in order to equip graduates with the necessary interdisciplinary, broad-based and deep knowledge encompassing both hard and soft skills. Quality education, in the greater sense, should constantly evolve, changing the learning environment and approach so as to better prepare graduates to thrive amidst disruptions.

SMU recognises that quality education should produce graduates who not just have paper qualifications, but contribute and make meaningful impact in society, long after their studies. We believe in providing holistic learning beyond a rigorous academic foundation – also developing the soft and 'heart' skills that grow students' social intelligence, empathy, adaptability and confidence, so that they can be their best for the community and also have the skills to continuously learn for the future. These capabilities not only enhance graduates' employability and versatility for diverse career paths, but also mould them into well-rounded and global-ready citizens who appreciate and can work with a multitude of people. Ultimately, they help to better society.

To achieve these, out-of-classroom learning is as important as within. Students need to become adept in critical thinking, innovation and communication. Curricula have to be more multi-disciplinary, forwardthinking, creative, and relevant to the real world. Pedagogy should be highly innovative and experimental to impart knowledge in newer and better ways. Active student life and real-world experiences make the journey more wholesome and outcomes more fulfilling.

Through a well-rounded education approach, SMU is committed to equip graduates with an edge – they have a heart for community, embrace reflexive and lifelong learning, are culturally and contextually aware, and understand global issues with regional and local relevance, while possessing entrepreneurial and job-ready qualities.

SMU places much emphasis on experiential learning, life lessons and community engagement to equip graduates with real-world experiences that help build their resilience and tenacity to face challenges of an unpredictable future.

What are the guiding principles in education for SMU?

With the mission to be an agent of change to Singapore's university landscape, SMU was established to be a daringly different education model. Being innovative and 'A Different U' have hence always been in our DNA. SMU has the distinction of being one of the earliest to enter into a significant collaboration with an international partner – it was set up as a business school in collaboration with Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, with plans to build other schools and disciplines that support management education broadly.

This ground-breaking approach has enriched the local higher education landscape and contributed to changing traditions and shaking up the education system. Over the years, five other schools were birthed, in the disciplines of accountancy, economics, information systems, law and social sciences. In the short time since its humble beginnings in 2000, SMU has quickly established itself to be a specialised university with approximately 10,000 students, 370 full-time faculty members, and close to 20,000 successful alumni who have strong employment records and community achievements. It now offers a wide range of undergraduate, masters, doctoral, executive development and continuing education programmes.

For SMU to be a great university that tackles the world's complexities and makes positive impact on humanity, SMU's vision for 2025 is to continue to be a game changer in transformative education, a catalyst and leader in cutting-edge research, and a global exemplar as an Asian city university.

High-quality research has placed SMU well. SMU is ranked among the top in Asia and the world in research in some of our disciplines. Our business school is currently 1st in Asia and 40th worldwide in the University of Texas, Dallas rankings for research contributions in 2012-2016. Our accountancy school is now ranked 1st in Asia and 3rd in

the world for both Archival Research (All Topics) and Archival Research (Financial) in the Brigham Young University (BYU) Accounting Research Rankings 2016. In the Tilburg University Top 100 Worldwide Economics Schools Research Ranking based on research contributions in 2011-2015, our economics school is ranked 2nd in Asia and 62nd in the world, and within the top 10 globally in the subdiscipline of econometrics.

Apart from publishing in the top international journals, SMU actively contributes to applied and translational research that makes a difference to our society, economy and polity. Our case-writing centre is rapidly developing into one of the main sources of case studies on Asian companies. Some of our research centres, such as those focusing on service excellence, economics of ageing, cyber security, and analytics for social and business applications, produce output that are among the top in the world. SMU is one of the youngest universities in the world to earn both the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) accreditations. It is also the first university to feature in both the Pre- and Post-experience rankings in the Financial Times Masters in Finance Ranking, and was the highest-positioned new entrant in 2015, for its business school's master programmes.

Through a rigorous and flexible curriculum, holistic education approach, distinct pedagogy with small and highly interactive seminar-style classes, exceptional commitment to community service, close links between theory and practice, dynamic learning environment and well-situated city campus, SMU established its own unique value proposition over the years.

Grounded on a broad-based education complemented by the depth of specialised majors, SMU students finish a core curriculum, and can choose from 300 combinations of double majors and double degrees across 42 majors and tracks. Over 70 per cent graduate with either double degrees or double majors.

The innovative curriculum has seen new, cutting-edge majors such as the Smart-City Management and Technology major by the School of Information Systems;



Singapore Management University (SMU)

the Politics, Law and Economics by the School of Social Sciences; and the Entrepreneurship major by the Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB).

SMU maintains strong linkages with the industry and community, maximising its proximity to the financial and civic district owing to our excellent downtown location. It marries the needs and requirements of the industry and the economy with experiential learning through compulsory internships and community service, interactive learning, project work, rich debates and presentations in the classroom, global exposure and career preparation workshops. Given how Singapore is integrally interwoven with the global economy, graduates must also be able to navigate, succeed and thrive in the global economy while understanding local and regional issues.

Students are encouraged to further open their minds, enrich student life, and hone interests and leadership through co-curricular activities (CCAs), global exposure programmes, and SMU LifeLessons – a values-based education

programme encouraging self-reflection, personal discovery and growth outside academic areas. A 100 per cent of SMU students have the opportunity to gain global exposure, and nearly 90 per cent of graduates have seized these opportunities, going on international student exchange, study missions, summer programmes, community service, internships, competitions and other academic or CCAs. These foster international understanding, cultural fluency and add diverse experiences to nurture our students to embrace diversity and inclusion, and be global-ready citizens.

As a graduation requirement, SMU students put in at least 80 hours of community service each. On average, graduates of the last few cohorts recorded more than 140 hours each. In total, SMU students have clocked more than 2.5 million hours (or 285 years) in 17 countries. These cultivate social responsibility, imparting empathy and values such as ethics.

In addition, universities, as thought leaders, must always be on the lookout for emerging trends and industry

demands, and constantly review and evolve our pedagogy. An example is the SMU-X pedagogy which SMU piloted in 2015 and mainstreamed in 2017. Students work closely with faculty and industry mentors on real-world projects solving actual industry problems, with outcomes that are highly relevant and provide unique multi-disciplinary learning and three-way interaction. Furthermore, with the rapid changes in the world of work and learning, as well as the challenges of the future economy, SMU sees the opportunity to contribute to continuing adult education in Singapore through the establishment of the SMU Academy this year.

Share a one-line pitch why Rectors and Students should join ARC6 this October.

Let's embrace and lead the waves of disruption together by discussing our critical roles and actions as key stakeholders in higher education on the global stage – SMU looks forward to hosting you at the ARC6 in the heart of Singapore's vibrant city, for a robust discussion that will drive meaningful change.



The 6th edition of the ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC6) will address the topic of "Future Universities and Graduate: Quality Education Beyond the Horizon" and invites over 280 representatives from academia, governments, business and industry, students and youth associations as well as NGOs and IOs.

The ARC6 consists of 2 programme elements: 1) a Students' Forum 2) followed by a Rectors' Conference. Close linkages between the Rectors' and the Students' is assured through a synergic exchange in which 4 Rectors' attend the Students' Forum as Mentors and 4 Students' participate throughout the Rectors' Conference.

Specifically, ARC6 aims to:

- Contribute to the policy dialogue on higher education in Asia and Europe and provide input to the agenda of ASEM Education Ministers
- Support the implementation of the SDGs
Facilitate cooperation and long-term partnerships among universities across Asia and Europe
- Enable collaborations among student networks and associations
- Strengthen the linkages between universities, governments, business and industry, IOs and NGOs, and local communities



Education

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe.

Since 1997, ASEF has contributed as part of its rich thematic portfolio to education policy dialogue and capacity building, and facilitated youth networks. Run by ASEF's Education Department (ASEFEdu), our projects strengthen collaborations between education institutions and exchanges among young people, academics and educators through interdisciplinary and pragmatic approaches. In doing so, we directly link these key players in education to the ASEM Education Process and ASEM Leaders' Meetings. Find out more at www.ASEF.org



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 produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and projectbased approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminarstyle teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full and part-time students, 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 interdisciplinary combinations of these areas. Find out more at www.smu.edu.sg

In Partnership with

Supported by



ASEF's contribution is with the financial support of the European Union.