SOSS welcomes its 12th batch of 201 freshmen for AY2015-16 at the Welcome Tea held on 21 August 2015. The Dean, Professor James Tang, Associate Dean Tan Yoo Guan, faculty members, SMU Social Sciences Student Society members and seniors gave a warm welcome to all freshmen over a tea reception.
The School of Social Sciences (SOSS) Commencement 2015 ceremony was held on 15 July 2015 at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre. One hundred and thirty-two SOSS graduates celebrated their academic achievements and graduation together with their parents and guests on this memorable day.

Heartiest congratulations to the graduating Class of 2015!

Left: DBS Bank School Valedictorian Award recipient, Jonathan Tan Ser Ern, receiving his award from SOSS Dean, Prof James Tang. Jonathan is also the recipient of Helen Chua Chin Xiang award for the best senior thesis in Psychology and joint-winner of Ho See Beng Excellence Award for top graduating student in Psychology.

Middle: Ho See Beng Excellence Award for top graduating student in Political Science, Derrick Cham Yanwei, receiving his award from Assoc Dean Tan Yoo Guan.

Right: Sudip Roy, joint-winner of Ho See Beng Excellence Award for top graduating student in Psychology

Left: Assoc Dean Christie Scollon presenting the Ho See Beng Excellence Award for top graduating student in Sociology to Subadevan s/o Mahadevan. Suba is also the recipient of the Helen Chua Chin Xiang award for the best senior thesis in Sociology.

Middle and Right: Fiona Lim Shi Hui and Desmond Ang Xinyao receiving their CIRCLE Awards from SMU President, Prof Arnoud De Myer, at the Opening Ceremony.

... To be continued next page
School Highlights

... Continued from previous page

Top: Graduates from the Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

Middle: Graduates from the Master of Tri-Sector Collaboration

Bottom and next page: Graduates from the Bachelor of Social Science

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Why do most of us tend to conform under peer pressure? How do policy-makers manage the delicate balance between various interest groups in society? How does our socioeconomic background affect our expectations in a relationship? These are all questions that SMU social science students would probably have encountered over the course of their study here. But do others know the answers to these questions?

On 19 June 2015, a group of enthusiastic student representatives from the School of Social Sciences Envoy Corps helped to execute the inaugural run of the Social Sciences Day Camp. This one-day event gave nearly 100 participants from the various junior colleges and polytechnics a rare opportunity to learn more about some of the issues in the social sciences through a combination of interactive activities and simulated project work.

The SOSS Envoys started off the morning segment with interactive activities from all three disciplinary majors and they proved to be a big hit with the participants. The sound of laughter could be heard emanating from the various seminar rooms where the activities were held. At noon, the participants headed downstairs to the Music and Drama Lab for a sumptuous catered lunch buffet and a chance to mingle and network with several of our SOSS faculty members through informal breakout sessions. In the afternoon, the participants took part in a team project competition where they were required to read, summarize and present the findings of an academic article to their peers.

The majority of the participants indicated in their feedback that they had an extremely enjoyable time and would recommend the event to their juniors. Judging from the smiles plastered on the participants’ faces at the end of the day, it was apparent that our event had left a strong and favorable impression on them.

The School of Social Sciences would also like to thank the following SOSS Envoys for making the event such a successful one:

- Adriel Chua Yong Hui
- Adam Peter Frederick Reynolds
- Alson Tay Ming Quan
- Gui Wan Ying
- Gaurav Deep Singh
- Karthik Mohan
- Roslina Binti Abdul Latif Yong
- Rajagopal Muralitharan
- Umairah Binte Abu Bakar
- Tsai Si Han
The Tri-Sector Forum was held on 14 May 2015 was the first public showcase by the SMU Master of Tri-Sector Collaboration (MTSC), a trailblazing course created at the SMU School of Social Sciences. The Forum was open by Prof James Tang, Dean of the SMU School of Social Sciences (SOSS). The highlight of the event was the panel discussion with participation of four out of six members of the MTSC’s Advisory Group, and moderated by Prof Ann Florini, the Academic Director of the MTSC programme and Professor of Public Policy at the SOSS. This was then followed by a presentation of the first ever policy task force project, which focused on the reduction of food waste in Singapore.

The idea of collaborative governance as a framework was a fairly recent development in the evolution of the thinking behind the development of the MTSC. The MTSC originated out of the growing understanding that individual sectors, business, government, or civil society, were finding it increasingly difficult to achieve their distinct objectives. Instead, they were turning to each other more and more, and partnering to harness one another’s strengths. The course focuses on partnership skills that enhance the abilities of individuals in one sector to collaborate with those in others. With additional stakeholders that were often cross-sector, cross-regional and cross-cultural, traditional governments were either finding themselves out of their jurisdiction or unable to govern effectively. Alternative governance constructs seemed to getting more popular: voluntary guidelines, standards and certifications, corporate governance, non-governmental watchdogs and many others.

The types of challenges that collaborative and cross-sector skills evolved to tackle are mainly wicked problems – complex, unstructured and non-linear problems. Such problems typically have multiple moving variables and are seldom solved by traditional linear thinking and processes. More often than not, they also cross industry, sector and geographical boundaries. As Peter Ho, Senior Advisor to the Centre for Strategic Futures states, these include problems like climate change, terrorism, corruption and evolving cyber threats.
By working in collaboration, organisations are now able to tap on the expertise of other sectors, and this happens at both organisational and individual levels. Piyush Gupta, CEO of the DBS Group, gave some background on the necessity of working with the other sectors, as he shared how DBS in fact placed great importance on its social license to operate rather than one from the government. Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, the Chairman and CEO of the Ayala Corporation, also mentioned the roles of his company and that of his competitors in the self-organisation of a group of businesses that could react quickly and effectively to support the government of the Philippines in the event of natural disasters. He opined that the MTSC was creating the type of talents needed to make a difference in such partnerships, a thought echoed by Khoo Teng Chye, Executive Director of the Centre for Liveable Cities, who shared his experience building up such partnerships a decade ago.

Following the panel discussion, the first cohort of the MTSC presented their capstone project, which aimed to reduce the amount of plate waste from Singapore food establishments. The production of food requires significant amounts of water and energy, and the waste of food at the end of its production journey represents an enormous waste of the resources that had gone into agriculture, farming, fertilizers, cleaning, transportation, refrigeration, cooking and preparation. The presentation analysed the drivers behind such waste and proposed business, policy and consumer-targeted recommendations to address them.

As the inaugural public platform to kickstart the dialogue on cross-sectoral issues and to nurture the partnerships ecosystem growing in Asia and beyond, the Tri-Sector Forum has been an extraordinary showcase of prominent individuals who have shown support for the goals of the MTSC. The Tri-Sector Forum will continue and expand this conversation in 2016. Look out for it!
PSYCHOLOGY & PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE
10 FEB 2015

The Psychology & Public Policy Conference brought together a selected group of international scholars to discuss how social and evolutionary psychological perspectives could inform pressing issues of public policy that exist in Singapore but also extend to East Asia and other nations. In particular, this Conference focused on the issue of declining fertility, which has become a serious concern over the last few decades in developed countries but especially in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well as urban China.

1st Row: Prof James Tang, Dean of School of Social Sciences delivering an welcome address.
Speakers of the Conference:
2nd Row (L-R): Assoc Prof Norman Li (SMU), Asst Prof Bussarawan Teerawichitchainan (SMU) and Prof Mark van Vugt (VU University Amsterdam)
3rd Row (L-R): Prof Bruce Ellis (University of Arizona) and Prof Steven Neuberg (Arizona State University)
SOSS hosted the International Studies Association (ISA) Global South Caucus Conference from 8 to 10 January 2015. Over 360 participants representing 269 institutions attended this three-day conference. The theme of this conference was “Voices from the Outside: Re-shaping International Relations and Practice in an Era of Global Transformation”. The conference provided a channel for sharing of research, information and ideas among scholars of the various institutions.

Opening Ceremony
8 Jan 2015

The Opening Ceremony of the conference was held on 8 Jan 2015 at the SMU Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium. Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-At-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was the featured speaker. He delivered the keynote address titled “Will there be peace in Asia?”.

First Row (L-R):
1. Prof Arnoud De Meyer, President of SMU, addressing the audiences.
2. Prof James Tang, Dean, School of Social Sciences, welcoming delegates of the conference.
3. Prof Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, Chair of ISA Global South Caucus and Chair of Programme Committee, giving her welcome address.

Second Row (L-R):
1. Prof Amitav Acharya, President of ISA, speaking to the audiences.
2. Prof Tommy Koh, Ambassador-At-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, delivering the keynote address.

Last Row:
(L-R) Prof James Tang, Prof Arnoud De Meyer, Prof Tommy Koh, Prof Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, Prof Amitav Acharya and Prof Thomas Volgy (Executive Director of ISA)

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Conference Days 9 & 10 Jan 2015

Fourteen concurrent sessions were held at the SOSS seminar rooms at different time interval on 9 & 10 January 2015. It was indeed a stimulating experience for all the conference participants.

Roundtable Meeting 9 Jan 2015

The topic for the Roundtable Meeting was “Comparative Perspectives on Regional Cooperation”. It was attended by representatives from ISA as well as local academic and industry partners.
Assistant Professor Colm Fox is one of this year’s two co-recipients of APSA’s (American Political Science Association) Comparative Democratization Section “Best Field Work” award for his dissertation. This prize rewards dissertation students who conduct especially innovative and difficult fieldwork. Congratulations to Colm!

Assistant Professor Jacob Ricks was awarded the Della Suantio Fellowship. Established in 2012 by Dr Della Suantio Lee and the DS Lee Foundation, this award is given to support junior faculty members in conducting academic and industry-relevant research, and their participation in international research programmes that are crucial to improving the understanding of Asian businesses.

Assistant Professor Serena Wee was awarded the Sing Lun Fellowship. Established in 2009 by Mr Patrick Lee, Chairman of Sing Lun Investment Pte Ltd, this award is given annually to support junior faculty members who have demonstrated the ability to conduct academic and industry-relevant research on business issues in Asia. Nominees are evaluated based on the originality and multidisciplinary nature of projects, research significance, potential to attract the collaborative interest of internationally recognised researchers, and publication in prominent journals and books.
Faculty in the News

David CHAN - 8 Aug 2015, The Straits Times
Putting Singapore above Self

Kirpal SINGH - 18 Aug 2015, Yahoo! News
Reflections on SG50 and Hopes for GE2015

THE ABOVE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE. CLICK HERE FOR FULL LIST OF SOSS FACULTY IN THE NEWS.

Faculty Research

Journal


“Eliminativism, Dialetheism and Moore’s Paradox” by John Nicholas WILLIAMS, 2015, 81, 1, Theoria, 27-47

“Invaluable Justice: Heidegger, Derrida, and Daoism on Thinking of Values and Justice” by Steven Victor BURIK, 2015, Value and Values: Economics and Justice in an Age of Global Interdependence, University of Hawai‘i Press


“Why does Everybody Hate Me? Balance, Status, and Homophily: The Triumvirate of Signed Tie Formation” by Janice YAP, Nicholas Michael HARRIGAN, 01/2015, 40, Social Networks, 103-122

Books & Monographs

“The EU’s Performance in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” by Clara PORTELA, Blavukos SPIROS, Bourantonis DIMITRIS, 2015, Palgrave-MacMillan

“People Matter” by David CHAN, 2015, World Scientific

“Liveability in Singapore” by David CHAN, 2015, World Scientific

Conference Papers

The 75th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Vancouver, Canada, 7-11 Aug 2015
1. “Female Professionals’ Gender-Professional Identity Integration (G-PII) and Creativity” and “The Effects of Cosmopolitan Culture, Competitiveness, and Need for Cognitive Closure on Creativity” by CHENG Chi-Ying
2. “Perceived Organizational Support Climate and Its Effects on Individual Performance” and “Facial Dominance and Effectiveness of Apology” by Grace PARK
3. “A Leader’s Decision Vigilance and Subordinate’s Creativity: Creativity Requirement as a Mediator” by TSAI Ming-Hong

2. “Between Democracy and Technocracy: Revisiting the Problem of Expertise in Post-Fukushima Japan” and “A Field Theory of Transnational Difficult Pasts” by Hirohisa SAITO


“Towards a Smarter City through the Participatory Mapping of the Electrical Power Distribution System in Lahore, Pakistan” by Ijlal NAQVI, 27-29 Aug 2015, RC21 2015 Conference on “The Ideal City between Myth and Reality”, Urbino, Italy

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