The Our Singapore Conversation session hosted by School of Social Sciences on 11 January 2013 gathered close to 30 students and alumni who shared their hopes and views of what kind of Singapore they would like to see in future. Discussion topics included alternative definitions of success, paradigm shifts of education and the fear of failure when striving for success. During the panel discussion, Associate Professor Kirpal Singh suggested that the decline of literature study has stifled expression within Singapore, and that the concern is how this has impacted Singapore’s preparedness for deeper discussions in future. Professor Singh also felt that sharing stories of local icons who have struggled for success can serve as a powerful tool for solidarity and motivation in the face of future challenges. Assistant Professor Serena Wee shared her view on alternative definitions of success and how the pressure to attain conventional concepts of success results in an unhealthy fear of failure. The session was made lively by moderator Assistant Professor Mahdev Mohan’s humorous remarks.

The breakout discussions after the initial panel session saw the participants share their thoughts on the nature and purpose of education, what are the values that they hold dear and would like to see embedded in Singapore’s future, and how success can have different meanings for different people. Many participants were concerned about how success was too narrowly defined and how the current definition of success restricts the ability of Singaporeans to gain access to opportunities for a good life. The conclusion drawn was that frustration stemming from this lack of opportunities that has led to growing cynicism among young Singaporeans and hence more needs to be done to combat this and effect change, and this national conversation was a good starting point.
Diversity is built into the concept of Indonesia. The national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) captures the essence of the archipelagic nation-state. With more than 300 ethnic groups and 700 living languages, Indonesia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries on earth. After the interminable 32 years of New Order government, Indonesia almost seemed to erupt in ethno-religious violence, apparently revealing that the peacefulness and stability of the New Order was paper-thin. It patently failed to uphold its national motto of Unity in Diversity, as trouble-spots flared in ugly violent conflict: there were attacks on the Chinese in several towns and cities, ethnic violence in Central and West Kalimantan, religious and ethnic conflict in Poso, Lombok, Halmahera, Ambon, and elsewhere. By the mid-2000s most of the violence was over. While the situation is still fragile in some places, and most observers wish that the state would deal more strenuously with attacks on religious minorities, the nation-state seems to have settled into a new era: democratized, decentralized and economically healthy.

At this two-day conference, scholars from Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, Taiwan and South Africa presented their research papers that explored how Indonesia is negotiating its ethnic, religious, gender and social diversity in this era of democracy.

The conference ended with a Public Forum on “Towards Diversity and Inclusion: Where Shall We Draw the Lines?”

Welcome address by SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer

Associate Professor Margaret Chan, Assistant Professor Hoon Chang Yau and participants of the conference enjoying a few light hearted moment during the conference

Keynote Speaker, Professor Farid Esack of University of Johannesburg
The 2012 US Presidential Election kept much of the world riveted, with the battle between Democrat incumbent President Barack Obama and Republican rival Mitt Romney often described by American media and political watchers as too close to call.

The SMU School of Social Sciences (SOSS) had organised an expert panel discussion on the afternoon of 7 November 2012 - literally minutes after news that President Obama had been re-elected as President of the US - to analyse what election outcome and what the results meant for American domestic and foreign policy, as well as the implications for Asia and Singapore.

The panel consisted of three distinguished academics from SOSS - Dean and Professor of Political Science James Tang; Professor of Public Policy Ann Florini (concurrently a Senior Fellow at the renowned American think-tank The Brookings Institution); and Associate Professor of Political Science John Donaldson. They were joined by Mr. Nicholas Fang, Director of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs and Nominated Member of Parliament.

Mr Fang started the discussion by congratulating SOSS for being one of the first institutions in Singapore to provide a commentary on the election, and praised the school of the timeliness of such an event. The panellists then gave their take on the election results, and engaged the audience on a wide spectrum of issues, including the challenging tasks that lay ahead for President Obama in his second term.

The event was covered by Channel NewsAsia as part of its special coverage on the election, with Professor Tang and Professor Florini granting exclusive interviews. Professor Donaldson was also interviewed by the local Chinese media for his views after the event.

The event was initiated and organised by Andrea Tang (Year 4, Political Science) and Tim Mou Hui (Alumnus, Class of 2012) from SOSS.
**School Highlights**

**Arts and Culture Management Second Major**

From January 2013 all SMU students will have a brand new subject to opt for when selecting their Second Major. The Arts and Culture Management Second Major is an innovative and practical-oriented Programme which aims to prepare graduates for the burgeoning arts/culture industry which, world-wide is going to drive important economic engines. In Singapore, there is a dire need for arts/culture managers, administrators who both understand the sensitivity of the arts/culture community and also the stringent demands of knowledge and experience of the different and varied industries where their skills are needed.

This new Second Major was officially launch on 9 November 2012. Please click **HERE** for more details.

---

Prof James Tang, Dean of SOSS, giving his welcome speech during the official launch of the new second major.

Ms Hilary Boulding, Principal of Royal Welsh College, addressing potential ACM students.
On 24-27th September 2012, SMU Emerging Markets had the privilege to participate in the 7th Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) at Marina Bay Sands. The Centre of Emerging Markets’ Executive Director, and former Singapore Ambassador to Russia, Mr. Michael Tay, spearheaded this event that focused on key issues such as growth drivers, fast developing Asian markets, and business opportunities and challenges.

As the only global Business-to-Business platform linking Russia & the Commonwealth of Independent States’ political and business elites with Singapore and the rest of Asia, it attracted more than 800 businessmen such as Mr. Jim Rogers, global investor and Chairman of Rogers Holdings, and Mr. Authur Tait, Managing Director of Gazprom Singapore. Also present were Mr. Lee Kwan Yew, former Prime Minister of Singapore, and Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tharman Shanmugatratnam.

I was honored to participate as Liaison Officer to guest speaker Mr. Hemant Kanoria, Chairman and Managing Director of SREI Infrastructure Finance Ltd. To ensure that the entire event ran smoothly, I had to constantly think on my feet in the fast-paced environment to facilitate his meetings and tight schedule. There were many valuable opportunities to learn as well, as we were able to sit in for several talks by prominent political and industry leaders.

Founder/Chairman of SMU Emerging Markets Gary Lee said, “RSBF was a great experience. Students from SMU Emerging Markets were honored to act as Liaison Officers to many senior executives of global businesses and received first hand experiences hearing from their expertise and knowledge. Personally, I was attached to Mr. Jim Rogers and had the rare opportunity to hear his viewpoint on the financial markets.”

My participation in RSBF 2012 highlighted that Singapore Management University has opened many doors for its students to relate what we learnt in the classroom to the real world. The School of Social Sciences has provided me with a very comprehensive background in understanding the political environment, which in turn influences businesses in the emerging markets. It was truly a great experience, and I look forward to RSBF 2013!
I saw the metal skyscrapers – The now. On the other end of the river, these buildings are now converted there hundreds of years ago, and foreigners set up their settlement Shanghai into two parts). I saw British crossing The Bund (river the divides vividly sitting on the boat and there at the age of 15. I remembered for myself, I loved the noise, the away from home?

Atlas). What is your favorite location continents, 196 countries and 4,360 the city - Shanghai. There are seven to work, and also because I love urgency VS Passion

A. right?

Choosing an overseas internship to many tiny steps, and one away the little that is given, is an

Viola, I fulfilled this dream. It starts pasting all the managers’ receipts, every beginner should have.

The biggest challenge when I first came in was how to grapple being humble to my managers who are senior in age than myself, as well as how to lead a project and instruct them with confidence. There was a constant need to balance between humility and confidence. In a male dominated automotive industry I was working in, I can easily be written off as naive, and not knowing what I am doing. That would make it difficult for me to lead any managers through a project.

Many young Chinese graduates are more often than not, shy, and not willing to take on hardships. They will throw in the towel if they had to go through mundane tedious work. Yet as a Singaporean, I have painstakingly travelled across work in a foreign land, there is no turning back for me. I had to bite the bullet and work, no matter how small my task was in the beginning.

Many students will make blatant comments such as, “I don’t need to prove myself. This is me.” Such a mindset is not only egoistic, but will never get one in any good place.

Every setting is a chance to prove myself; every phone conference I had with any colleague, client or manager, every lunchtime chitchatting session; every meeting; there was never once I let my guard down. I was not putting up a front; I was fighting for a chance. Sometimes, many of us come from top junior colleges, and end up in top universities in Singapore, we only prove ourselves through grades, through scoring an A+. But in the real world setting, proving and fighting for your chance, is not just a once-off examination setting, it is a daily affair and it has to be done in a professional demeanor of being humble yet confident.

Phase VS Life

I did not just meet someone great, to Singapore. For myself, it was a best, I ended up meeting an endless

I am sure for many others out to love, I ended up meeting a lot of great to never lose sight of what drives you.

Fate VS Choice

“Coincidence is god’s way of removing ignorance”.

I cannot emphasize enough how being overseas working and successfully surviving can be a little bit of a strangeness of fate. During my journey there, it was because of a chain sequence of many unplanned events, set of beautiful coincidences, that I met people that moulded me so positively.

D. to Singapore, I have been fighting for a chance, I have to bite the bullet and work, no matter how small my task was in the beginning.

I was subsequently entrusted with bigger roles, duties and projects. But had I given up, complacent, or portrayed a bad attitude at the never get one in any good place.

Every setting is a chance to prove myself; every phone conference I had with any colleague, client or manager, every lunchtime chitchatting session; every meeting; there was never once I let my guard down. I was not putting up a front; I was fighting for a chance. Sometimes, many of us come from top junior colleges, and end up in top universities in Singapore, we only prove ourselves through grades, through scoring an A+. But in the real world setting, proving and fighting for your chance, is not just a once-off examination setting, it is a daily affair and it has to be done in a professional demeanor of being humble yet confident.

Phase VS Life

I did not just meet someone great, to Singapore. For myself, it was a best, I ended up meeting an endless

I am sure for many others out to love, I ended up meeting a lot of great to never lose sight of what drives you.

Fate VS Choice

“Coincidence is god’s way of removing ignorance”.

I cannot emphasize enough how being overseas working and successfully surviving can be a little bit of a strangeness of fate. During my journey there, it was because of a chain sequence of many unplanned events, set of beautiful coincidences, that I met people that moulded me so positively.

D. to Singapore, I have been fighting for a chance, I have to bite the bullet and work, no matter how small my task was in the beginning.

I was subsequently entrusted with bigger roles, duties and projects. But had I given up, complacent, or portrayed a bad attitude at the
ASEAN+3 YOUTH LEADERS SYMPOSIUM
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
By Mohammed Farhan Bin Mohd FIRDAUS, BSocSc Year 3

For every Social Science Student and especially for those reading Political-Science in the university, the most gratifying moment in your life comes when you know you can finally put the knowledge you’ve acquired in your academic life, to good use and into practice. That was how I felt when I was nominated by the National Youth Council to be one of four Singaporeans to represent our country at the ASEAN+3 Youth Leaders Symposium held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 18th to 20th October 2012. My team members included a Post-Grad student of Southeast Asia Studies and another was a researcher, both from NUS and the other was an ex-inspector with the Ministry of Home Affairs. While I was appointed as the Head of Delegation for Singapore, one of my key roles was to present in front of an audience approximating 100 people about ‘The Future of ASEAN’. Now, in order to predict or at least attempt to foresee ASEAN’s future, one has to first have a coherent and updated knowledge on the topic. Also, my delegates from the ASEAN countries, along with China, Korea and Japan were expecting me to stipulate action to be taken for ASEAN to reach its ultimate goal and immediate objectives, together with improvements for the regional organization.

I was able to cope with the tremendous pressure and expectations as a result of the theories and applicable knowledge retained from my political science classes which stretch as far back as my freshman year in the School of Social Sciences, SMU. I owe it to my professors, especially Assoc. Prof. John Donaldson, Asst. Prof. Clara Portela and Asst. Prof Yooil Bae who have equipped me in the fields of Politics, Public Policy as well as International Relations; as a result of their effective teaching skills, I was able to pick up the pertinent points and apply it in the real world. When I asked or even, answered questions from my peers from the other countries who were either Directors or at very least, Assistant Directors of the ministries and government agencies which they worked for, they were astonished and often surprised with my deep knowledge in Political and Economic Integration, topics which I personally am fond of and take great interest to update myself from time to time. Most importantly, I feel the School of Social Sciences has prepared me sufficiently for the momentous and most memorable event in my schooling life, thus far. At the end of the 2-days in Phnom Penh, the other delegates and I had to spend half-a-day drafting and vetting a proposal for the Head of States and Head of Governments of all 13 countries, in time for the ASEAN+3 Summit in November 2012. It was a painstaking and arduous process, but I now can relate to the stories Prof. Donaldson always talks about of congressmen in Capitol Hill ‘drafting bills all day’, I guess my experience though a pale comparison, was a pinch of reality. In the end, I made a lot of friends, widened my personal network and absorbed all the experiences through my 2-day enthralling symposium cum meeting in Phnom Penh.
**Faculty Promotion/Appointment**

*With Effect from 1 January 2013*

- **Associate Professor John Donaldson** has been appointed the Associate Dean (External Relations).
- SOSS is pleased to announce the promotion of Dr Angela Leung (Left) and Dr Forrest Zhang (Right) to Associate Professors (with tenure).
- SOSS is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Song Jiyoung as Assistant Professor of Political Science.

**SOSS Admin Appointment**

SOSS welcome Ms Serena Gunawan Wong Liting who joined the School on 2 Jan 2013 as Assistant Manager.

**Faculty in the News**

- Christie Scollon & William Tov - 7 Jan 2013, The Straits Times
  *Get Schooled in ways of happiness?*
- Ann Florini - 30 Dec 2012, Channel NewsAsia
  *The year ahead: What will 2013 bring?*
- John Donaldson - 18 Dec 2012, 938Live
  *A Year in Review: United States*
**Journal**

“Gender Disparities in Self-employment in Urban China’s Market Transition: Income Inequality, Occupational Segregation and Mobility Processes” by Qian (Forrest) ZHANG, 2013, The China Quarterly


“China’s Agrarian Reform and the Privatization of Land: A Contrarian View” by Forrest ZHANG, John Andrew DONALD-SON, 07/2012, 21, 78, Journal of Contemporary China, Elsevier, 55 - 58

“Cultural Differences and Switching of In-group Sharing Behavior Between an American (Facebook) and a Chinese (Ren-ren) Social Networking Site” by L. QIU, H. LIN, Ka Yee Angela LEUNG, 12/2012, 44, 1, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Sage Publications, 106 - 121


**Chapters in Books**

Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion and Belonging, HOON, Chang Yau, “By Race, I am Chinese; and by Grace, I am Christian”: Chineseness and Christianity in Indonesia, Siew Min Sai and Chang Yau Hoon (eds), 159 - 177, 10/2012 Publisher: Routledge

Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion and Belonging, SAI, Siew Min, and HOON Chang Yau, Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: A Critical Review, Siew Min Sai and Chang Yau Hoon (eds), 1 - 26, 10/2012 Publisher: Routledge


**Conference Papers**


MOONEY, Thomas Brian, “Friendship with the Bad”, Philosophy Colloquium 2012: A Day of Φιλο-ΣοΦια (Philo-Sophia): Friendship and Philosophical Discussion, 4 Dec 2012