



President's Message

Dear SMU Community

You would have received over the past two weeks, several health and travel advisories on precautionary measures against the 2019 novel coronavirus. As your health and well-being is the University's top priority, we have implemented several measures for all members of our University community as well as for SMU's visitors, contractors and tenants.

You can refer to these measures on a dedicated [SMU microsite](#), which serves as a one-stop location with key updates and important information on the novel coronavirus, and contacts for assistance.

When SMU Prinsep Street Residences (PSR) was identified, alongside hostels in NUS and NTU, as one of several Government Quarantine Facilities (GQF), we set aside one block at PSR for this purpose. This block will serve as a quarantine facility in the event that any of SMU's international students staying at PSR or any other international student from SMU is issued with a Quarantine Order. We are thankful that to date we have not had any cases.

In this connection, I applaud our local student residents for their empathy and spirit of camaraderie when they moved back to their homes so that their international peers could be relocated in the remaining two blocks at PSR. We are also very appreciative of our SMU Peer Helpers, both current and alumni, who have been reaching out to fellow students to offer various forms of assistance. They have set up a dedicated Peer Helper Crisis Response team to complement the University's efforts in supporting students affected by the 14-day Leave of Absence directive. They had also provided assistance to a group of international students who were relocated to temporary accommodation in SMU Connexion when their block at PSR was being prepared for use as a GQF. The team provides peer support by listening to affected students' concerns and challenges, and also encourages them to connect via SMU Peer Helpers Facebook Page and Instagram account. In addition, our professional counsellors at the Mrs Wong Kwok Leong Student Wellness Centre have offered counselling services to any of our students who may require it.

Our students' strong spirit of helping and supporting one another was also evident over the last weekend when two local resident seniors volunteered to move back home so that two additional beds could be made available for house-displaced residents. It was heartening to learn that local student residents who have moved out of PSR have continued to be active in their respective apartment group chats. They still feel connected as part of the PSR community, and understand that this temporary disruption is necessary to support the national effort. And it was business as usual for local PSR residents who are part of one of PSR's community service project groups. Although they had moved back home, they returned to PSR over the last weekend to join their international friends for their regular group meetings.

These are just a few of the many heart-warming examples of how our students and other members of our community have rallied together to render help and support to those affected. Across SMU, many offices, schools and units are working hard in planning and implementing pre-emptive measures for our community and developing alternative learning platforms for students. My thanks to all of you for responding so promptly and positively. There may be a need to call on colleagues to help in different ways, from getting ready more e-learning material, to taking on duties not ordinarily required. I seek your understanding and support.

The University is also working closely with the Ministry of Education to take the necessary precautionary measures for our community as the situation develops. Your health and well-being is of utmost importance and we remain ready to adopt any additional measures which might be requested of us. Though this may be a challenging time, it is important for us to be vigilant against misinformation about the virus, take care of our health, and importantly, stay calm. Together, we can all play our part in being socially responsible and practising good personal hygiene habits. If anyone feels unwell, with any fever, cough or flu-like symptoms, please use a mask and seek medical help promptly.

Thank you and I look forward to your continued support.

Warmest regards

Professor Lily Kong
President
Singapore Management University