



SMU

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

SMU PRO BONO CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

PRO BONO CENTRE

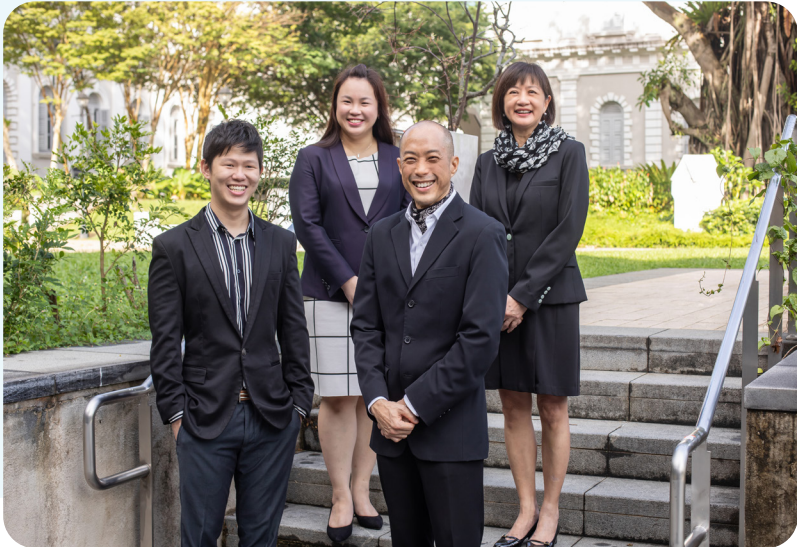
SUPPORTED BY
RHT RAJAN MENON
FOUNDATION

YONG PUNG HOW
SCHOOL OF LAW





OUR PEOPLE



Director

Professor Chan Wing Cheong

Deputy Director

Ms Ruby Lee

Senior Assistant Manager

Ms Rebecca Teo

Executive

Mr Vincent Goh

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Despite the trying circumstances caused by the on-going pandemic, I am pleased to say that the willingness of SMU Law students to contribute to the community has not been affected at all. At various times this year, many in-person programmes had to be rescheduled or cancelled altogether, sometimes at short notice, while others had to switch to a virtual format for the first time. The SMU Pro Bono Centre Legal Clinic, for example, was suspended three times for about one month each time owing to the Covid-19 restrictions. The students took all these challenges in their stride.

The average number of pro bono hours served per student by the Class of 2021 (LLB and JD) was 51.3 hours. This is 6.9% more than last year's cohort, and much more than the 20 hours mandated by SILE. I am very proud of the 6 JD graduates and 43 LLB graduates who completed at least 50 and 80 pro bono hours respectively.

I would like to congratulate the Spirit of Pro Bono Award winners this year for their remarkable achievement. This award is given to students who completed the most number of pro bono hours in their graduating cohort. Lokman Hakim (JD) completed 460.5 pro bono hours, while Farahna Alam (LLB) completed 258.6 pro bono hours. These are the highest number of pro bono hours by a JD and LLB student that we have recorded so far!

The SMU Pro Bono Centre would not have been able to fulfil its mission of facilitating access to justice, imparting practical legal skills, and instilling social responsibility among students without the close cooperation with our valued community partners and volunteer lawyers. Thank you for your support and providing invaluable learning opportunities to our students.

I would like to recognise the 17 lawyers who volunteered at our legal clinic this year, and especially Richard Tan and Zheng Pei. For the third year running, Richard receives the Volunteer Lawyer Award for having volunteered the most times at the legal clinic; while Zheng Pei receives the 5 year Long Service Award.

The statistics for the legal clinic for January to September this year can be found in this report. The total number of applicants assisted was 135, a decrease from 199 for the same period last year due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The percentage of cases which were related to Covid-19 issues was 11.1% as compared to 8.5% last year. The majority of the Covid-19 issues were associated with the Covid-19 Act and raised by small and medium businesses on matters such as tenancy disputes with landlords. I am glad that our legal clinic could lend a helping hand during this difficult period.

Finally, I take pleasure in showcasing some of the projects that students took part in this year in this report.

Professor Chan Wing Cheong
Director, SMU Pro Bono Centre



AVERAGE NUMBER OF APPROVED PRO BONO HOURS COMPLETED PER STUDENT

CLASS OF 2020

ALL STUDENTS	LLB STUDENTS	JD STUDENTS
48.0 hours	45.0 hours	68.9 hours

CLASS OF 2021

ALL STUDENTS	LLB STUDENTS	JD STUDENTS
51.3 hours	51.3 hours	51.7 hours

SPOTLIGHT

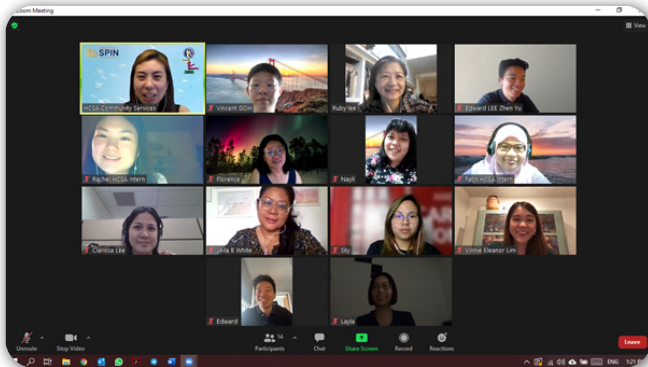
PROJECT AGEING

In recognition of Singapore's ageing population over the coming decades, we have embarked on this project to provide information on key legal instruments relating to mental capacity and death. The aim is to help the general public, litigants-in-person, caregivers and other family members to plan for the ageing process and avoid costly litigation when things go wrong.

We completed the first video on ageing with dementia, and work on the second and third videos on ageing and intellectual disability are currently ongoing.



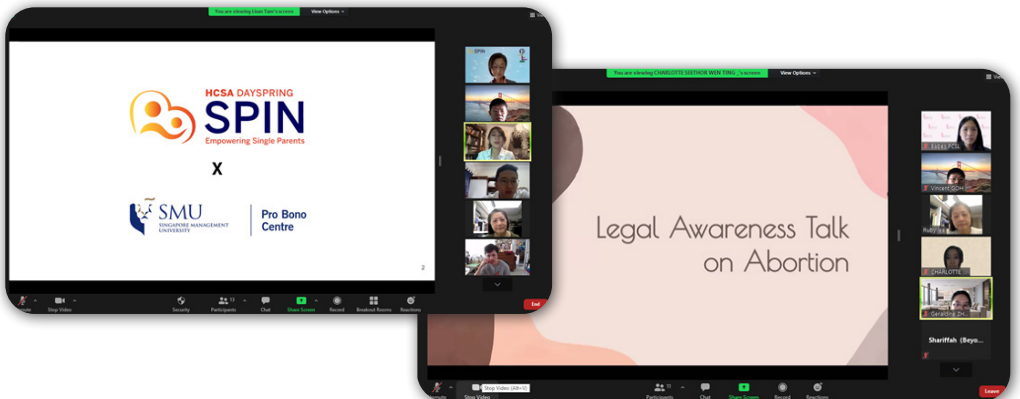
LEGAL AWARENESS TALKS



Although the Covid-19 restrictions meant that many in-person activities could not carry on as before, students were still able to reach out to the community and share their legal knowledge through video conferencing tools.

Nearly 20 legal awareness talks were given this year in this new format on topics such as PDPA obligations, illegitimacy, maintenance and guardianship of children, trust law, the Singapore legal system, lasting power of attorney (LPA) and deputyship. The talks were given to various organisations including schools, hospitals, non-profit organisations and charities.

As an added service, about 30 participants who were interested in making an LPA after attending the talk were helped by volunteer lawyers from RHTLaw Asia to certify their LPA applications in January 2021.





PROJECT iFAMS

Project iFAMS builds on our experience in helping litigants-in-person apply for deputyship orders via a court application. In this project, students assist litigants-in-person apply for the orders via the Integrated Family Application Management System (iFAMS) which is a much faster, simpler, and cheaper alternative.

We have helped 21 families so far – 10 from MINDS; 4 from SUNDAC, and 7 from the Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore.



PROJECT WILL WRITING

Students assist caregivers of persons with special needs to make a will to empower an executor to sell the caregivers' HDB flat and place the sales proceeds in a trust at the Special Needs Trust Company (SNTC). Students interview the caregivers to take their instructions and thereafter draft the wills which are reviewed by volunteer lawyers before execution.

7 wills were executed by SNTC beneficiaries in August 2021. We plan to expand this service to residents of nursing homes and hospices.

STUDENT INITIATED PROJECTS

PROJECT LIGHTHOUSE

Students assist lawyers who take on pro bono cases such as referrals from CLAS, LASCO and LAB. Unlike an internship which only lasts a few weeks and where students work on cases without a holistic overview of it, the students in this project follow a case from the beginning till it is resolved. They learn valuable skills such as client interview, drafting of documents, and court strategy, and become sensitised to common issues faced by the public.

PROJECT SPARK

Members of the SMU Law Outreach Club assisted VOICES, which is a unit in SMU that supports students who experience harassment and sexual misconduct. The students helped VOICES to produce a legal guide to explain what harassment is, the criminal penalties, and avenues of help available. This guide will be made available online to the entire SMU student body.

PRO BONO MEDIATION CLINIC

A brainchild of the SMU Mediation and Negotiation Club, this clinic offers pro bono mediation services to financially disadvantaged members of the public. Students explain what mediation is and how it can be a viable alternative for dispute settlement to interested parties, and assist volunteer mediators during the sessions. The first mediation session under this scheme took place in April 2021.

WHAT PARTNER AGENCIES AND STUDENTS SAY

“We are thankful for the dedication of the SMU Pro Bono Centre in supporting our single parents, staff and volunteers of SPIN by sharing their legal knowledge and expertise through a series of legal talks. Not only do they equip us with knowledge and insightful information, the regular legal talks also provide a safe platform for our single parents to openly share and discuss issues and challenges they struggle with which they may not have been able to do so otherwise.”

SYLVIA CHOU, COMMUNICATION MANAGER
HCSA Community Services
(SPIN is a programme which provides support to single parents and lone caregivers)
Legal Awareness Talk on Divorce

“The students delivered today’s presentation very well. I personally found it informative and helpful in shaping future volunteer management policies. Thank you very much!”

LOUISE LOH, VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIST
Daughters Of Tomorrow
Project DOT

“I enjoyed the talk and would be happy to sign up for more. The learning process was extremely enlightening.”

LISAN TAM
JD Class of 2022
Legal Awareness Talk on LPA

“Thank you for introducing us to iFAMS and taking the time to coach us and accompany us throughout the event as well as giving us a really eye-opening talk It helped me to re-evaluate why I chose to take up law in the first place – which is the pro bono aspect – and not to get so caught up with the prestige of being a lawyer.”

ANISA LOW
LLB Class of 2023
Project iFAMS

“I would just like to let you know how interesting it was working on these wills under your guidance. Thank you for all your help and support on this project.”

JESHER HO
LLB Class of 2022
Project Will Writing

“I have a great interest in single mothers which is a big social problem in Korea due to insufficient laws to protect them. Through this talk, I was able to learn where I can offer my help in the future and what concerns single mothers have. It was a pleasure learning more about this topic.”

KIM MUN JEONG
JD Class of 2022
Legal Awareness Talk on Illegitimacy

SERVICE AWARD & CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION RECIPIENTS

Spirit of Pro Bono Award – Class of 2021 (JD)

Lokman Hakin bin Mohamed Rafi

Spirit of Pro Bono Award – Class of 2021 (LLB)

Farahna Alam

Volunteer Lawyer (volunteered most times at the SMU PBC Legal Clinic)

Richard Tan Ming Kirk

Volunteer Lawyer (5 year long service award)

Zheng Pei

JD graduates from Class of 2021 who completed 50 or more approved pro bono hours

Boon Yong Xin Rachael
Ee Zong En, Fernando
Koh Yi Wen
Nur Liyana binte Kamaludin
Wijesuriya Arachchilage
Dhanushka Sanjeewa
Wijesuriya

LLB graduates from Class of 2021 who completed 80 or more approved pro bono hours

Aidan Goh Guo Yao
Arushee Bhatnagar
Au Yee Ting, Carolyn
Aymeric Seah Chien-Ming
Benedict Koh Yen Hin
Carrie Leong An Ting
Chau Wing Wei
Cheyenne Valenza Low
Dou Han
Ee Wan Qi, Lynn
Elizabeth Anne Shuet Yan Boey
Foo Yang Yi
Fu Wan Ying Wendy
Gitta Priska Adelya
Hon Yu Rou, Roxanne
Hsu-Anne Choo Sha Ling
Joshua Ho Jin Le
Kevin Wong Jin Wei

LLB graduates from Class of 2021 who completed 80 or more approved pro bono hours

- Cont'd

Lee Chang Jin
Lee Wei Teng
Low Guan Ling Queeny
Marissa Daisy Decruz
Mohamed Ali Azeera
Mohamed Shafie Bin Allameen
Naomi Lim Bao Bao
Samantha Ee Hui Ying
Sherwin Chew Jun Kai
Sia He, Harvard
Soh Kian Peng
Sonia Elizabeth Rajendra
Su Zhiren
Tan En Wei, Max
Tan Jia Yi
Tan Siu Ping, Angelica
Tan Xue Min, Shermaine
Tan Yoong San
Tay Jie Qi
Tay Yan Xia
Teh Siew Woon Valentina
Teo Jia En
Victor Tang
Xu Hongli, Terry

Lawyers who volunteered in the SMU PBC Legal Clinic in 2021

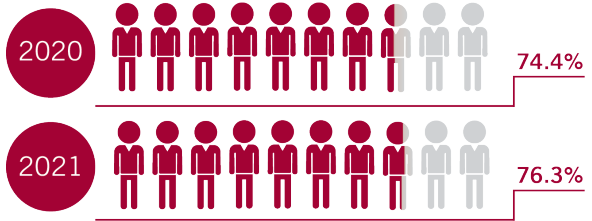
Aileen Chua+
Alvin Ong+
Alvin Sia+
Charlotte Tan+
Christian Teo Hee Sheng+
Derek Tay+
Heather Huey Yen Hoong
Jasper Chan+
Jolie Giouw+
Matthew Teo Hee Ann+
Nerissa Tan+
Richard Tan Ming Kirk
Ruby Lee
Tess Soon+
Violet Lee
Wang Zirui
Zheng Pei+

REPORT OF THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC

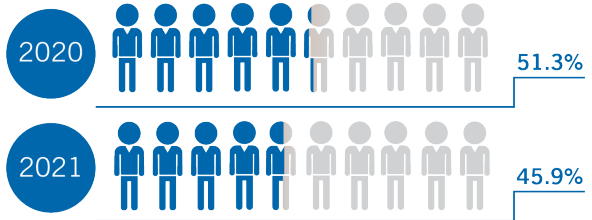
PROFILE OF THE APPLICANTS

A TOTAL OF 135 APPLICANTS WERE ASSISTED AT THE LEGAL CLINIC BETWEEN JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 2021

SINGAPOREAN



AGE UNDER 40 YEARS-OLD



HAVE DIPLOMA EDUCATION & ABOVE



EARNED LESS THAN \$4,000/MONTH



The median gross monthly income of full-time employed residents in Singapore (excluding employer CPF contributions) was \$4,000 in 2020 (Labour Force in Singapore 2020).

LEGAL ISSUES
PRESENTED AT THE
SMU PRO BONO
CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC



FAMILY

2020

18.6%

2021

18.5%



EMPLOYMENT

13.1%

6.7%



CRIMINAL

7.0%

10.4%



TENANCY

8.0%

12.6%

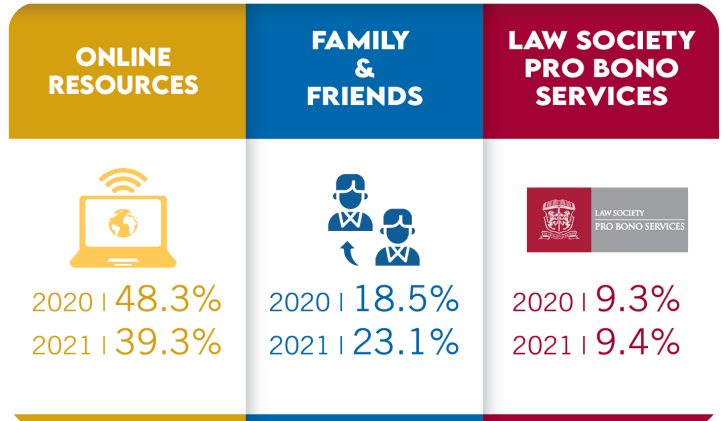


COVID-19

8.5%

11.1%

APPLICANTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC THROUGH



SATISFACTION WITH THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC IN 2021



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish thank the following volunteer lawyers, partners and stakeholders for supporting the SMU Pro Bono Centre:

Ada Chua
Aileen Chua
Alvin Ong
Alvin Sia
Averill Chow Mingni
Charlotte Tan Guan Ling
Chooi Jing Yen
Christian Teo Hee Sheng
Christina Tien
Edwin Sim
Erik Widjaja
Eugene Neo
Gabriel Lee
Glen Koh Teck Beng
Heather Huey Yen Hoong
Hoo Ann Qi, Persis
Jacinth Chua
Jasper Chan
Jolie Giouw Rong Zhen
Junie Loh
Kor Wan Wen, Melissa
Lee Kai Lin, Kelyn
Lim Yong Sheng, David
Lim Yuan Jing
Lisa Farrah Ho
Marissa Zhao
Mary-Anne Chua
Matthew Teo Hee Ann
Mohamed Arshad Bin Mohamed Tahir
Nerissa Tan
Priscilla Chia Wen Qi
Richard Tan Ming Kirk
Shermin Teo Sher Min
Spencer Tan
Tan E-Fang
Tan Li-Ning, Tamasin
Tay Yi Ru, Derek
Tess Soon
Tong Siu Hong, Joshua
Violet Lee
Wang Zirui
Zheng Pei

Adrian Tan
Allen Sng
Ang Wei Yun
Audrey Tan
Avis Yeo
Azrina Abdul Azim
Benny Tan
Brian Ooi
Chan Hian Young
Chew Siew Kheng
Chong Cheh Hoon
Chua Siew Geok

Daniel Hakim
Douglas MacLean
Dr Chen Shi Ling
Eleanor Wong
Ellis See
Emilyn Teo
Emma Chen
Esther Tan
Francis Wong
Geethanjali Chandra
Gerald Tan
Gloria Lim
Greg Tan
Ho Soh Li
Ignatius Chia
Jason Foo
Joel Chia
Justin Goh
Kanak Muchhal
Kelvin Lim
Koh Soek Ying and Barry Koh
Kwok-Chern Yew Tee
Lalitha Sriharan
Leng Yan Lee
Leonard Lee
Lim Hui Min
Lim Lei Theng
Lim Tanguy
Lin Huiyu
Melinda Louis
Melisa Wong
Ng Pei Xin
Ong Lay Hoon
Pandiyan Vellasami
Paul Fong
Peggy Chan
Peggy Yee
Phyllis Teng
Quek You Zhen
Ranald Or
Roderick Ng
Serene Pok
Shahira Banu
Sham Sabnani
Sonita Jeyapathy
Sylvia Chou
Tan Mei Choo
Timothy Seet
Tris Xavier
Vanessa Ang
Vickneswary Jeraman
Wendy Koh
Wendy Ng
Yvonne Cheah

Agency for Integrated Care
Allen & Gledhill LLP
Alzheimer's Disease Association
Babes Pregnancy Crisis Support Ltd
Braddell Heights Community Legal
Clinic
Catholic Lawyers Guild Legal Clinic
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore
Chong Pang CC Legal Clinic
Church of Christ the King Legal Clinic
Community Justice & Tribunals
Division
Community Justice Centre
Daughters Of Tomorrow
Emerald Law
Frontier CC Legal Clinic
HCSA - SPIN
Jurong Spring Legal Clinic
Justice Without Borders
Kebun Baru Link RC Legal Clinic
Kembangan-Chai Chee Community
Legal Clinic
KK Women's and Children's Hospital
Law Society Pro Bono Services
Legal Aid Bureau
MINDS
Ministry of Law
Ministry of Social and Family
Development
Office of the Public Guardian
Mustard Tree
NTUC LawWorks
NUS Centre for Pro Bono and Clinical
Legal Education
Potter's Place Community Services
Society Legal Clinic
RHTLaw Asia LLP
SG Assist
Singapore Council of Women's
Organisations
SNTC
St. Margaret's Ex-Students Association
(SMESA)
SUN-DAC
Supreme Court
SUSS
Trans FOCUS Centre



Pro Bono Centre

Supported by RHT Rajan Menon Foundation

**Yong Pung How School of Law
55 Armenian Street
Singapore 179943**