

SMU Pro Bono Centre Appreciation Dinner 2019



SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

PRO BONO CENTRE

SUPPORTED BY
RHT RAJAN MENON
FOUNDATION

SCHOOL OF LAW



SMU PRO BONO CENTRE



ADVISOR

The Honourable Former Chief Justice
Chan Sek Keong

CHAIRMAN, EXPERT PANEL

The Honourable Justice Tan Siong Thye

MEMBERS, EXPERT PANEL

Rajan Menon
Tan Chong Huat
Benjamin Szeto
Eduardo Ramos-Gomez
Lionel Tay
Ada Chua

NURTURING LAW GRADUATES WITH A COMMUNITY SERVICE ETHOS



From 2013, all law students are required by the Singapore Institute of Legal Education to complete a minimum of 20 approved pro bono hours before graduation. However, since its establishment in 2000, SMU already required its students to participate in community service as a graduation requirement. For students in SMU School of Law, this means that contributing to the legal community and volunteerism has been an integral part of their legal education well before it became mandatory in Singapore.

For LLB students in SMU, they have to complete at least 80 hours of community service, comprising at least 20 hours of approved pro bono. For JD students, they have to complete at least 50 community service hours, out of which at least 20 hours must be in approved pro bono.*

The Pro Bono Centre was set up at SMU School of Law in 2013 to initiate and manage the different approved pro bono activities for students. These activities include running a free legal clinic at the University; operating a helpline during office hours to register applicants for the legal clinic; helping out at other legal clinics run by different organisations in Singapore; placement in agencies such as the State Courts, the Supreme Court, the Legal Aid Bureau, the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme, and so on.

* The community service component will no longer apply to JD students admitted after AY 2018/2019.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Chan Wing Cheong
Director, SMU Pro Bono Centre
January 2019 - Present

We have much to celebrate at the SMU Pro Bono Centre. The free legal clinic started by the Centre in September 2013 has grown from a fortnightly service to a weekly service since February 2017. It continues to make an impact in facilitating access to justice for those who may not know where else to turn to.

In 2018, a total of 287 applicants were seen at the legal clinic, and we are on target to serve the same number this year. More than 8 in 10 applicants were 'very satisfied' or 'quite satisfied' with the service received, and more than 9 in 10 applicants say they would return to the clinic if they have new legal issues, and would also recommend the legal clinic to others. A summary of the applicants' profile and their feedback for 2018 and 2019 (to end August) can be found within these pages. We would not

have been able to provide this service without the generous funding from the RHT Rajan Menon Foundation.

The legal clinic serves an equally important function in the training of our law students. They support the volunteer lawyers and take notes during the sessions. They also run a helpline every weekday where applicants call up to make enquiries and schedule appointments. Through these activities, students acquire the 'soft skills' of legal practice (such as client interviewing skills and office management), learn about issues of social justice, and translate what they have learnt in law classes and books to real life issues. We wish to thank our volunteer lawyers for not only providing legal advice at the clinic but also teaching and mentoring our law students!

We wish to acknowledge 14 JD and 30 LLB students from the Class of 2019 for completing more than 50 and 80 approved pro bono hours respectively. This is a remarkable achievement considering the many competing demands on the time of law students. In fact, one-quarter of the Class of 2019 not only completed all of their University community service requirement (ie 50 hours for JD students, and 80 hours for LLB students) in approved pro bono, but also exceeded the required hours. Furthermore, while only 20 hours of approved pro bono was required of them, the graduating cohort completed an average of 45 approved pro bono hours each!

We would also like to show our appreciation to each of the organisations that the Centre has partnered with. It is thanks to your supervision and placement opportunities that our law students have the opportunity to be exposed to a wide variety of clients and issues. Thank you for partnering with us in giving them a holistic education, so that they can make a meaningful impact in society in the future!

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to our hardworking colleague, Rathna Koman, who was director of the SMU Pro Bono Centre from 2013 to 2018. The Centre would not be where it is today without her leadership.

NEW INITIATIVES IN 2019

New initiatives were started by the SMU Pro Bono Centre in 2019 under 3 themes:

- Develop new areas where students can do approved pro bono work;
- Allow students to propose approved pro bono projects themselves; and
- Recognise the pro bono contributions of volunteer lawyers and students



Volunteer lawyers and students at TRANS Family Service Centre

DEVELOP NEW AREAS WHERE STUDENTS CAN DO APPROVED PRO BONO WORK

There have been 3 new approved pro bono areas for students at the SMU School of Law. First, from June 2019, our students started giving legal awareness talks at Project X, TRANS Family Service Centre and Bethesda CARE on various topics such as employment rights, wills, elder abuse, and lasting power of attorney (LPA). They do so under the guidance and supervision of SMU School of Law faculty and practising lawyers. In planning and delivering the talks, students not only have to research on areas of law that they may not have studied in law school – thereby expanding their legal knowledge – but they also have to converse in Mandarin in most of these talks – which means learning to express legal concepts in another language in order to engage their audiences. The learning curve may be steep, but the learning outcomes are invaluable for their development as lawyers!

As an added service to the audience at the talks on LPAs, we have partnered with 2 law firms (RHTLaw Taylor Wessing LLP, and Peter Low & Choo LLP) to certify LPAs for those who wish to execute one. Thus, in addition to providing information on LPAs, students also help members of the audience to utilise the information that they have been given.

The second project is a collaboration with the Agency for Integrated Care to develop a guidebook to help VWOs which run nursing homes understand their PDPA obligations and to share best practices in data management. This project is supervised by our colleague, Warren Chik, who is also the deputy director of SMU's Centre for AI and Data Governance. The project started in September and the guidebook is expected to be ready by the end of the year.

The third project is one where students help litigants apply in person for deputyship orders over their loved ones who do not have mental capacity. Ruby Lee from the NUS Centre for Pro Bono & Clinical Legal Education, together with 2 NUS Law graduates, carried out the training for our law students in September. Law students from SMU and NUS will be working together in this project.

ALLOW STUDENTS TO PROPOSE APPROVED PRO BONO PROJECTS THEMSELVES

Our Centre has launched a Pro Bono Challenge Competition in September 2019 to encourage students to initiate and carry out projects to serve unmet legal needs in Singapore. The students will be guided and mentored by practising lawyers to help them develop and execute their projects. Prizes, generously supported by the RHT Rajan Menon Foundation, will be given out to those projects which make the most impact in the community. The winning projects will be announced in August / September 2020.

RECOGNISE THE PRO BONO CONTRIBUTIONS OF VOLUNTEER LAWYERS AND STUDENTS

In order to recognise the pro bono contributions of volunteer lawyers and students, and thereby inspire others to do the same, the following awards will be given out at this year's appreciation dinner:

- Volunteer lawyer who has participated the most number of times at the SMU Pro Bono Centre Legal Clinic in 2019;
- 5-year service award for volunteer lawyer at the SMU Pro Bono Centre Legal Clinic; and
- JD graduate and LLB graduate from Class of 2019 who have completed the most number of approved pro bono hours.



Recognition of Pro Bono contribution by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon



Students at Senior Activity Centre run by Bethesda CARE

SERVICE AWARD & CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION RECIPIENTS

JD graduates from Class of 2019 who have completed more than 50 approved pro bono hours

Charmaine Lim Kei Ying
Chng Eng Chiau, Edward
Dylan Mah Hon Sen
Guo Yunwen, Yvonne
Lee Chuan
Lim Kwang Ren
Lim Yin Hui
Lolita Andrew
Soo Ming Jie
Stephanie Danielle Kok Mei Hui
Tan Wei Chieh
Trishna Rajan Menon
Vinod Khanna Shanmugam
Zhang Jun

LLB graduates from Class of 2019 who have completed more than 80 approved pro bono hours

Chang Chee Jun
Cheng You Duen
Evan Chooi Xunhao
Guo Ziyong
Kwoh Ji Wei
Lee Zheng Hui, Sean
Lim Joe Jee
Lim Shao Yang, Lionel
Looi Hui Yu
Marianne Goh Jingyi
Mark Sanjay Thambiah
Mary-Lisa Zhi-Hui Chua
Nah Yan Li, Beverly
Ng Jun Xuan
Ng Weng Sun
Ou Wai Hung, Shaun
Sharma Neharika
Susanna Abigail Yim
Tai Yuanmin, Estelle
Tan Ting Ting
Tan Ziming, Timothy
Tan Zong Yang
Tay Huimin, Benjamin
Thia Zhang Jie
Thong Ying Xuan
Tin Shu Min
Tong Yi Keat, Zachary
Wayne Yeo
Wong Ye Yang
Zerlina Yee Zi Ling

Volunteer lawyers who participated in the SMU PBC Legal Clinic in 2019

Ada Chua*
Aileen Chua*
Alvin Ong*
Alvin Sia*
Andrew Goh
Benjamin Tham
Charlotte Tan*
Chooi Jing Yen*
Christian Teo
Christina Tien*
Devathas Satianathan*
Erik Widjaja
Eugene Neo*
Gabriel Lee*
Glen Koh
Haziq Ika
Jacinth Chua*
Jasper Chan*
Junie Loh*
Mary-Anne Chua*
Matthew Teo*
Richard Tan
Shaun Wong*
Tan Hui Jin*
Zheng Pei*

* SMU Law Alumni.

REPORT OF THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC

A total of **287** applicants were seen as the legal clinic in 2018. From January to August 2019, a total of **206** applicants were seen.

PROFILE OF THE APPLICANTS:



Singaporean

2018	70.7%
2019	64.6%



Under 40 years-old

2018	52.6%
2019	60.2%



Have diploma education and above

2018	65.5%
2019	63.6%



Earned less than \$4,000/
month[#]

2018	46.7%
2019	50%

[#] The median gross monthly income of full-time employed residents in Singapore (excluding employer CPF contributions) was \$3,800 in 2018 (Labour Force in Singapore 2018).

ISSUES PRESENTED AT THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC:



Family Issues

2018 **22.6%**

2019 **22.8%**



Employment Issues

2018 **12.5%**

2019 **16%**



Criminal Matters

2018 **10.5%**

2019 **9.7%**



Tenancy Issues

2018 **7.7%**

2019 **8.7%**

APPLICANTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC THROUGH:



Online Resources

2018 **40.7%**

2019 **34.2%**



Family Members

2018 **16.7%**

2019 **17.6%**

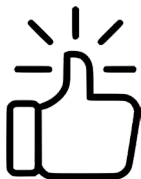


Law Society Pro Bono Services

2018 **12.4%**

2019 **15%**

SATISFACTION WITH THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC:



More than 8 in 10 applicants were 'very satisfied' or 'quite satisfied' with:

- The legal clinic staff's helpfulness and efficiency
- Venue and operating hours of the legal clinic
- Length of session and helpfulness of the volunteer lawyer



More than 9 in 10 applicants would:

- Return to the legal clinic if they had new legal issues
- Recommend the legal clinic to others

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Aileen Chua
Alvin Ong
Alvin Sia
Andrew Goh
Benjamin Tham
Bevelyn Tan
Charlotte Tan
Chooi Jing Yen
Christian Teo
Christina Tien
Cindy Cham
Colleen Lim
Devathas Satianathan
Erik Widjaja
Eugene Neo
Evelyn Tham
Felicia Ang
Gabriel Lee
Glen Koh
Grace Morgan
Haziq Ika
Jacinth Chua
Jasper Chan
Jolie Giouw
Junie Loh
Mary-Anne Chua
Matthew Teo
Richard Tan
Shaun Wong
Suang Wijaya
Syazana Binte Yahya
Tan Hui Jin
Zheng Pei

Aileen Everitt
Allen Sng Kiat Peng
Angeline Quek
Ann Yew
Belinda Chng
Benjamin Mui
Brenda Ho
Brian Ho
Cacy Tan
Christine Low
Claudine Tan
Cosmas Stephen Gomez
Danial Hakim
Daniel Ho
Dennis Tan

DJ Jill Tan
Douglas MacLean
Edwin Sim
Elsie Tjoeng
Emma Chen
Foo Siew Fong
Ho Soh Li
Ignatius Chia
Jacqueline Choy
Jasmine Yong
Jason Dendroff
Jennifer Lee
Jeremiah Huang
Joey Lee
Juliha Bee Mohd Noor
Kayla Chng
Kwok-Chern Yew Tee
Leonard Lee
Lim Lei Theng
Lim Tanguy
Lorraine Cheung
Louis D'Souza
Lucella Maria Lucias Jeraled
Luo Ling Ling
Michael Chen
Michelle Voo
Nandakumar Renganathan
Nandhu
Natasha Baobed
Ng Bin Hong
Ng Joo Kim
Nicole Chua
Pandiyar Vellasami
Patrick Tay Teck Guan
Paul Fong
Peggy Yee
Peter Low
Petrina Prishanthini Philip
Quek Gou Jun
Quek You Zhen
Raphael Toh
Rayvathy d/o Ramalingam
Regana Zara Mydin
Roderick Ng
Ruby Lee
Saihi Shi Qi
Salim Bin Hassan Mohamed
Sara La Rocca
Sarah Wee

Shalini Mogan
Sham Sabnani
Shannon Leong
Shanthi Raman
Stella Chen
Tan Kah Wai
Tan Mei Choo
Tay Aik Joo
Tay Shu Ying
Timothy Yeo
Ting Wa Ying
Vanessa Ho
Vernon Voon
Vivienne Ong
Wendy Koh
Yee-Chow Choy Yin

Agency for Integrated Care
Bethesda CARE
Braddell Heights Community
Legal Clinic
Catholic Lawyers Guild Legal
Clinic
Chong Pang CC Legal Clinic
Church of Christ the King
Legal Clinic
Community Justice Centre
Community Justice & Tribu-
nals Division
Community Mediation Centre
Jurong Spring Legal Clinic
Justice Without Borders
Kebun Baru Link RC Legal
Clinic
Kembangan-Chai Chee Com-
munity Legal Clinic
Law Society Pro Bono Services
Legal Aid Bureau
NTUC LawWorks
NUS Centre for Pro Bono and
Clinical Legal Education
Peter Low & Choo LLP
Potter's Place Community
Services Society Legal Clinic
Project X
RHTLaw Taylor Wessing LLP
Singapore Council of Women's
Organisations
TRANS Family Services

“ PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES REPRESENT
THE HIGHEST FORM OF SOCIAL WORK THAT
THE LEGAL PROFESSION CAN PERFORM IN
SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC. ”

**FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE
CHAN SEK KEONG
ADVISOR, SMU PRO BONO CENTRE**

Director
Chan Wing Cheong

Assistant Manager
Rebecca Teo

Executive
Vincent Goh