THE GLOBAL INNOVATION CHAMPION
DAREN TANG ‘97

ON A MISSION TO STRENGTHEN MUSLIM FAMILIES
GUY GHAZALI ‘05

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS IN LEGAL PRACTICE
HUAY YEE KWAN ‘04, LYNN ARIELE SOH ‘08
& LIN SHUMIN ‘08

BLAZING A TRAIL IN LAW & TECH
PROFESSOR DAVID TAN & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DANIEL SENG ‘92

STUDENT LIFE IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE FACULTY OF LAW
CONTENTS

2  Dean’s Diary
Message from the Dean

3  Alumni Spotlight
Daren Tang ‘97:
The Global Innovation Champion  3
Reflections on 2020  7
Guy Ghazali ‘05:
On A Mission to Strengthen
Muslim Families  8
Law Alumni Mentor
Programme 2020  9
Celebrating Achievements in
Legal Practice  10

12  Law School
Highlights
Real-Life Skills for Real-World Good -
The Centre for Pro Bono and Clinical
Legal Education  12
Blazing A Trail in Law & Tech  13

14  Student Features
Year 4 Law-USP Student Elected
as NUS Students’ Union President  14
The Inaugural NUS Law Arts Week:
The Virtual Edition  15
Student Life in the Age of COVID-19  16
Law ‘N’ Undue Influence  18

19  Reunions
LLM (IBL) Class of 2010’s
Zoom Reunion  19

20  Benefactors

22  NUS Giving
With Thanks From
The Next Generation

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DEAN’S DIARY
PROFESSOR SIMON CHESTERMAN

In the course of this year, students have sometimes asked me about the value of lawyers during a pandemic. We didn't find the vaccine; we were of little help nursing those afflicted or caring for those grieving. What can someone with a law degree do that would make a difference in such trying times?

Plenty.

Lawyers ensured that the economic pain is distributed fairly, that health services and the coming vaccine will be shared equitably, and that emergency surveillance powers rolled out around the world are limited to the extent and for the duration truly necessary.

Lawyers keep the wheels of industry turning even as we write and enforce — and push back against — the laws to keep us safe and healthy.

Lawyers may not save lives directly. But we can make those lives saved a little fairer, a little more just.

The alumni of NUS Law have been doing all this and more. As these pages show, our graduates continue to make their mark in Singapore and in the world.

At a time when research and development into pharmaceuticals is more important than ever, we are proud that Daren Tang ’97 has been appointed Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Given the strain that the pandemic has put on families in Singapore and beyond, Guy Ghazali ’05 will play a key role in her new post as Senior President of Singapore’s Syariah Court.

Up and coming lawyers were also recognised in Asian Legal Business’ “40 Under 40” list, with four NUS Law alumni featured.

And many of you supported the next generation of lawyers, serving as mentors even as the pandemic forced us to move our LAMP programme online.

That was only one of the accommodations that our students had to make in the course of this extraordinary year. What has struck me, again and again, is how adaptable and resilient they proved themselves. From attending classes on Zoom to premiering the Law IV musical on YouTube, our students brought creativity, resourcefulness, and strength to their curricular and extracurricular pursuits.

In this, they had willing and supportive partners in our faculty and staff, who worked tirelessly to provide the best legal education and university experience possible. Even as we shifted online, however, we continued to push ahead with new initiatives, like our Law & Technology Primer series and an expansion of our Centre for Pro Bono & Clinical Legal Education.

These initiatives also benefited tremendously from partnership with alumni in offering practical and experiential learning opportunities for our students, preparing them for a fast-changing world.

For as we look beyond the pandemic, it is clear that the world will continue to change rapidly and unexpectedly.

Our alumni are proof of the diverse ways in which the graduates of NUS Law have worked to make Singapore and the world a better place.

And, as I tell our students, you help us reframe the question that our students should be asking themselves — not what can an NUS Law graduate do in such a world, but what can’t we?

THE GLOBAL INNOVATION CHAMPION
DAREN TANG ’97

Daren Tang is the first Singaporean head of a United Nations agency, taking office as the Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on 1 October 2020 for a six-year term. Amidst his frenetic schedule of relocating to Geneva and setting new goals for WIPO, Professor David Tan manages to pin him down for a chat.
Prior to joining IPOS, Daren was a Senior and bonhomie. It was at IPOS that I first got to know Daren, WIPO and in Free Trade Agreements. It also represented Singapore in myriad Trade Marks and Designs, as well as the Registries Cluster, and oversaw the Executive of IPOS and in charge of the Singapore (IPOS) on 16 November 2015. Daren Tang was appointed Chief Executive of the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) on 16 November 2015. Daren was previously Deputy Chief Executive of IPOS and in charge of the Registries Cluster, and oversaw the operations of the Registries of Patents, Trade Marks and Designs, as well as the development of Singapore’s intellectual property (IP) policy and legal regime. He also represented Singapore in myriad international IP negotiations, including WIPO and in Free Trade Agreements. It was at IPOS that I first got to know Daren, and I was most struck by his good humour and bonhomie.

Prior to joining IPOS, Daren was a Senior State Counsel with the International Affairs Division of the Attorney-General’s Chambers, where he advised the Singapore Government on a number of complex international law issues. Daren graduated from NUS in 1997 and later obtained an LLM (with distinction) from Georgetown University, where he was also a Fellow of the Institute of International Economic Law. He also attended the Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Business School in 2013.

Law was never on my mind

Law was never on Daren’s mind when he was young, and he was far more fascinated with psychology and astrophysics. But growing up in Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s, Daren was told by his parents that it would be best to do something practical. He recalled, “Even then, going to law school was far from my mind, and I applied to med school. I ended up arguing with one of the members of the interview panel, who had asked a rather incoherent question, and one of them laughingly told me that I should apply to law school instead. Well, I did that the next year and if I recall correctly, I failed my first interview. I think I only got in on my second interview. I was probably too flippant for the first law panel as well, whom I recall asked serious but rather boring questions about geopolitics.”

It was a blessing for NUS Law that he finally took up the suggestion by the medical school interview panel. The study of law is indeed a practical and broad-based education as Daren has pointed out, and at that juncture he thought being a professional was attractive and it was versatile enough that he could move on to do something else later. On reflection, he said: “One of the great advantages of a legal education is that it trains you to analyse any situation or issue in a logical and methodical manner, and then to express yourself succinctly and concisely. As legal professionals, we are often called to apply this to a wide variety of contexts in legal work, but it also helps us in other areas of work that we may venture into, whether it is government, diplomacy or business.”

“Law school was generally huge fun!”

Judging by Daren’s enthusiastic reaction when asked about his most memorable moments, one wondered how he had any time to study? True to his convivial personality, Daren quipped: “I always joked that one had to work hard to fail law school exams! Most of the law school years was not about the law school, but about the opportunity to open our horizons as young adults in university. I always told myself, and I maintain it to this day, that law students do themselves a disservice if they see themselves as the lawyers first, and university students second. It should be the other way around.”

As a student leader, Daren was not one to shy away from provoking the administration, but always with the welfare of the students in mind. “I have vivid memories of being Law Club President in my final year, where I had the chance to work with many fellow students to make law school a better place”, he shared. “We started the Law Careers Fair (an idea I brought back from my exchange at McGill Law School), initiated a Curriculum Review, which had certain members of the Deanery rather nervous, and tried our best not to make the corridors more lively and active.” But Daren did not stop there, and continued to light a few little fires, mercifully there were no hunters. “Towards the end of the academic year, a few of my fellow student leaders and I mounted a protest against fee hikes, which were higher than without much prior consultation, so that made for a very dramatic end to my four years in law school. We did not succeed then, but it was important that we tried. If our young adults give up trying to change things for the better, then what hope is there for the future growth of our society?”

Trina Ha ’97, his classmate, confirmed this: “He was always one of the more vocal students in class, frequently offering views from a different perspective.”

“Fluffy” subjects, as they were commonly referred to. “Daren’s first contact with IP law came much later, when he was doing his postgraduate studies at Georgetown. He joked, “So, it wasn’t love at first sight, but more like an arranged marriage – I grew to love it. But that is the beauty of legal education, isn’t it? It gives you the discipline to approach any issue in a structured and logical manner, and once you see it within the larger societal and economic context, it all comes alive in a very concrete way.” This arranged marriage has brought Daren from Singapore to Switzerland, and the journey is not one he has made without compunction. “It isn’t so much about leaving IPOS, but leaving the people that I have worked with very closely for years. That isn’t easy,” he mused. “Beyond work, part of my family is also still in Singapore, IPOS Workplace Launch Event 2017

At the 2016 Yong Shau Lin Professorship in Intellectual Property Public Lecture with (L-R) Dr Stanley Lai, Dean & Professor Simon Chesterman, Professor David Tan, Professor Kal Raustiala and Ms Priscilla Shunmugam ‘06

Intellectual property was an “arranged marriage”

It came as a surprise to me when Daren confessed that he was never really interested in IP when he was a student. He admitted: “My interests in law veered much more strongly to public international law, human rights, jurisprudence – all these ‘fluffy’ subjects, as they were commonly referred to.” Daren’s first contact with IP law came much later, when he was doing his postgraduate studies at Georgetown. He joked, “So, it wasn’t love at first sight, but more like an arranged marriage – I grew to love it. But that is the beauty of legal education, isn’t it? It gives you the discipline to approach any issue in a structured and logical manner, and once you see it within the larger societal and economic context, it all comes alive in a very concrete way.”

The Music Man

It seemed that Daren’s final year at NUS Law was his annus mirabilis after he returned from a year’s exchange at McGill (where he, Lim Bee Hong ’97, and Michelle Ng ’97 were the very first exchange students there). He said, “I really wanted to bring some fresh ideas to improving the law school environment. And the study of law had finally clicked a bit better as a discipline – although taxation law was an utter nightmare, and Prof Stephen Phua, mercifully! I have fond memories of the most court too, not because I was terribly enamoured of mooting, but because there was a piano in the corner that I could play once in a while.”

Daren’s love for music was echoed by his classmate Basile Weng ’97 (Managing Partner, Hauzen LLP), who shared: “I first knew Daren as a jazz-crazy pianist classmate in law school, where jazz was not yet quite popular in Singapore. Daren introduced me to jazz and bossa nova, for which I am much grateful. When we were both young men, Daren struck me as a thoughtful, humorous individual with an artistic side, and sometimes a bit of a mad-scientist air to him.”

Lawyers, in the broadest sense, are capable of being great musicians, and Daren’s musical inclinations are not far from the lawyers that he has mentored. “I will always be the other way around.”

Daren Tang and fellow Music Directors/Composers from Law N ’97

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Daren Tang kicking off IP Week @ SG 2019

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which is tough. So there is a real sense of the closure of a chapter of life, and the opening of another.”

My biggest influences
The biggest influences in Daren’s life are neither lawyers nor jurists, but musicians and artists. However, in his career as a lawyer, he counts former Chief Justice and Attorney-General Mr. Chua Sock Koong ’61, with whom he had worked closely in the Piedra Branca dispute, as one who has made the most indelible impact on him. Daren explained: “My closest memory of understanding what good advice was reading a two-page memo that Mr. Chin wrote on an extremely complex constitutional matter. I read this when I was in my second year in Legal Service, as a State Counsel. It was short, sharp and succinct, and gave guidance on the possible way forward. A real joy to read and a revelation on the craft of giving advice.” Others whom Daren had learnt much from include the late Mr. S. Tiwari ’71 (who was his immediate boss for many years), Chief Justice Sundaresan Menon ’86 (who paved the way for his career shift from AGC to IPOS); Ambassador-At-Large (who paved the way for his career shift from AGC to IPOS); Ambassador-At-Large Trina Ha ’97 described her interactions with Daren as follows: “Daren and I were in the same classes for a few years in NUS Law and our paths crossed again in IPOS. The four years of his stewardship as Chief Executive were intense yet exciting with his vision and views of the strategic role IP could play in our economy. He constantly challenged us to rethink, explore and be brave to try new ideas or push boundaries. I’m sure with his skills and varied experiences especially in the international arena, he will do very well steering WIPO through these challenging times.”

Beyond 2020
I did not want to end this interview on a pandemic note, but I do want to highlight Daren’s meditative advice: “This year has really driven home the lesson that there is a lot in life that is outside of your control. In the face of this, we have to sit with what there is in our lives, not turning away from it, but also not over-reacting to it.”

I had always wondered if the rarefied Swiss air contained something magical, as so many people – such as the footballers Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Roger Federer. While Geneva is a very international city, housing many UN agencies, just like NGOs, it is also distinctly different from Asian cities, where there is vibrancy and cutting edge quality to life. That said, in both cities the attitude to work is highly professional but, according to Daren, the rhythms of personal life revolve around different things. "The charms of Geneva and this part of the world centre around nature, which is both spectacular and tranquil. Mountains surround Geneva and on a clear day, one can see all the way to the tallest mountain ranges in Europe. It reminds us that life requires a more encompassing perspective that goes beyond ourselves and our immediate concerns."  

Daren is in the prime of his life and is a role model for leaders of all ages. He is always brimming with ideas and is a dynamic, inspiring, and warm person. I am so glad to have worked with him and look forward to his future successes. Daren is a warm and approachable person, always ready to lend a helping hand. He is a great listener and always has time for those in need. His leadership style is always focused and purposeful. He is a true leader who leads by example and always puts the needs of others first. I am confident that he will continue to make a significant impact on the world through his work at WIPO. He is a shining example of what can be achieved through dedication and hard work.”

REFLECTIONS ON 2020
2020 has been a challenging year for everyone as the world grapples with the pandemic. We asked some of our alumni to share their reflections on the year and what they look forward to most in 2021.

Debbie Ong ’89 Presiding Judge, Family Justice Courts
“Important lessons in 2020: 1(a) “The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry” in 2020. 1(b) Nothing can be taken for granted – so appreciate, 2(a) More things are possible than we thought. 2(b) I can conduct hearings paperlessly. 3. “Let it go!” (1”: that fixed way of doing things). 4. Continue to care. Care for those who matter in our life. 5. Hope is vital. 6. Take charge and make it happen. 7. Gratitude for blessings. 8. Certainty was never so precious before (looking forward to that next year)!”

Eleanor Wong ’85 Vice Dean (Student Life & Global Relations), NUS Law
“Distance is the space we choose to put between us. Nothing had really changed except the perimeters we set on our minds. Age holds no monopoly on wisdom. As we teachers raced to convert our lessons to remote learning, our students adjusted with grace and ease, and many stepped up to assist with technical expertise and pedagogical suggestions for how to teach better in a technological age. Value has seldom been the same thing as price. We came to appreciate the true worth of those in our community upon whom our well-being is built. When our guest workers had to be taken out of circulation, Singapore literally came to a halt. When we could not hold those we love or sup with those most dear, it was little consolation that Michelin star restaurants figured out how to Grab deliver. In August, grandma could finally come for a simple home-cooked dinner with us and her grandkids.”

Sunil Sudheesan ’04 Director, Head (Criminal Department), Quaha Voo & Palmer LLC
“2020 was hard. We had to say goodbye to many friends and legends in the fraternity. Losing Harry Elias S.C. and G Kamar was particularly tough for those who knew them. Both exemplified the best traditions of the Bar and both have set examples which we should strive to emulate. 2020 was a useful reminder to all of us to cherish our family, friends and socially distanced colleagues. WIHF is part of the new paradigm, and Zoom hearings demand that we develop a different approach to court craft but the Bar will relish the opportunity for change. I am grateful that technology has allowed my practice to continue, but for some industries, the disruption provided a wake-up call with the skills that we have, especially those who cannot afford our help. Many already epitomise the pro bono spirit and in 2021, we should celebrate the efforts of all those who volunteer when help is needed.”

Joan Foo Mahony ’74 Author & Publisher
“The effect of the 2020 pandemic on my life, and what I am most thankful for, is my book! As my husband and I hunkered down in Kuala Lumpur, I used the quiet time to complete ‘MILLENNIALS MEET MARY’ (www.millennialsmeetmary.com). The book was launched on 30th May at the Vatican Museums via a Zoom Webinar, and 2,000 copies have already been sold. The book is a biography of the Virgin Mary, revealed through stunning Renaissance artworks. Eighty Millennials from forty-two countries and from all walks of life provide commentary on the artworks and how the story of Mary has impacted them. Personally, this has been a tremendous learning and spiritual journey for me, and I am grateful that the firm and enduring friendships cultivated while working in Tokyo, New York, Boston and Hong Kong have enabled me to assemble Mary’s Millennials with ease and joy.”

Luke Tang ’06 Deputy Senior State Counsel, Attorney-General’s Chambers and Caris Tay ’05
“We were living in New York city when we found ourselves at the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the catastrophe of the year being “social distancing”, the pandemic has fostered a different and more intense form of togetherness – a stronger impetus to connect with friends and loved ones physically closer, a deeper appreciation for the people serving the community, and the joys (and tribulations) of spending 24 hours a day with our boisterous young children. We also witnessed the power of adaptability and innovation. In our interactions with counterparts from all over the world, we came to realise that the human spirit is resilient. We will collectively find ways not only to survive, but even thrive, amid the most unimaginable hardships. The pandemic has shaken the world to its core, and in so doing unearthed many serious social issues and created new ones especially for the most vulnerable members of society. We feel one of the things we can do with our legal training is to share it with those who need it most. As such, Caris recently completed a course on cybersecurity that aims to empower students with knowledge of the law, and we look forward to publishing the books and an educational website going into 2021.”
ON A MISSION TO STRENGTHEN MUSLIM FAMILIES

GUY GHAZALI ’05

As a Muslim lawyer, there is a growing body of scholarship on how we can strengthen Muslim families as we recognise that the family is the basic unit and the bedrock of the community. As SYC administers Muslim law, we also look forward to working with our Asatizah to explore how they can contribute their knowledge and expertise that are relevant to the work that we do in SYC – whether as counsellors, arbitrators (hakam), mediators and even adjudicators as future SYC judges.

What does it mean to you to be the first female to be appointed to this role in Singapore?

I believe that appointments in an organisation are made based on the organisation’s needs at that particular time and the organisation’s assessment as to how these appointments can fulfil these needs, irrespective of gender. While this is the first time that a female Senior President has been appointed, it is not uncommon for females to be performing a judicial role in SYC and the MUIS Appeal Board. Before my appointment, we already have a female President in the Syariah Court, female Registrars and female members of the Appeal Board.

What fills your weekends?

I spend most of my weekends with my family – either going out or spending quality time at home. My idea of relaxing is to spend some quiet time reading.

What were your aspirations and priorities?

Your aspirations and priorities are shaped by numerous partners. I learnt a lot as I was exposed to different styles of work and legal thinking. I assisted in arbitration, mediation, matters in the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts (as they are now known), the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the Syariah Court and the MUIS Appeal Board.

During your tenure, you have had the opportunity to learn from many different partners. What did you value about the judicial role in SYC?

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CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS IN LEGAL PRACTICE

NUS Law is proud to celebrate the achievements of our alumni who were recognised in Asian Legal Business’ 40 Under 40 list for 2020. We caught up with three of them - Huay Yee Kwan, Lynn Ariele Soh and Lin Shumin - to find out their career motivations, reflections on their journey and advice for their younger selves.

Huay Yee Kwan ‘04
Partners, Stephenson Harwood (Singapore) Alliance

“Adaptability and work ethic will be what ultimately helps in tough times, so no need to look for comfort stuff. Make the most out of any available opportunity and hang on to the friendships you make along the way.”

Huay Yee Kwan ’04 made her mark as the first female Singaporean admitted to the international partnership of Stephenson Harwood. As a maritime and offshore lawyer, she has represented clients in a variety of international and cross-border transactions. Her success in the field of maritime law has earned her recognition and respect among her peers.

Lynn Ariele Soh ’08
Director, Eng & Co. LLC

“Champion for the things you believe in.”

Lynn Ariele Soh ’08 has advised on corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, private equity and M&A transactions in both Singapore and China. She has also represented clients in Australia, the US and South Korea. She is currently advising a Chinese client on a US$250 million syndicated credit facility.

Lin Shumin ‘08
Director, Dispute Resolution, Drew & Napier LLC

“Don’t be afraid to fail, or to make mistakes.”

Lin Shumin ‘08 regularly acts in complex contractual disputes, shareholder’s disputes, company law issues, and tortious actions. She has particular experience with freezing injunctions and her work has also seen her handle judicial reviews, competition investigations and dawn raids.

Her journey in NUS Law has helped pave the way to a fulfilling professional and personal life. It was at law school where she met her husband and two of her closest friends. She counts them as her sounding board for whenever she faces an issue or difficult problem.

“More importantly, when things get tough or discouraging, we encourage each other and pull each other up. It is that camaraderie, which has followed through from NUS Law days, that has kept me going,” said Shumin.

Legal practice has been an adventure for her. One aspect of her work that she loves is the opportunity to meet people.

“My career has enabled me to meet a whole host of people from different industries that I would not otherwise have encountered,” said Shumin. “It is inspiring to learn how my clients have built up their businesses, and it’s a privilege to be able to help them navigate through and resolve their disputes.”

Her advice to future lawyers is something that she is still continuously learning to master. There are two important skills that any lawyer will need. First, the ability to communicate in a clear and precise manner. Second, the ability to keep calm under pressure.

“Don’t be afraid to fail, or to make mistakes. Whilst you should try your best to avoid mistakes, things will always happen that are outside of your control. It’s far more important to learn how to pick yourself up and to fix your mistakes when they happen,” said Shumin, on contemplating what she would say to her younger self.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7 - REFLECTIONS ON 2020

Faz Hussen ’05
General Counsel & Director (Legal & Government Relations), McDonald’s Singapore

“Looking back, this year has been momentous for me in so many ways. I was privileged to partake in the last ever (to-date) English Premier League match full of long fans and experience the unparalleled spontaneous rapture of celebrating a crucial derby goal (Man United won 2-0!).

2020 was a very challenging time both personally (I got COVID and was quarantined for 51 days due to swab issues) and professionally (given the constantly evolving challenges and dynamics a General Counsel of a consumer business faced in the months leading up to, during and post circuit breaker). However, it has certainly been illuminating and affirming too. The experiences this year triggered me to make a life-changing decision - I had been putting off which has led to much more happiness and fulfilment in my life. Looking ahead to 2021, given my never-ending imagination.

Susan Peh ’86
Chief Executive Officer, Adair Law LLC

“The COVID-19 pandemic swept through humanity wreaking havoc and disrupting almost all aspects of our lives. It has made us realise, reinvent, reimagine and recreate - all at once - over an intensely short period of time. Beyond work, it struck me that in a crisis, we are capable of being self-sufficient in ways we never imagined.

2020 has enabled me to spend so much more quality time at home with my family which is priceless. I even became a self-appointed resident barber to my 94-year-old Dad. I would like to think that the pandemic is fortifying and conjures optimism. Without any doubt, the day will come when we are able to put this pandemic behind us. For now, let’s wake up to each sunrise with renewed strength, hope and boundless imagination.”

Rakesh Kirpalani ’06
Director, Dispute Resolution & Information Technology and Chief Technology Officer, Drew & Napier LLC

“2020 is a great teacher. The most important lesson for me is that people can be closer even when they are physically further apart. Just like how your actions define you, organizations, institutions and countries are defined by the actions of their people, wherever they may be.

At the same time, while technology can bridge many gaps, it will never replace the personal touch or the humanity of being present.

2020 showed us what we are capable of, how resilient and adaptable we can be and that the things we thought mattered most, in truth, cannot measure up to the people who matter most.

The best that we can hope to do moving forward into 2021 is to not forget the lessons taught by 2020.”
The Centre for Pro Bono and Clinical Legal Education welcomed its new leadership team in July this year. The 3 now at the helm, Associate Professor Eleanor Wong '85, Senior Lecturer Sonita Jeyapathy '03 and Sheridan Fellow Benny Tan '12, bring to the Centre a diverse set of perspectives and experiences based on their respective backgrounds and academic credits. The Centre has a team of legal experts, which have formed an advisory council. The team has also introduced several assessable tasks and received several applications. The Centre's clinics will also run from the current academic year onwards and will be available to students to experience and assist in pro bono opportunities. If you are keen to partner with us or to offer your support in other ways, we would love to hear from you.

In the Law & Technology Primer seminar, Associate Professor Seng explained that our societies are always in a state of change as new technologies are introduced. In a series of three case studies (AI-generated works, autonomous vehicles and cryptocurrencies), he demonstrated how recent technological advancements have challenged longstanding legal assumptions in an unprecedented manner. The seminar was held on 21 September 2020 helmed by Professor David Tan and Associate Professor Daniel Seng '92.

In its maiden year, this Law & Technology Primer seminar was compulsory for all Year 1 and Year 2 students, and optional for Year 3 and Year 4 students. In future years, all Year 1 students will be expected to attend the seminar, and there are plans to introduce this as an additional course for the upcoming academic year. This year, the seminar was held at the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) and was attended by a diverse group of students and faculty.

The seminar focused on the intersection of law and technology, with guest speakers from various fields. The seminar concluded with a panel discussion on the future of law and technology, with panelists from the legal industry, academia and technology companies.

In a series of three case studies, the seminar explored the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technologies. The first case study was on AI-generated works, where the panelists discussed the legal implications of AI-generated works and the potential for copyright infringement.

The second case study was on autonomous vehicles, where the panelists discussed the legal challenges of autonomous vehicles and the potential for liability in case of accidents.

The final case study was on cryptocurrencies, where the panelists discussed the legal implications of cryptocurrencies and the potential for financial crime.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion on the future of law and technology, with panelists from the legal industry, academia and technology companies. The panelists discussed the potential for new legal professions and the role of the legal profession in the future.
The NUS Students’ Union (NUSSU) has elected its second female President. Wee Su-Ann, a fourth-year Law-USP undergraduate and former varsity sharpshooter, was elected as President of the NUSSU 42nd Executive Committee. She started her one-year term on 1 Oct.

She succeeds Richard Wang, an NUS Arts and Social Sciences graduate and the outgoing 41st President.

Expressing confidence in his successor, Richard said: “Through my interactions with Su-Ann during her campaign and after her election into office, I have come to know her as a determined and competent person.”

The election was heartening for Richard.

He added that he had been encouraging more female candidates to run for office for some time.

In his outgoing message, Richard welcomed Su-Ann as the second-ever female NUSSU President, and the first in 14 years.

Preceding Su-Ann as the first female NUSSU President was Ms Tay E Teng, an NUS Business School graduate and the President of the 28th Executive Committee. She held office from 2006 to 2007.

Su-Ann did not expect to become the second female President in NUSSU’s history. “I did not realise there was only one female President before me,” she said. “I feel honoured to step up and be the role model for other female students to be inspired to step into leadership positions.”

Su-Ann added that her team will also look into different ways of communicating with students, which could potentially include a YouTube channel about NUSSU.

After undergoing an election campaign filled with unexpected changes and last-minute adaptations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team also plans to reformat the exam pack, NUSSU Receive and Give (RAG) Day, as well as the Freshman Orientation Central Committee (FOCC), in preparation for such crises in the future.

There is also a NUSSU merchandise store in the works.

Together with her team, Su-Ann aims to create a united and transformative Union by strengthening bonds with the Constituent Clubs, Associate Bodies, and the students themselves.

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Together with her team, Su-Ann aims to create a united and transformative Union by strengthening bonds with the Constituent Clubs, Associate Bodies, and the students themselves. Innovating new formats for student life and welfare initiatives, and helping students adapt to the new learning conditions during and after the pandemic.

This article was first published on 7 October 2020 on NUS News at https://news.nus.edu.sg/41st-president/.
The year 2020 will be remembered as a year of unprecedented global challenges. With the COVID-19 pandemic still looming large, it is worthwhile recognising how we have adapted to disruptions, and celebrating how we have remargined ourselves in the “new normal”.

When Mooting Goes Virtual

Mooting has long been arite of passage for many law students. Representing the university in mooting competitions remains a sought-after learning experience. While COVID-19 placed international travel restrictions and halted physical moot court sessions, many organisations were quick to revise competitions virtually.

From preparing for virtual moots to sparring against opponents via the now ubiquitous Zoom video-conferencing application, it was a novel experience even for seasoned mooters.

Isabella Tan ’21 and Nikhil Angappan ’21, winners of the International Negotiation Competition (INC) 2020 National Round, described their preparation entirely online during Singapore’s circuit breaker period. “When I first heard about the concept of virtual mooting, I was sceptical as to whether they would be able to capture the visceral zeal and nerves of debating in front of a live audience,” said Isabella. “Part of the excitement of mooting comes from being able to speak in the moot court.”

As social gathering restrictions shut the door on physical meetings, technology opened up new avenues for communication.

“Paradoxically, preparation for moots has been easier. Meeting online is second nature to everyone. This has made organising practice sessions much easier because there is no need to find an available venue and to travel. It takes a few clicks to set up a Zoom meeting,” said Kevin, adding that he even managed to set up several practice sessions with friends residing in the United Kingdom.

“In the past, I would usually meet up with my teammates to simulate the actual rounds. We’d have discussions in seminar rooms, laying out all of our ideas on the whiteboard, taking them through, and editing our memorials and negotiation plans together,” said Isabella.

Apart from on-screen peculiarities presented by the confines of video conferencing, the mooters observed that establishing the right chemistry and rapport during the competition was particularly challenging.

Chun You Quan ’22 and his teammates had initially trained online separately from the rest of the team. “It took some time for us to get to know each other,” said Chun You Quan. “For example, when we were discussing who gets to get our partner’s attention, it is much easier to simply turn to them in person and look at them to initiate a response. Such nuances contribute to the overall team chemistry,” said You Quan. Fortunately for the team, by the time of the competition, they were in case Two.

“Not only did it show how personable things were, our team was also able to quickly overcome the difficulties impacting team performance. They had to plan the flow of their arguments meticulously, agree on who would speak when, and decide what signals to give each other when interjecting. “We couldn’t feel the round as we would have been able to in person. Most notably, knowing when to jump into the conversation was tougher in the absence of physical body language cues,” said Nikhil.

Winning the Class of 2024

Despite the challenges occasioned by COVID-19 safety measures, the NJUS Law Club Freshmen Orientation Central Committee (FOCC) rose to the occasion and organised an inspired virtual Law Camp in order to welcome the new class of 2024.

Freshmen Charisse Peh Xue Qi’24 and Ng Yong Kang ’24 shared their thoughts on this unprecedented start to their university experience.

Like many freshmen looking forward to making new friends, Yong Kang was initially disappointed when he learnt that orientation would be held online. However, during the three-day e-camp, he realised that the orientation group leaders had made a huge effort to plan activities to help foster bonding among students.

“I am more than thankful for the orientation experience,” said Yong Kang. “Our group leaders took the initiative to try to get our group to bond. Every night, they would set up an informal Zoom session, for us to get to know each other better.”

Charisse appreciated the host of orientation activities organised, which included virtual visits to four firms, namely, Yuen Law LLC, Baker McKenzie, ET LLP, and Allen & Gledhill.

“E-Orientation was essential and useful in kick-starting my journey. Although it was held online, I found the seniors’ sharing of experience and e-firm visits very informative and useful. Apart from that, I also managed to make friends with my Orientation group mates through online games and outings when Phase Two began,” she said.

On learning that she would attend most of her classes online and miss out on face-to-face interaction, Charisse felt worried. “I knew that the rigour of Law School cannot be replicated in a Zoom room. I also managed to make friends with my teammates to discuss the different things I needed to adjust to, and it did not seem easy doing so while being isolated from everyone else,” she said. “The pandemic gave me a different university experience from what I envisioned, but I tried to make the most out of the situation by actively making new friends and taking opportunities that I am interested in.”

When it comes to online learning, the students see benefits and drawbacks.

Yong Kang leaned towards preferring online lectures as he playback recorded lectures at variable speeds and revatch particular segments to gain more clarity. “I’m in the other camp when it comes to tutorials. I enjoy LARC tutorials the most right now because it is a face-to-face module. I find it easier to participate in the discussion in person during class, rather than over Zoom,” he said.

Charisse felt that online lessons have the potential to cover more ground. “On Zoom, the question-and-answer function allows us to pose questions at any time. It also allows us to view everyone’s questions, and we benefit together from the lecturer’s answers, whether spoken or typed. This may not be replicated in a physical setting,” she said.

Beyond the New Normal

The foremost question in our minds is: What would the world look like after such an unprecedented year? Much has been said about moving to the normal as we are familiar with. The lessons we can take comes from the ingenuity of overcoming the disruptions posed by the pandemic and marching on with our lives in the “new normal”.

“I would think that even after COVID-19 passes, we will still need these methods that we have applied during the pandemic would remain. It is likely about identifying the benefits and upsides of doing things in the appropriate context,” said You Quan.

“Ultimately, it is a matter of remaining adaptable and flexible. Our value rests not on being able to execute mere repetitive tasks, but by being able to adapt and innovative and flexible whatever challenges come our way,” he concluded.

Charisse found a silver lining. “There is still a lot to be grateful about, like having my family by my side and mentors supporting me through my first semester. The COVID-19 situation has also opened up countless opportunities for me such as volunteering to tutor students during home-based learning and being able to do so more efficiently because it is remote,” she said.
LAW IV: UNDUE INFLUENCE

Contributed by Valen Lim '20, Alison Lewis '20, Natalie Ng '20 and Phoon Wuei '20
Photos: Michelle Shona '20

Law IV has been a tradition at NUS Law when the graduating class every year will stage a musical production to celebrate and showcase their talents while raising funds, through ticket sales, to give back to the community. Everyone had different reasons for signing up for Law IV. For some, it was a storied NUS Law tradition that they too, were eager to join. For others, it was an opportunity to become better friends with their batchmates. Whatever the cause, we shared a common purpose - to make the best out of our final year as the graduating class of 2020, and to do good at the same time.

This year’s production, titled Undue Influence, was a musical about a bona fide murder mystery. A young lawyer, Hugo Tan, was found dead in his office after a long day of work. The suspect? His best friend, influencer Nathaniel Ho (@natflexandchill on Instagram). As he struggles to defend himself in the court of public opinion, his defence counsel, Shirley Hong, attempts to navigate the equally unforgiving landscape of the Singapore courts. It is up to Shirley to uncover her inner sleuth and seek out the truth behind Hugo’s death.

Undue Influence was a proud production and accomplishment of the Law IV 2020’s team with a record of 16 songs, choreographed dance sequences, multifunctional stage sets towering over the stage, and a new record to sponsorships.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s performance became an extraordinary one. The cast and crew spent many hours discussing the future of Law IV 2020, setting in place various contingencies and backup plans. However, eventually, the performance was forced to be cancelled.

After consultation with the faculty, a single recording of Law IV 2020 was produced and launched on the date the musical would have been staged. This allowed the team to not only continue to canvass for donations for our beneficiary, Geylang East Home for the Aged, but also to provide an opportunity for interested audience to watch the musical. As a result of the recording, this year’s Law IV became a debut online premiere on YouTube on 22 May 2020, which has since reached a viewership of more than 1,800 (more than 3 days of full-house performances)! While Law IV 2020 did not turn out the way the team had planned, it was heartening to see that the audience enjoyed the musical as much as we enjoyed staging it.

LLM (IBL) CLASS OF 2010’S ZOOM REUNION

Contributed by Charles Guo LLM '10

Neither the pandemic, nor borders, nor different time-zones, could prevent the LLM (International Business Law) Class of 2010 from celebrating their 10th anniversary since graduation. Attended by 39 out of 60 classmates from around the world, the e-reunion was held virtually on Zoom late on the night of the 26th of July 2020, with the theme: “One year of study, life-long friendship”.

The event had the full support of the Faculty of Law, and was graced by Dean Simon Chesterman as the Guest-of-Honour. To kick off the celebrations, Dean Chesterman warmly greeted the class and shared his views on how Covid-19 has changed methods of teaching, reshaped education, as well as the means of connecting. The International Business Law (IBL) Programme Director, Associate Professor Stephen Phua ’88, then delivered a keynote speech recalling some of the highlights and memorable moments from when he taught the Class of 2010, and summarizing the unique features that have made this class so special and united from the day they entered NUS Law.

Following that were three sessions of sharing and discussion by various classmates around three broad areas: career development, life and work experiences as well as opportunities for co-operation. This presented a unique opportunity for everyone to get involved as representatives of judges, lawyers, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, in-house counsels, government officials, and scholars all took turns to share their stories and experiences since graduation. Amidst recalling the good old days and exchanging the latest developments on career, politics, education, as well as our personal experiences as well as opportunities for co-operation. This presented a unique opportunity for everyone to get involved as representatives of judges, lawyers, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, in-house counsels, government officials, and scholars all took turns to share their stories and experiences since graduation.

We are grateful that together, our class has made a difference to strengthen the NUS community, especially during this time of pandemic and full of uncertainty!
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WITH THANKS FROM THE NEXT GENERATION

NUS Law is thankful to our Donors for their generous support for law students through scholarships, bursaries and prizes. During this period of disruption and uncertainty, many Donors reached out to meet up and encourage their recipients, some of whom share their gratitude here.

“Receiving the Woon Eng Chwee Memorial Bursary has been a huge blessing, and has given me a much-needed boost to push on despite my adversities. It gives me hope that I am still able to control the steering wheel and work towards a future with no regrets. It gives me hope that I am still able to control the steering wheel and work towards a future with no regrets. I'm also really glad to have had the opportunity to meet up with Professor Woon over lunch. It was really nice of him to reach out to me!”

Angeline Tan '21
Recipient of the Woon Eng Chwee Memorial Bursary established by Professor Walter Woon '81

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr Kai Schneider and Mr Paul Sandosham for taking time out of their busy schedules to have a meal with the Clifford Chance ICA prize recipients. Even in the midst of this pandemic, it is heartwarming to know that senior and accomplished lawyers like them go the extra mile in making juniors like myself feel welcomed. From extending help to sharing insights on how COVID-19 has revolutionised the legal industry, it was truly an honour meeting the both of them. Clifford Chance’s generosity in extending a cash prize has also gone a long way in supporting my legal education and has helped me start off my practice in the legal industry on a good footing.”

Fiona Ng '20
Recipient of the Clifford Chance Prize in International Commercial Arbitration (picted 2nd from right, with Clifford Chance LLP Managing Partner Mr Kai Schneider, Dip.Sing.Law '95, and another recipient of the Prize)

“The prize has encouraged me to pursue my research interests in the field of public international law beyond law school. It has also been a privilege to hear from and speak to Professor Koh personally about his wealth of experience and insights into the practice of international law.”

Perry Peh Bing Xian '20
Recipient of the Koh Han Kok Prize in Public International Law (picted right, with Professor Tommy Koh '61 and another recipient of the Prize)

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