



*Ms Maevis Lee
Bachelor of Science in Marketing with
a Minor in Contemporary Social Issues*

DRIVING NEW LEARNING FRONTIERS

Contributing to critical national conversations and responding to real-world shifts and new realities — this is central to SUSS' role in society. In 2025, SUSS continued to carry this mandate forward by expanding access, purpose, and opportunity in learning.

A FIRST FOR SOCIAL WORK IN SINGAPORE

Official Launch

School of Social Work & Social Development



Officiating the launch of the School of Social Work and Social Development. L-R: Professor Robbie Goh, SUSS Provost; Mrs Mildred Tan, Chairman, SUSS Board of Trustees; Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Education, and Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration; Professor Tan Tai Yong, SUSS President; and Associate Professor Vincent Ng; Dean of SUSS School of Social Work and Social Development.

Social work today calls for more than technical knowledge. Practitioners must navigate increasingly complex social issues while exercising empathy, sound judgement, and resilience in supporting individuals, families, and communities.

In response to growing demand for social services and workforce challenges such as attrition and burnout, SUSS launched the School of Social Work and Social Development (SWSD) on 4 September 2025.

As Singapore's first dedicated social work school, SWSD was established not only to grow the social service workforce, but also to prepare future social workers and social service professionals to navigate and shape the evolving realities of social work practice.

A revamped undergraduate curriculum now gives students deeper exposure to areas such

as eldercare, healthcare, disability services, family social work, children and youth work, juvenile justice and correctional work, and protective services. The curriculum also places greater emphasis on practicum and real-world experiences, helping students build the confidence and adaptability needed to respond to diverse community needs.

The focus also extends to current practitioners. In partnership with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), continuing education and training programmes were introduced for frontline officers in Social Service Offices, with the first run conducted from September to October 2025. Through these programmes, MSF officers are better equipped to respond to evolving community needs with confidence, empathy, and professionalism.

A LANDMARK PROFESSORSHIP IN SOCIAL WORK

Alongside the launch of SWSD, SUSS established the Lau Wai Lan Professorship in Social Work, made possible by a \$2 million endowed gift from the Estate of Siow Fung Wai Ying. Named in honour of Madam Siow's mother-in-law, Madam Lau Wai Lan, the professorship supports applied research in areas such as caregiving, youth vulnerabilities, and community mental health.

Beyond research, the professorship will play a vital role in mentoring future practitioners and strengthening evidence-informed practice to help build long-term capability and support for the social work sector.



SHAPING HOW THE REAL WORLD WORKS

BEYOND THE PAPER CHASE: RETHINKING HOW WE HIRE

Resumes and qualifications have long shaped hiring decisions, but employers are increasingly paying attention to what people can actually do in the workplace. To drive this shift, the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), an autonomous institute of SUSS, launched the Centre for Skills-First Practices on 10 October 2025.

In line with the national SkillsFuture movement, the Centre seeks to build the capability and mindshare of stakeholders to articulate, activate, and recognise skills, driving the optimisation of human capital development and effective use of skills in Singapore.

Through a series of working papers and roundtables, more than 600 participants – including policymakers, employers, HR leaders, unions, training providers, researchers, and international organisations – came together to explore how skills-first approaches could be applied across hiring, skills development, and career progression.

Beyond dialogue, some organisations have begun piloting initiatives to apply these ideas in identifying emerging skills needs, strengthening capability planning and enhancing job roles within their workforce. As a result, they reported clearer skills pathways for employees and improvements in work performance.

IAL also partnered with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to develop the first-of-its-kind Skills-First Readiness and Adoption Index. The index offers countries a way to better understand and track progress in adopting skills-first practices. Singapore's ranking – 12th out of 30 countries – provides a clearer picture of both how far the country has come and the areas where further progress is needed. By translating skills-first principles into measurable and actionable outcomes, IAL positions itself as a thought leader in the skills-first movement, accelerating awareness and adoption of skills-first practices both locally and globally.



Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Education, and Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration (third from right); Mrs Mildred Tan, Chairman, SUSS Board of Trustees (fourth from left); and leaders from SUSS, SkillsFuture Singapore, Workforce Singapore, and IAL at the launch of the Centre for Skills-First Practices.

MAKING FLEXIBLE WORK WORK

As flexible work becomes more common, many organisations are still figuring out how to implement such arrangements in ways that are practical, fair, and sustainable for both employees and employers.

When the Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangement Requests took effect in December 2024, questions remained around how organisations could translate the guidelines into day-to-day workplace practice. SUSS' Behavioural Insights Centre of Excellence collaborated with the Singapore National Employers Federation to better understand how employers were interpreting and responding to the new requirements. Drawing on in-depth interviews and a survey involving 367 organisations, the

study surfaced practical concerns ranging from operational constraints to decision-making processes.

The findings were shared in 2025 through industry sessions attended by more than 400 participants. These discussions created opportunities for employers to ask questions, exchange perspectives, and better understand what implementing flexible work arrangements could look like in practice.

Through this work, SUSS helped bridge the gap between policy and workplace realities by supporting organisations in developing clearer and more consistent approaches to flexible work within their teams.

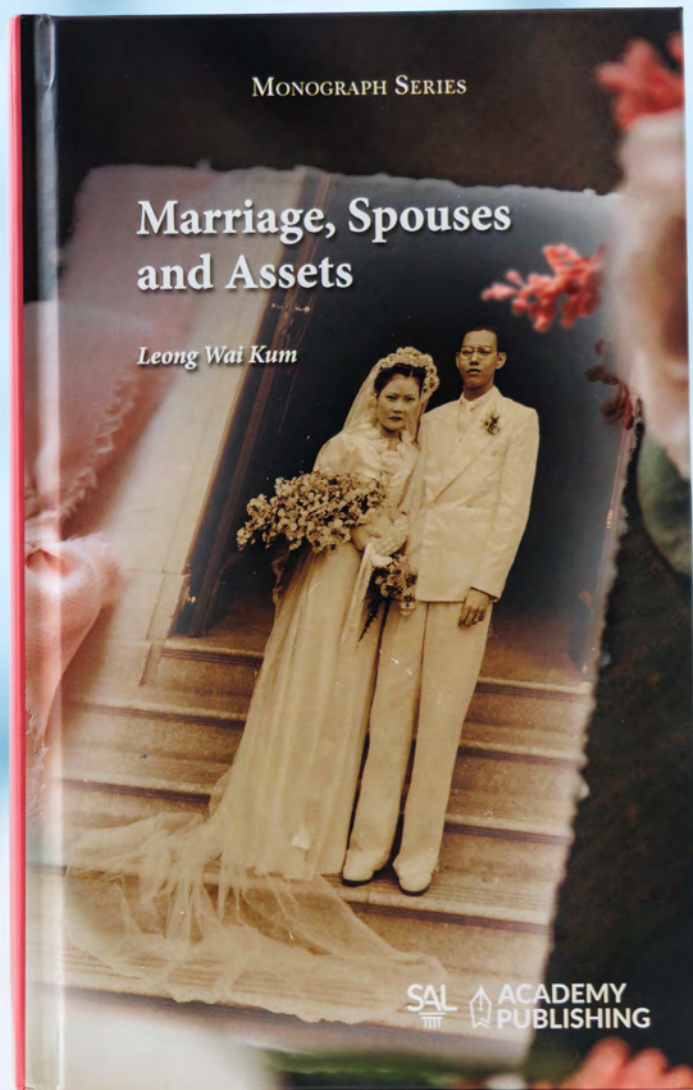
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As Singapore marked 60 years of nation-building in 2025, conversations about the future of its urban landscape took on renewed significance. On 12 September 2025, SUSS convened the third Seah Choo Meng Public Lecture Series, bringing together leading voices in urban planning, infrastructure and public policy.

The event featured speakers including the late Dr Liu Thai Ker; Mr Wong Heang Fine, Chairman of Asia Infrastructure Solutions (Singapore); and Mr Basskaran Nair, Adjunct Faculty at the Executive Programmes division of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS. More than 800 participants attended the session both in person and online.

Drawing on decades of experience in urban planning and infrastructure development, the speakers reflected on how Singapore's past planning decisions continued to shape the way the city evolves today. Beyond the presentations themselves, the lecture series created space for practitioners, policymakers, and members of the public to engage in wider conversations about how Singapore can continue building a city that remains liveable, resilient, and responsive to future needs.





SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES IN FAMILY LAW

Family law shapes some of the most personal and significant moments in people's lives – from marriage and divorce to questions of caregiving, finances, and family relationships. As society evolves, so too do the legal and social issues surrounding families.

In 2025, SUSS contributed to these conversations with the launch of *Marriage, Spouses and Assets* by Professor Leong Wai Kum. Drawing from the University's Family Law curriculum, the first of three books explores how family law applies to real-life situations, offering insights into marriage, divorce, and the division of assets.

More than a legal text, the publication highlights how family law operates in practice and how legal principles are applied within the Family Justice Courts. The launch, attended by senior members of the legal fraternity, including Justice Debbie Ong, reflected growing recognition of SUSS' contributions to family law education and practice in Singapore.

BRINGING EMPATHY INTO HEALTHCARE

Singapore's healthcare workers operate in environments shaped by long hours, emotional strain, and constant clinical demands. Within these realities, sustaining empathy can be an ongoing challenge.

Together with SingHealth, SUSS undertook a research initiative to better understand how nurses experience and express empathy in demanding clinical settings. Through focus group discussions with registered nurses across SingHealth institutions, the study explored how empathy is shaped by clinical pressures, professional boundaries, and the diverse cultural backgrounds of nurses in Singapore's healthcare workforce.

The study identified six core dimensions of empathy, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, and perspective-taking, offering a more practical understanding of how empathy can be expressed, sustained, and balanced in patient care.

Building on these findings, an empathy assessment tool developed from the framework was launched at the SingHealth Nursing Conference on 4 July 2025. This marked an important step towards embedding empathy more systematically into training and professional development.

By working closely with practitioners and grounding research in real care settings, SUSS is helping the healthcare sector translate empathy from an abstract ideal into a practical, developable, and measurable skill that can be applied across Singapore's healthcare system.



BUILDING INDUSTRY LEADERS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

As organisations confront challenges ranging from governance and risk to technological disruption, leadership increasingly calls for adaptability, sound judgement, and the ability to respond to change.

In 2025, SUSS partnered with organisations across sectors to strengthen these capabilities through applied, real-world learning and collaboration.

Through SUSS Academy, the University developed programmes for both the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and labour leaders. For the Combat Service Support Command (CSSCOM) of the SAF, SUSS introduced a Professional Certificate in Governance aimed at strengthening risk-aware leadership across logistics and operations. Built around real deployment and supply chain scenarios, the programme repositioned governance as an operational capability essential to effective command. Participants identified vulnerabilities, strengthened accountability, and learnt to make more informed decisions.

Partnering with the Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute, SUSS also worked closely with union leaders to equip them with a practical understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its impact on the workforce. Delivered since February 2025, the sessions were tailored to the needs of various industry unions, enabling participants to examine how AI is transforming their respective sectors. By grounding the sessions in industry contexts, participants gained clearer insights into how AI is reshaping the workforce and how to respond effectively to these changes.

Such initiatives reflect SUSS' broader approach to leadership development across diverse sectors. Whether supporting the defence sector or the labour movement, our focus remains the same: to equip leaders with the practical capabilities and confidence to navigate technological change and lead effectively through uncertainty and transformation.



MAKING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THE DEFAULT



Educational inclusion has become increasingly important as institutions respond to more diverse student profiles and evolving learning needs.

Over the past year, SUSS has taken steps to embed inclusion more intentionally across its systems, prompting a broader rethink of teaching methods, technology use, and the overall student experience.

A key shift was the launch of SEN101 training in February 2025, a programme that equips teaching faculty with practical strategies to support students with special educational needs (SEN). Focused on real classroom scenarios, educators learn to recognise how different learning needs manifest in practice and adapt their teaching approaches accordingly.

Building on this effort, SUSS also introduced SEN102 and SEN103 to foster greater awareness and inclusion across the wider University community. SEN102 helps students better understand and support classmates with disabilities through topics such as respect, friendship, inclusion, and effective communication. SEN103 equips administrative and professional staff with disability awareness

and inclusive communication skills, helping to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for students and colleagues with disabilities.

SUSS also took steps to address accessibility gaps by developing a curated suite of Generative AI tools for SEN students. Tested across different disability profiles, these tools provided students with more accessible ways to participate in learning, build independence, and engage more confidently in their studies.

These efforts have been further strengthened through the Inclusivity Roadmap, a two-year initiative launched in 2025 with funding from SkillsFuture Singapore. Through a university-wide gap analysis, staff capability-building in Universal Design for Learning and practical initiatives such as speech-to-text interpretation at major events, the roadmap seeks to enhance accessible and inclusive learning experiences across the University.

Rather than addressing inclusion only when challenges arise, SUSS is building a shared capability to support diverse learning needs more consistently.