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CHAIR’S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the second issue of NEW HORIZONS. For the past few months we have witnessed several exciting developments in NTU and the School of Social Sciences (SSS).

In his speech at University Town Hall in August, NTU President Subra Suresh announced specific plans and “moonshot” projects over the next five years. One of these projects include targets and pathways focused on attracting top talent—faculty, postdoctoral fellows, staff—and students to the University. In line with President Suresh’s vision, we are delighted to welcome several new SSS faculty members who have joined us over the last few months. They are experts in their respective fields with strong professional and academic credentials, one of them is a recipient of the prestigious Nanyang Assistant Professorship (NAP) scheme. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Professor Joseph Liow, the new Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, who is also an internationally renowned scholar of international relations and comparative politics. In this issue, we feature an interview with Professor Liow.

Profesor Suresh also announced the launch of the Accelerating Creativity and Excellence (ACE) Programme to encourage greater interdisciplinary collaboration among the various schools and colleges in NTU. SSS has much to contribute to interdisciplinary research and education. Interdisciplinary research and education is crucial in solving the complex problem to the 21st century. This also drives our mission to ensure our students are equipped to face challenges in today’s changing landscape and to establish the new minor, Science, Technology and Society (STS), offered under College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. STS will give our students greater insights into the intellectual bridge between the social sciences, natural science and engineering, and encourage them to think deeply about the complex relationship between society and technology.

As we stand at the cusp of technological innovations, it is belting that the feature article in this issue looks at the Fourth Industrial Revolution from the social sciences perspective. Technological advances have the power to be agents for good, but can also be manipulated for undesirable purposes. We are heartened that the social sciences are an integral part of the discussion in the development and application of new technologies, evidenced by the setting-up the NTU Institute of Science and Technology for Humanity (NIstH) earlier this year.

Thank you for your continued support, and I hope you will enjoy this issue of NEW HORIZONS!

Professor Liu Hong
Tan Kah Kee Endowed Professor of Public Policy and Global Affairs
Chair, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University
NEW FACULTY
Economics
Asst Prof Wang Wenjia
AssoC Prof Jonathan Tan

Psychology
Asst Prof Victoria Leong
Asst Prof Tan Chin Hon

Public Policy and Global Affairs
Asst Prof Nilay Saha
Asst Prof Azusa Katagiri
Asst Prof Winardi Jambulat Abdallah

Sociology
Asst Prof Jung Hong Hyun
Nanyang Asst Prof Ian McConigle
Asst Prof Mananjia Bhada Hames
Asst Prof Lee Hyo Jung

FACULTY TENURE AND PROMOTIONS
Faculty Granted Tenure
- Economics
AssoC Prof James Ang
Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure
- Public Policy and Global Affairs
AssoC Prof Chua Chong-Ann

FACULTY AWARDS
Nanyang Education Award (University)
- Silver, Sociology
AssoC Prof Patrick Williams

Nanyang Education Award (School)
- Public Policy and Global Affairs
Asst Prof Kai Koga

Nanyang Award – Research (Young Investigator)
- Psychology
Asst Prof Suzy Styles

MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OFFICERS (M&SO) AWARDS 2018
Best Customer Service
Ms Ma Jiaying
Best Leadership Award
Ms Ng Yanja
Best Teamwork Award
- Faculty Affairs / HR Team
Ms Constance Yong and Ms Chelseea Yeo

MSO PROMOTIONS
Assistant Manager
Ms Janice Teh
Senior Assistant Manager
Ms Ng Yanja

ASST PROF ANDY HO RECEIVES ADEC ACADEMIC EDUCATOR AWARD
Assistant Professor Andy Ho from Psychology was conferred the Academic Educator Award from the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) at the 60th Annual Conference of the Association for Death and Counseling in April 2018. He is the first Asian recipient of this prestigious award, which is given to individuals who possess expertise in the field of dying, death and other bereavement.

Awarded with this award must also have Excellence in Academic Teaching in Thanatology as demonstrated by judgement of peers, development of teaching materials, new courses and student evaluations; Scholarly Activities as demonstrated by publication records and membership on editorial boards of academic and professional journals, as well as Continuing Growth as demonstrated by keeping abreast of changes and being at the cutting edge of developing ideas for the field.

ASSOC PROF MD SADUIL ISLAM RECEIVES OUTSTANDING SCIENTIST AWARD
Dr Md Saduil Islam, Associate Professor of Sociology, received the Outstanding Scientist Award 2017 (for Publication Excellence) from the i-Proclaim, Malaysia. The Award was given on 31 December 2017 in the i-Proclaim’s annual meeting held in the Mini Auditorium, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur.

The i-Proclaim Annual Research Awards (ARA) is “a prestigious Research Awards program organized by ABC Malaysia (m)pl seeks to recognize and reward the outstanding performance, talent and effort of the best research contributors, PhD holders and agencies dealt with research and publication in the Asia and global context.”

He’s currently working on, among other projects, “Climate change and food security in the Asia-Pacific: Response and Resilience”, a 1-year project supported by a financial grant from the Ministry of Education, Singapore.

The idea of the book came about in 2013, from research Associate Professor Tee began as what she thought of as “experiences of low-income persons in Singapore”. In the book, she peaks into the systems of Singapore’s education, labour, care and welfare, demonstrates how class inequalities are entrenched in them. She further illustrates how within these systems, some people have more options than others. The essays have been arranged to be read as a whole story in sequence.

Associate Professor Tea You Yenn’s latest publication, This Is What Inequality Looks Like, has generated much discussion among political leaders, academics and the general public in Singapore. The book, which is a series of essays, looks at inequality in Singapore.

The book, which is a series of essays, looks at inequality in Singapore. The book has sold 13,000 copies in seven months. It is currently the number one bestseller.

Pursue Not Just Success but Also Significance: SSS Convocation 2018
The convocation ceremony is one of the biggest milestones in an NTU student’s life. For the 412 graduates of the School of Social Sciences, it was a day of celebration as it marked the end of one journey, and the start of another in their young lives.

Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development (MSF), graced the event as the guest speaker for SSS convocation ceremony. In his speech, he outlined MSF’s initiatives to boost coordination and data-sharing between the ministry and agencies in the social service sector in order to help needy families more effectively. He shared that while government spending in the social services has more than doubled over the years, stronger integrated communities of care was also critical to better assist families and individuals in crisis.

Further emphasized the important roles local communities and neighbours play in providing support to such vulnerable groups of people.

Nonetheless, Mr Lee, said he was heartened that some SSS graduates have made volunteering a way of life. He commended Sociology graduate, Mr. Jonathan Ang, for his voluntary work in youth and disability sectors, and hoped that more graduates will join as community partners to support voluntary organizations and agencies.

Similarly, SSS valedictorian and Economics graduate, Ms Jodyn Lim, called upon her peers to harness their “unique skills and talents to engage in good work and pursue not just success, but also significance.” As she and her peers now faced a new phase of challenges in “adulthood”, they should keep their “faces towards the sunshine” and use life’s lessons to help themselves grow and mature.

SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON INEQUALITY IN SINGAPORE
In an interview with Ethos Books, she said: “Ultimately the book also poses this question: what can we do about our current state of inequality? I have some answers—about thinking through policy principles, about looking to empirical data, about asking the right questions, about getting over our biases and blindspots, about setting goals for ourselves to do better.”

Associate Professor Tea also contributes commentaries on the issue of inequality in Singapore to local newspaper, The Straits Times, as an extension of her book. This is What Inequality Looks Like and articles are also often mentioned or referred to by other commentators on the subject.

This is What Inequality Looks Like has been on the non-fiction weekly bestseller list of Books Kinokuniya since January this year, and is currently the Number One Bestseller. It has sold 13,000 copies in seven months.

In a warm welcome to our new faculty to the School of Social Sciences, and our heartfelt congratulations to the faculty and staff for their outstanding contributions to the School!
ASSOC PROF KAMALUDEEN NASIR ON HIP-HOP ISLAM

Associate Professor Kamaludeen Nasir from Sociology went on a three-month Fulbright stint at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) earlier this year. He was awarded the Singapore Fulbright Research Award in 2017.

Associate Professor Kamaludeen was at UCLA from 5 February to 30 April, and during his time there he gave a few lectures on hip-hop and perceptions of the United States overseas. He also participated in dialogues at RAND Corporation, an American non-profit global policy think tank. In addition, he engaged in conversations with the local community for Black Awareness Month, and took the opportunity to visit homeless shelters as well as volunteered as a family at a food bank.

A highlight of his stint was being invited to give a lecture at Georgetown University in Washington. He gave a talk called Hip-Hop Islam: commodification, cooption and Washington. He gave a talk called Hip-Hop Islam: commodification, cooption and Washington.

He was presented with an ‘Honorable Mention’ award at the APA Convention 2018 for his poster presentation. The conference/expedition was from 26 to 28 August and held in Svalbard onboard a veteran ship with no WiFi or cellular coverage, allowing for deep discussions. The topic for discussion revolved around building an empathetic society, with 15 core questions that were deliberated regarding ethics, sustainability, and the future.

Regional Cooperation of East Asia in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution: EAUI Summer School 2018

This year’s East Asian University Institute (EAUI) Summer School took place at Korea University in Seoul from 30 July to 4 August. More than 60 participants from five partner universities, including NTU, attended the lectures, presentations and a one-day symposium on the theme of “Regional Cooperation of East Asia in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution”.

Lectures conducted by the faculty from the participating universities covered some aspects, which will be important for effective regional cooperation in East Asia in the wake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Students were also given an opportunity to present their perspectives on regional cooperation in East Asia across a number of topics in the form of group presentations that has further contributed to forging friendships and professional networks between the five partner universities. In the international symposium, leading scholars from the five partner universities presented research in their respective fields and implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution covering a range of issues such as migration, technology, disaster risk management, human rights and others.

Regional Cooperation of East Asia in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution: EAUI Summer School 2018

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Building an empathetic society also involved developing empathy with nature—climate change had inevitably been one of the main topics discussed at the conference/expedition. Mr Muhammad, a Year 3 student, observed the tangible effects of climate change firsthand at the Arctic as the ship brought the delegates deep into the Monaco glacier. “It was possible this time only because the glaciers have retreated 4km inwards within just a year,” he shared.
The fourth annual Brain Stimulation and Imaging Meeting (BrainStIM) was held at Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (ILMC) from 15 to 16 June 2018. BrainStIM is an official satellite meeting of the Organization for Human Brain Mapping, highlighting research focusing on the combination of brain imaging and neurostimulation. Professor Vincent Clark from University of New Mexico and Professor Annabel Chen from NTU’s psychology programme served as the conference chair and conference co-chair respectively.

The meeting included seven keynote lectures, a symposium, and four oral sessions spread over the two days. Speakers included researchers from China, Hong Kong, Israel, Chile, the United States, Israel, Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Some of the notable speakers who delivered keynote lectures for the conference included Dr. Peter Fox – Vice Chair for Research and Research Education at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio; Professor Hartwig Siebner – Head of Institute of Human Movement Neurology, Copenhagen University Hospital Bispebjerg; Professor Nicole Wenderoth – Head of Institute of Human Movement Sciences and Sport from ETH Zürich; and Dr. Sven Buchsbaum – Professor of Motor Neuroscience, Institute of Neurology, University College London.

BrainStIM 2018 was jointly organised by NTU Singapore’s School of Social Sciences’ Psychology programme and LKC Medicine, with support from NTU Singapore’s Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) and industry sponsors.

The theme for the symposium was “What are eye blinks good for?”

The theme for the symposium was “What are eye blinks good for?” SYMPOSIUM IN EUROPE

Nanyang Assistant Professor Gerrit Maas from Psychology recently organised a symposium as part of the 41st European Conference on Visual Perception (ECVP). Held from 26 to 30 August in Trieste, Italy, the symposium – “What are eye blinks good for? Perceptual, oculomotor, and cognitive effects of eye blinks” – included researchers from 12 countries – including Belgium, France, Israel, Japan, Singapore, and the United States.

The symposium focused on the consequences of blinks for neural processing, perception, eye movements, and higher cognitive processes. Each contribution in the symposium also presented recent findings on the functions and consequences of eye blinks.

The symposium featured research findings by Dr. Tal Goran from University of New York, Dr. Yoram Bonneh from Bar-Ilan University, Israel; Marianne Duyck, Thérèse Collins and Mark Wester from Université Paris Descartes France; and Associate Professor Tamami Nakano from Osaka University, Japan. Assistant Professor Maas also presented his own research, “Blinks reset gaze control and attention”. According to the abstract of his paper, blinks completely disrupt the stream of inputs from the retina and introduce instabilities in gaze direction. However, perception remains continuous throughout spontaneous blinks. To help maintain stability, blink-related eye movements anticipate and correct for cumulative gaze position errors across blinks.

His research showed some behavioural evidence that blinks may cause an attentional reset. In rapid serial visual presentation tasks that require identification of a target in a rapid stream of distractors, it was also found a boost in identification performance time-locked to the last blink.
The Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0, is the evolution of new technologies that fuse the physical, digital, biological, and social realms. The previous three industrial revolutions were centred around early automation and intra-national connections in the late 18th century, mass production and productive connectivity of the late 19th century, and the rise of the digital age in the 1960s. What drives the Fourth Industrial Revolution are extreme automation and extreme connectivity as well as breakthroughs in several fields such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing, biotechnology, nanotechnology and the Internet of Things.

The technological innovations of Industry 4.0 are on the verge of spurring significant changes throughout the global economy, bringing about considerable benefits and challenges. Given its novelty, it is hard to predict its long-term consequences. However, we should acknowledge that “technologies shape people, and people shape technologies.” How we choose to wield technology will affect how they are deployed and developed – this is where the social sciences play a critical role.

As Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum says in his book, The Fourth Industrial Revolution: “The Fourth Industrial Revolution, finally, will change not only what we do but also who we are. It will affect our identity and all the issues associated with it: our sense of privacy, our notions of ownership, our consumption patterns, the time we devote to work and leisure, and how we develop our careers, cultivate our skills, meet people, and nurture relationships.”

But while we laud the benefits new technologies have brought, we should also reflect on how they have the potential to bring about undesirable outcomes.

As Industry 4.0 progresses, we can expect relentless risks to digital rights through the interconnectedness of technologies – from data protection, and algorithmic bias to privacy risks. New technologies adopted by media, businesses, humanitarian organisations or governments may reveal lack of standards or guidelines for collecting and using sensitive data.

And even with such technological advances and unsurpassed connectivity, it does not necessarily mean society is more open, diverse and inclusive. New technologies, while they have raised global incomes and quality of life around the world, have also exacerbated inequality. The economic benefits of this industrial revolution are becoming more concentrated among a small group of global citizens. According to Shaping the Fourth Industrial Revolution by Schwab and Nicholas Davis, at least 600 million people live on smallholder farms without access to any mechanization; around 2.4 billion people lack clean drinking water and safe sanitation; and 1.2 billion people have no electricity. And while more than 3 billion people now have access to the Internet, more than 4 billion people still have yet to enjoy the benefits of the digital age from the third industrial revolution. This increasing inequality can further heighten political polarization, exacerbate social fragmentation, and worsen public trust in institution.
You need equal attention to the social and economic dimensions, the political dimensions, and not just technology.” — Assistant Professor Monamie Bhadra Haines

"To belittle or dismiss the social sciences as merely playing a supportive role to STEM would be perilous. The pervasive impact Industry 4.0 has on society should be a clear indication on the central role the social sciences play in the development and application of technology."

Social Sciences and Industry 4.0

There is much discourse about education for the future, which is mostly concentrated on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning. In the face of technological advances, the growing focus on STEM is valid and necessary, but we cannot ignore the importance of education in the social sciences as well. Human society has been rapidly transformed by technology so the human experience in Industry 4.0 should also be investigated and not overlooked.

Technology, by itself, does not determine what is good or bad for humanity—it has no understanding of the human condition. It cannot tell us about the impact of technology on society, or how we are growing increasingly dependent on it and what the outcome would be. It needs human ethics and values to guide its purpose and intent. To belittle or dismiss the social sciences as merely playing a supportive role to STEM would be perilous.

The pervasive impact Industry 4.0 has on society should be a clear indication on the central role the social sciences play in the development and application of technology.

The use of technology is not simply a means to solve inconveniences—there are many human-related issues to consider. “You need equal attention to the social and economic dimensions, the political dimensions, and not just technology,” Dr Monamie Bhadra Haines, Assistant Professor from NTU’s School of Social Sciences pointed out. Furthermore, fields of study within the social sciences—like economics, political science, psychology and society—help society to analyse the implications of technological changes while providing insight as to how to wield technology responsibly.

This means that everyone has a stake in Industry 4.0—from the anxious worker who are concerned they would be replaced by machines, consumers who want to buy products that are aligned with their personal and community values, to businesses developing corporate reputations based on values and ethics, and governments defining national strategies to combat fake news to safeguard their respective sovereignty and security.

The complexity of new technologies in the 21st century requires interdisciplinary skills and understanding. To master and survive this new epoch of technology, we need both STEM and the social sciences to ensure a more human-centric approach in meaningful application of new technologies.

Adapting to an Ever Changing World

Despite being a university known for its strength in science and technology in education and research, Nanyang Technological University Singapore (NTU) also recognises the critical role the social sciences plays in contributing to the discussion that surrounds new technologies. Interweaving social sciences subjects such as economics, political sciences, psychology and sociology with STEM subjects leads to a richer understanding of Industry 4.0.

Early this year, NTU established the NTU Institute of Science and Technology for Humanity (NIstH), an interdisciplinary centre of excellence that seeks to make sense of how technological advances affect societies, cultures and human behaviour. The Institute aims to establish NTU and Singapore as a centre of excellence in the Science, Technology and Society arena. Through NIstH, NTU’s objective is to take the lead in mobilizing the power of technology for the benefit of society. This requires close collaboration between the arts and science, engineering and medicine, local government and international partnership.

Supplementing the efforts of NIstH is the offering of a new interdisciplinary minor by NTU’s College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences: Science, Technology and Society (STSS). This new minor draws on history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, media and communication studies as well as other fields to introduce undergraduates to ways of thinking about science and technology from a range of social and humanist perspectives.

Two new faculty hires from the School of Social Sciences—each with their unique research specialities—are part of a team of professors supporting this new minor. One of them is Nanyang Assistant Professor Ian McDonigle, whose interests lie in genetic science in the Middle East. “My ongoing project will circle around biology and identity—and these identities include ethnic identity, national identity, social identity and others,” he shared. Assistant Professor McDonigle has also expressed his interest in getting more involved with the GenomeAsia100k project to “bring a crucial anthological perspective”.

The other faculty member is Assistant Professor Haines, whose current area of research and expertise is in the political and cultural implications of energy transitions in the developing world, specifically a variety of contexts in Asia. One reason why she joined NTU was the university’s stance on STS. She added that the “link that the humanities and social sciences are critical for critiquing and improving science and technology is not shared everywhere”.

"To belittle or dismiss the social sciences as merely playing a supportive role to STEM would be perilous. The pervasive impact Industry 4.0 has on society should be a clear indication on the central role the social sciences play in the development and application of technology."
# Research Grants

## MOE Tier 1 Grants

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<td>Economics</td>
<td>Associate Professor Chia Wei Mun</td>
<td>Capital Flows and Instability in Foreign Exchange Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Kang Minwook</td>
<td>Three ways to overcome present bias under the hyperbolic consumption model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Charles Dr</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Nanyang Assistant Professor Gianluca Esposito</td>
<td>Predicting Infant Neurophysiological Emotional Regulation: Elucidating the Roles of the Mother-Infant Synchrony, Family Environment &amp; Genetic Predisposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy and Global Affairs</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Christopher Holman</td>
<td>Democracy and Comparative Political Theory: Imaginative Encounters in the History of Political Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam</td>
<td>The Rise of the “Green” Movement in the Global Environment Politics</td>
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## MOE Tier 2 Grants

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<tr>
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<td>Economics</td>
<td>Associate Professor James Ang</td>
<td>Cultural orientations and long-term comparative economic development</td>
</tr>
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## External Grants

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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>National Research Foundation Singapore (NRF)</td>
<td>Nanyang Assistant Professor Suzy Styles</td>
<td>How language mixes contribute to effective bilingualism and effective biliteracy in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore Millennium Foundation (SMF)</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Andy Ho Hau Tan</td>
<td>Development and Evaluation of a novel Narrative E-Writing Intervention (NewI) for Parents of Children with Life-Limiting Illness: A Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial for Advancing Holistic Palliative Care and Parental Bereavement Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Arts Council (NAC)</td>
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<td>Project ARTISAN: Fostering Aspiration and Resilience through Intergenerational Storytelling &amp; Art-Based Narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Research Foundation (NRF)</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Xu Hong</td>
<td>From Virtual Reality to Simulation: User-Centred Design of Dynamic Guidance Systems for Transit Hubs</td>
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<td>Host Institution of project, Singapore ETH Centre (SEC) / Future Cities Laboratory (FCL)</td>
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<td>Ways to improve commuters’ emotions and perceptions toward train disruptions through better train disruption management methods</td>
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# NTU Behavioural and Experimental Economics Workshop

Professor Joseph Liow is the new Dean of College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CoHAS), a mantle he has taken on since 1 July this year. He is also a professor of Comparative and International Politics, and Dean of the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). He takes over Professor Alan Chan, who has been Dean of CoHAS for the last nine years. Professor Liow will be serving as Dean of RSIS until 31 December 2018.

Being a Dean of two institutions simultaneously is a daunting task few can imagine, let alone undertake. But the challenge of managing CoHAS and RSIS is something Professor Liow takes in his stride. He comments that it is a challenge leading the two entities at the same time. However, “therein lies the reward”—to be able to push and extend himself beyond his comfort zone. The arrangement, moreover, is temporary as a new Dean will be appointed to RSIS soon.

The unique position he is in has presented him the opportunity to synergize what CoHAS and RSIS each has to offer to add value to the University. He is also able to broaden his horizons as he would have to delve deeper into disciplines and areas—both academic and administrative—he had not previously been involved in. But what is most important is that the experience allows him to learn something new every day.

He dedicates a lot of time tending to faculty-related matters—from contrast renewals and promotion prospects to publication choices and personal issues, to budgetary and financial matters. It is time-consuming, but asserts that it is also a crucial aspect of the job. “Any college or school is only as good as the faculty and staff they have, so as Dean I see engagement with the people in the institution as a key priority in my job scope,” he says. Having good, motivated, and enthusiastic faculty and staff is absolutely essential to the quality of education we provide to our students, he adds. Therefore, it is vital that he pays attention to these issues. “But before I tackle all these issues though, I hit the gym…to psyche me up for the day!”

Turning to his vision for the College, he believes the humanities, arts, and social sciences are even more critical, especially in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. “As a College in what is essentially a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) oriented university, we are often viewed as ancillary to the ‘hard sciences,’” he says. “This view is not only unfair; it is terribly misplaced and fundamentally misguided.” He quotes Jeff Goldblum’s character, Dr Ian Malcolm, from Jurassic Park (1993): “Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could that they didn’t stop to think if they should.” This emphasises his point that the onus is on us, as humanity, “to ask ourselves some very fundamental questions about ourselves, the answers for which will not be found in engineering labs, mathematical equations, or microchips, but in the humanities, arts, and social sciences.”

“Any college or school is only as good as the faculty and staff they have, so as Dean I see engagement with the people in the institution as a key priority in my job scope.” — Professor Joseph Liow
A recipient of the prestigious Nanyang Assistant Professorship (NAP) scheme, Assistant Professor Ian McDoniglia shares his plan for the generous research grant – to foster interdisciplinary research and break down disciplinary divides. Specifically, research pertaining to global science, technology and society (STS). He hopes to use the social sciences to bring a different perspective to the developments of technological advancements and implications that cutting-edge research may have on society.

SCIENCE AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

Born in North Carolina, United States, Assistant Professor Menamie Bhadra Haines comes from a highly diverse academic background. She started off as a pre-med student at the University of Michigan (U-M), but then decided medicine was not for her when she could not bring herself to kill and dissect a frog. "Thereafter, before switching to geology, the Assistant Professor dabbled in astrophysics and astronomy. She eventually graduated with a double degree in both Geological Science and English—in which she qualified for a Minor in Physics as well.

Assistant Professor Haines shares her encounter with the field of science, technology and society (STS) as one of serendipity, chance upon the area of study through a conversation with a neighbour who was a postdoctoral fellow at U-M. She became keen in STS for its interdisciplinary nature, leading her to earn both a master’s and Ph.D. in Human & Social Dimensions of Science and Technology from Arizona State University. STS demonstrated to be a good fit for the Assistant Professor.

“I’m interested in so many things and STS was a way to bring it all together,” she says. She elaborates that it was in doing benchwork and laboratory work where in realising how science involved a lot of judgment and interpretations that she “wanted to know more about a more critical perspective of science.” (Not to say that it was anti-science, but how could we do things better,” she adds.

His shift from the biosciences to social sciences, and consequently, merging of the two, is one of surprise “that science came back into the center of it all.”

“I thought that I was leaving the sciences to do social anthropology, so it was somewhat surprising that I came back to science with anthropological questions. But I think that’s the innovative contribution I’m trying to bring here,” he elaborates. Assistant Professor McConiglia sees the main contribution of STS as not taking for granted the normative assumptions of science and technology, but one that looks at the broader social life of science and technology. Hence, he shares a highlight of his academic life as having co-organized symposia at Harvard to discuss the relationship between science and social identities. He hopes to have such an interdisciplinary conversation in NTU as well.

Recent research by Assistant Professor McConiglia includes a study on genetic research being used to identify ancient grape varietals used to make wine in Biblical times in Israel/Palestine; he delved into an entanglement of complex factors involving genetics, biblical prophecy and social values. He looks forward to learning more about the GenomeAsia100K project, teaching seminars and exploring areas of study to do with identity in relation to biosciences.

BRIDGING INTERDISCIPLINARITY WITH SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

The Irish scholar has Ph.D in Biochemistry (University of Cambridge) and Middle Eastern Studies and Anthropology (Harvard University). He recounts that it was in doing experimental lab work with the Chinese traditional medicine Ginkgo Biloba that first piqued his interest in science, culture and philosophy. This drew the Assistant Professor to anthropology.

His research interests later on developed to the areas of science and technology, philosophical anthropology, and genetics and identity. These interests led to him spending a year doing ethnomorphic research in Israel at the National Laboratory for the Genetics of Israeli Populations, and making multiple research trips to Doha, Qatar, where he studied the Qatar Genome Project. He was also a postdoctorate fellow at Harvard Kennedy School’s Science, Technology, Society Program. These multidisciplinary experiences and qualifications have given him a unique position of having the identity and credentials of a scientist, as well as the sophisticated mindset of a cultural anthropologist, Professor McConiglia does all of statistical, philosophical and cultural questions through an STS lens.

Assistant Professor Walid had been following his work since the former’s younger days. The now Associate Professor Hussin Mutalib, from the Department of Political Science in NUS, later became his mentor, adviser and friend. Today, the Singaporean scholar describes himself as being extremely blessed to be able to do “work that is related to [his] hobby.”

The Assistant Professor completed his PhD in both NUS and King’s College London, and when he was there, the avid football fan managed to catch several English Premier League (EPL) matches. In his free time, he plays football and watches political videos, especially of the Singapore and Malaysia Parliament. Crediting much of his accomplishment today to the support he received from his wife and family, Assistant Professor Walid is also a proud father of a three-year-old son.

Professor Walid shares another highlight of his academic journey as having his intellectual inspiration turned mentor. Assistant Professor Walid shares another highlight of his academic journey as having his intellectual inspiration turned mentor. Assistant Professor Hussin Mutalib. Assistant Professor Hussin Mutalib.

Apart from having his intellectual inspiration turned mentor, Assistant Professor Walid shares another highlight of his academic journey as having his intellectual inspiration turned mentor. Assistant Professor Hussin Mutalib. Assistant Professor Hussin Mutalib.

His research areas focus on state-Islam relations, political parties and elections as well as Southeast Asian politics, specifically in Singapore and Malaysia. He has published several articles in internationally peer-reviewed journals such as International Political Science Review, Australian Journal of International Affairs, Small Wars & Insurgencies, and Journal of Church and State. Recent work awaiting publication include an article on the state’s approach (one he calls ‘electoral secularism’) towards the LGBT issue in Singapore and an article on the ideology of Parti Islam Se-Malaysia in PAS, the Islamic party in Malaysia. The Assistant Professor is currently teaching Fundamentals of Politics’ to undergraduates and looks forward to taking on ‘Comparative Politics of Asia’ next semester. He also hopes to be able to introduce his own modules to do with political parties and elections.

Assistant Professor Walid grew up in a home where politics was regularly discussed at the dinner table and family gatherings. Gradually, politics came to be a hobby of his even as he studied Economics at the undergraduate level in the National University of Singapore (NUS). The defining moment that spurred him to pursue further studies in his hobby was when he took an elective about governance and politics of Singapore, taught by political scientist Hussin Mutalib.

His area of expertise looks at the politics and social dynamics of renewable energy transitions. Her next project aims to study green entrepreneurship in places of humanitarian crisis such as refugees camps. Assistant Professor Haines is also currently working on publishing her book, Democracy in Fission: Dissent and the Fissicular Renaissance, which examines Indian politics in relation to manifestations of nuclear energy into the country’s culture, politics and environment. She is doing studies on development communities and climate fiction, where the latter explores themes of ecoscionism as well as English literature, as well. Her other research interests include liberal and liberal-democratization, social movements, and the politics of risk and uncertainty. Presently, she is teaching Contemporary Social Theory and looks forward to proposing a course on nature, culture and technology in a globalizing world.

The Assistant Professor states one of her greatest academic achievements as being able to finish her dissertation despite having just given birth by emergency C-section to twins two months early – in which her work was later on recognized with the Nicholas C. Mullins Award of 2016 for best graduate student paper at the Society for the Social Studies of Science.

WHEN PASSION AND WORK COME TOGETHER

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SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH THE LENS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLGY, MDS
Edited by Associate Professor Md Saidul Islam (Sociology)

This Special Issue of Sustainability will provide an environmental sociological approach to understanding and achieving the widely used notion of “Sustainability.” The Special Issue will address these questions: What is this new discipline, the inherent discursive formations of environmental socioculture, contested topos and paradigms, competing theories and practices, and their complex implications on our society at large.

DEAR CHINA, EMIGRANT LETTERS AND STIGMATA, 1820-1990, UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Gao Yanping and Professor Liu Hong (Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme) and Huizhi Zhang

Dear China is the first book-length study in English of gaopi and of the origins, structure, and operations of the gaopi trade. The authors explore the characteristics and transformations of gaopi, showing how such globalization and cross-national mechanisms helped sustain families separated by distance and state frontiers and contributed to the sending regions’ socioeconomic development. Dear China contributes substantially to our understanding of modern Chinese history and to the comparative study of global migration.

THE QIAOPI TRADE AND TRANSACTIONAL NETWORKS IN THE CHINESE DIASPORA, ROUTLEDGE
Roger Benton and Professor Liu Hong (Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme) and Huizhi Zhang

This book seeks to examine the gaopi from two interconnected perspectives. One views gaopi from a political and institutional angle, the other from a financial and social angle. Bringing together the extensive research of a group of international scholars, this multi-authored volume sheds light on the larger significance of the gaopi for modern China. As one of the first books in English on the gaopi trade and its significance, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Chinese history and Chinese migration, as well as in Migration Studies and Diaspora Studies more generally.

CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY: SOUTHEAST ASIA TRANSITIONS, OUR DIALOGUE SERIES, NUS Singapore and Prof Liu Hong (Public Policy and Global Affairs)


DIFFERENTIAL INCLUSION THROUGH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, MIGRATION, PRECARITY AND DIVERSITY IN SINGAPORE
Asst Prof Xin Jia (Sociology)


FALLING SHORT: CLASS AND THE PERFORMATIVE SELF IN CHINESE SOCIETY
Asst Prof Teo You Neng (Sociology)

In Family and Population Change in Singapore: Histories and Futures of the global family changes, Ijedil Wei-Jun Jean Young and Shu Hu (London: Routledge, 2018), pp 16-111.

BORDER CAPITALISM, DISRUPTED: PRECARITY AND STRUGGLING IN A SOUTHEAST ASIAN INDUSTRIAL ZONE, CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS
Assistant Professor Stephen Campbell (Sociology)

By bringing a new deployment of workerist and autonomist theory to bear on this fieldwork, Stephen Campbell highlights the ways in which workers’ struggles have catalyzed transformations in labor regulation at the frontiers of capital in the global south.

THE SOCIO-TECHNICAL CONSTITUTION OF RESILIENCE: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON GOVERNMENTAL RISK AND DISASTER, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Edited by Associate Professor Sulflak Amr (Sociology)

This book considers the concept of resilience in a global society where coping with the consequences and long-term impact of crisis and disaster challenges the capacity of communities to bounce back from this severe disruption. Drawing on the concept of sociotechnical resilience, it closely examines a range of events, North America, Asia, Australia, and Europe.