2012 AsRES – AREUEA Joint International Conference

The 2012 Asian Real Estate Society (AsRES) and American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association (AREUEA) Joint International Conference will be held from 7 - 10 July 2012 in Singapore.

The venue for the conference, hosted by National University of Singapore, Department of Real Estate and Institute of Real Estate Studies, and supported by professional bodies and statutory boards in Singapore is the Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort.

The conference will provide a forum for academics, practitioners and policymakers to participate and discuss the latest research findings in the areas of real estate markets, housing, urban economics and planning, real estate finance and investment, and development.

Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT______________________________________________________________________________</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dec 11</td>
<td>Opening for submission of abstracts / papers via conference website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Jan 12</td>
<td>Conference registration starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Feb 12</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of abstracts / papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Mar 12</td>
<td>Notification of accepted papers, acceptance is subjected to conference registration by 8 Jun 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 May 12</td>
<td>Deadline for early-bird conference registration / hotel booking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Jun 12</td>
<td>Submission of full paper to be considered for best paper awards and designated discussants. Conference registration for paper inclusion in conference. Closing date for conference registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Jun 12</td>
<td>Submission of full paper to be included in the conference proceedings</td>
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For more details of the conference, please visit the conference website at http://www.rst.edu.sg/asres2012/.

And we look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Graduate Certificate in Real Estate Finance

May I congratulate you on the successful launch of the GCREF programme. This is a unique collaboration between private practitioners and university academia, to serve the common fraternity. The warm reception by industry titans and strong participation is testament of the benefits of this course. With this in mind, we have already sent staff to attend the GCREF.

Tan Swee Yiow
President, Singapore Commercial Head, Regional Investments
Keppel Land

The NUS Graduate Certificate in Real Estate Finance (GCREF) was launched earlier this year to meet the growing demand for a special group of professionals who have deep working knowledge of the real estate and capital markets. The programme is divided into three modules as follows:

• Module I: Real Estate Investment & Asset Management covers issues related to direct commercial real estate investment and asset management.
• Module II: Real Estate Finance & Securitisation covers issues related to fund raising for real estate investments as well as issues related to real estate securitisation.
• Module III: Real Estate Portfolio & Risk Management covers issues related to portfolio investment and risk management associated with investing in international real estate and indirect real estate, covering both debt and equity instruments.

Bridging the two markets, the GCREF is distinctive in terms of its academic rigour and practical relevance. Each module runs as a 4-day intensive program with a pre- or post-seminar technical workshop. The class is kept to a small size to maintain a conducive learning environment and to facilitate closer sharing and interactions among the participants. The instructors include an impressive line-up of distinguished practitioners and professors.
Module I and Module II were held on 21-25 May and 15-19 August 2011, respectively. Feedback from the participants, many of whom hold management positions in their company, was overwhelmingly positive.

I. Effectiveness of the Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The course content has met its stated objectives</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>The knowledge gained will be practical and of great value to my work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The coverage/depth of the course was adequate</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The case studies &amp; exercises were useful</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy with the overall benefits derived from the course</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate your level of satisfaction for this program on the whole</td>
<td>4.71</td>
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II. Quality of Trainers

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Coverage/Relevancy/usefulness of course materials</td>
<td>4.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to hold interest, communicate ideas &amp; concepts clearly</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall effectiveness of the trainer</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Module III on Real Estate Portfolio & Risk Management will run from November 14-17. Just as with the previous two modules, it is anchored by a strong line-up of instructors from the industry and NUS including Goh Kok Huat (President, GIC Real Estate), David Dickinson (Global Head of Research & Strategic Planning, GIC Real Estate), Tsan Tsang Eng (Principal & MD, European Investors Inc.), Christopher Gee (Head of Equities Research, JP Morgan), Paul Kwee (Head of Credit Risk, Standard Chartered Bank) and Liow Kim Hiang, Lum Sau Kim, Masaki Mori and Joseph Ooi from NUS.

The success of the programme is only possible with strong support from the real estate and finance communities in the form of constructive suggestions during the design development stage and in providing financial support, participants as well as instructors for the three modules. In appreciation, NUS will be hosting a cocktail reception and dinner on November 17 (Thursday). The keynote speaker for this special event is Dr Yongheng Deng who is Provost’s Chair Professor and Director of Institute of Real Estate Studies (IRES), Professor of Finance, NUS Business School, and Professor of Real Estate at the Department of Real Estate, School of Design and Environment, NUS. Participants who have completed all the three modules will also be receiving their GCREF certificate.

Dr. MORI Masaki joined the Department of Real Estate as an Assistant Professor in July 2011. His research interests include real estate and financial investments and risk management as well as behavioural real estate. Prior to joining NUS, he was an Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Finance at the International University of Japan. He was also a manager at Nomura Asset Management. He holds a Ph.D. (Real Estate) from Georgia State University.

Dr. Kwan Ok LEE joined the Department of Real Estate as an Assistant Professor in August 2011. She holds a Ph.D. in Policy, Planning, and Development from the University of Southern California and Master in Urban Planning from Harvard University. Her research interests focus on housing, neighbourhood dynamics, and urban policy. Her current research includes the neighbourhood determinants of residential relocation choices, housing choices in aging households, household formation in a recession, and triggers of mortgage distress and post-delinquency outcomes. Dr. Lee’s research has appeared in leading academic journals such as American Economic Review, Papers & Proceedings and Regional Science and Urban Economics.

Dr. Megan WALTERS, Head of Asia Pacific Capital Markets research for Jones Lang LaSalle, was appointed as Adjunct Associate Professor in July 2011. The appointment further cements the strong academic and industry ties between the Department and Jones Lang Lasalle. Dr Walters holds a PhD (Institutional Economics) from the University of Hong Kong and her research interests embrace institutional economics of real estate, capital flows in real estate developments and asset and property management.
STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

A/P Prof David Ho

- His paper entitled “Examining fuzzy tactical asset allocation (FTAA) as an alternative to modern portfolio theory (MPT) asset allocation for international and direct real estate investment” published in the *Journal of Financial Management of Property and Construction* was chosen as a Highly Commended Award Winner at the Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2011.

Prof Deng Yongheng

- His paper, co-authored with Dr Wu Jing and Dr Liu Xueliang, entitled “Population impact, marriage and housing market” was awarded the first prize for Best Dissertation at the 3rd Global Chinese Real Estate Congress Conference held from 1-3 Apr 2011 in Hangzhou, China.
- Invited to participate in the World Economic Forum’s Summer Davos Meeting in Dalian, China, 13-16 Sep 2011. Prof Deng chaired two panels at the Summer Davos Meeting. Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts of Singapore, Mr. Vincent H. S. Lo, Chairman, Shui On Holdings, Hong Kong SAR, among other developers and government officials, served as panelists in the sessions. They discussed insights from emerging markets: urban development, and new urban development business models for greater economic impact.
- Invited by the University of Amsterdam to serve as external member for a Ph.D. dissertation defence, 8 Sep 2011.
- Appointed as Provost’s Chair, in recognition of his outstanding and impactful scholarly accomplishments. The appointment is for a period of 3 years from 1 Oct 2011 to Sep 2014.

A/P Sing Tien Foo and Dr Lee Nai Jia

- Their paper, entitled “Inter and Intra generation consumption of housing good: Did my parents own a larger house?” won the second prize for Best Paper at the 3rd Global Chinese Real Estate Congress Conference held from 1-3 Apr 2011 in Hangzhou, China.
- A/Prof Sing Tien Foo is invited to join as a post-doctoral honouree of the Homer Hoyt Institute, Maury Seldin Advanced Studies Institute, Weimer School of Advanced Studies in Real Estate Land Economics in May 2012.

Dr Grace Wong

- She received the Annual Teaching Excellence Award (Honour Roll) on 4 May 2011.

A/P Yu Shi Ming

- Appointed as the President of Asian Real Estate Society (AsRES) for a period of one year effective from Jul 2011.
- Invited to speak on “Green Retrofitting Costs and Benefits: Implications for Valuations” BCA Talk to CEOs, 16 Sep 2011, Singapore.
- Invited as Key Resource Person to speak on “Real Property as a Development Imperative: Regional Experiences” and “Role and Reliability of Valuation and its Impact on the Financial and Real Property Markets” at Conference on The Role of Real Property Development in an Emerging Economy organized by the Centre for Banking Studies, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Urban Development Authority and the Institute of Real Estate and Valuation of Sri Lanka, 6-7 Oct 2011, Sri Lanka.

A/P Zhu Jieming

- Invited by the Korea Regional Economic Association to give a presentation, entitled “Land Development in China’s Peri-urban Areas” to Mutual Benefitting Strategy of Urban and Rural Areas and Regional Economic Development symposium, Daejeon, South Korea, 9-12 Jun 2011.
Islamic banking and finance has taken on increased significance in recent years, with the global market for Islamic financial services with Shariah-compliant assets estimated to be $951 billion in 2008; a 73% increase on the $549 billion market in 2006. This has reflected an increased demand for Shariah–compliant investment opportunities for Muslim investors in the Middle East and Asia, as well as growth in other Muslim markets. Shariah-compliant investing has also seen increased demand from non-Muslim investors in the broader context of ethical investing and socially responsible investing.

This demand for Islamic financial products has seen a diverse range of Shariah-compliant financial products made available. Islamic REITs have also been established in Malaysia and Singapore. Specifically for property investment, compliance with specific issues regarding tenants and properties in the property portfolio need to be assessed by an appointed Shariah Board or Shariah Advisory Council. The Islamic REITs in Malaysia are seen to be a differentiated product to conventional REITs, delivering low risk, portfolio diversification and robustness during the GFC.

On the contrary, previous empirical research has generally found no significant differences between the risk-adjusted performances of Islamic stocks versus non-Islamic stocks. However there is some evidence of Islamic stocks out-performing conventional stocks, particularly in a bear market. Hence, this paper assesses the risk-adjusted performance and portfolio diversification benefits of Shariah-compliant property companies at a global, developed markets and emerging markets level in a mixed-asset portfolio over 2007-2011, with the broader global and Islamic property investment implications also highlighted.

S&P Shariah indices form the basis for the Shariah-based analysis in this paper. Stocks are screened for Shariah-compliance which is carried out by Rating Intelligence Partners, an independent consulting group based in London/Kuwait, who work closely with a Shariah Supervisory Board of four Islamic scholars. Both sector-based screens and financial-based screens are applied to ensure non-compliant activities are not conducted and certain company financial ratios are not violated. Risk-adjusted total returns were assessed over September 2007 – January 2011. Mixed-asset portfolio diversification benefits were assessed with efficient frontiers constructed to assess this mixed-asset portfolio performance.

The expectation from this Shariah property company analysis is that there will be no significant difference in risk-adjusted performance between the Shariah property companies and conventional property companies. This would potentially see investors having comparably performing property company portfolios, whilst still explicitly adhering to Shariah-compliance in the investment portfolio. This has implications for institutional investors in Islamic countries seeking Shariah-compliance in their property exposure, as well as for the broader property investment community in terms of ethical investing and socially responsible property investment.

Over the full sample period from Sep 2007 to Jan 2011. Some of the returns are negative as the timeframe constitutes the heat from the financial crisis. Yet, Shariah property is relatively the best performing asset class with the developed property Shariah as the best performing index. Evidently, both Shariah property indices exhibited lesser volatility than their conventional property asset class. From a mixed asset portfolio standpoint, developed property Shariah mix outperforms its conventional counterpart. This is evident from its frontier which is situated more upwards in the risk return trade off coordinate. The results were also robust during the GFC sub sample period (available upon request) and at the global level.

The empirical analysis highlights that in all sample periods, a Shariah property either warrants an inclusion into a Shariah compliant portfolio or as a standalone investment. This suggests over the period of Sep 2007 – Jan 2011 and within the context of a portfolio, Shariah property as an asset class can be a viable competitive instrument for investors. The challenge moving forward is for the Shariah compliant industry to formalize its infrastructure and amass assets so as to continue propelling the Shariah property industry as a profitable and sizeable component of the global property market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Average annual return</th>
<th>Annual risk</th>
<th>Reward-to-risk ratio</th>
<th>Sharpe ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Shariah property</td>
<td>-0.43%</td>
<td>29.22%</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed Shariah property</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>26.97%</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global property</td>
<td>-0.32%</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed property</td>
<td>-0.92%</td>
<td>30.88%</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Shariah stocks</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
<td>22.86%</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed stocks</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
<td>24.22%</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Exchange Experience

Prior to leaving
I still remember vividly the myriad of emotions felt while I was in the plane on my way to Stockholm, Sweden. I was excited and eager to embark on an adventure of a lifetime, yet I felt strangely apprehensive at the same time. It was the first time I was going to be apart from my friends and family for such a long period of time and I did not know exactly what to expect. I had heard from seniors who had previously gone on the student exchange programme that they had an amazing time overseas but deep down, I always thought that they were perhaps exaggerating their experiences. I did not believe that a mere semester spent abroad could have such a profound impact on an individual.

Even though I knew that spending a semester abroad was going to be a key milestone in my life, I never expected the huge impact that it would have on my life.

I had heard many wonderful and inspiring stories about how breathtakingly beautiful Europe is, with its magnificent architecture, vast landscapes and panoramic views. I chose to go to Stockholm, Sweden for the student exchange programme as I felt that this country could offer me the very best that Europe have to offer – gorgeous scenery, picturesque views, cold weather, and most importantly, a clean and safe environment. Looking back now, I can safely say that I made the right choice in going to Sweden because I never did once regret my decision.

While in Sweden
Most Swedes are able to speak fluent English and when prompted, many will be happy to converse with you in English. Sweden is also home to IKEA, Volvo, Ericsson, Lakerol and H&M, amongst many other famous brands.

I have to admit that prior to arriving in Sweden, I did not have much knowledge about this Scandinavian country, apart from the fact that I knew it was going to be nail biting cold - and boy, it was! Upon arrival in Sweden, the first thing that hit me was how I was surrounded by white, fluffy snow everywhere. Blankets of frozen ice covered the pavements and I slipped a couple of times because I was not used to walking on the slippery ice. The temperature was around -10 degrees then (I had arrived right smack in the middle of winter) and it took me quite awhile to get used to the cold. How different it was as compared to tropical Singapore, where you start sweating within 5 minutes of stepping out of your house! It was indeed an eye-opener though, because experiencing 4 months of harsh winter permitted me to take part in many activities that were offered only during winter. I had a picnic on a frozen lake, was caught in a heavy snow storm which lasted for one whole day, had a few snowball fights along the way and of course, I made snowmen for the first time in my life! Best of all, I was fortunate enough to travel within the Arctic Circle to catch a glimpse of one of the World’s seven natural wonders – the aurora borealis (or Northern Lights). These experiences will forever be etched in my memory and I will never forget them for as long as I live.

Lessons at my host university were rather different from lectures and tutorial lessons conducted at NUS. Class sizes at KTH were smaller and students there were extremely vocal. Swedes, like many of their European counterparts, are very vocal and eloquent at expressing their opinions and views to an audience. Professors did not believe in spoon feeding us too as they expected us to be highly independent learners who would take the initiative to seek help if we felt that we needed extra guidance.

Swedes are generally friendly and will be more than willing to help you if you’re caught in a predicament. I remember going to an IKEA outlet during the first week I was at Stockholm. I felt helpless while at the self-service counter in IKEA, looking around frantically because there was a long queue behind me and I was not sure how to scan my items and pay for them myself without the help of a cashier. Thank goodness there was a gentleman behind me in the queue who guided me in scanning and paying for my items quickly. We even stopped to chat for awhile after that as he was interested in knowing more about Singapore. This small incident was just one of the many which made me realize that Swedes are a warm and friendly bunch who will do what they can to make you feel right at home in a foreign land.

Tu Sophia Iskandar, at Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm on Student Exchange Program
I cannot emphasize this enough - Sweden is a beautiful country. Vast greenery and azure, clear waters make up a large part of this country and it is no wonder that Swedes are very environmentally conscious. They are more than willing to go the extra mile in helping to conserve the natural environment. I shared a corridor kitchen with around 10 other corridor mates and we were strongly encouraged to sort out our rubbish according to the types of materials that they were made of.

I also had the pleasure of meeting many Europeans from all over the continent – Spaniards, Italians, French, Germans, and Belgians etc. They were all eager to know more about Singapore and were indeed surprised when I told them that our first language is English (and not some sort of 'Singaporean language') and that no, we are not part of China. Telling them that chewing gum was banned in Singapore sure did raise quite a few eyebrows! I also learned more about the different cultures and quirks unique to other countries as well, making it mutually beneficial for me too.

Traveling around Europe
I seized every opportunity I could to travel around Europe, even going on several solo trips to England and Scotland. Never once did I feel lonely because I made friends everywhere I went. I exchanged life stories and had many interesting conversations with solo travellers from all over the world. It made me realize that money and career are no doubt two very important things in life, but they are not everything. I believe that it is imperative that I strive to maintain a maximal work-life balance in the future.

Looking Back
The 6 months that I spent in Stockholm were probably the best few months of my life, not only because I had the time of my life there but also because I grew up a lot during that period. Meeting people from all over the world changed my perspectives and outlook on life in general.

In Singapore, a comfort zone for most of us, we are used to having things our way all the time. Most of us still expect things to be handed to us on a silver platter. We believe that it is our prerogative to have clean running water flowing from our taps, that our MRT trains run smoothly and without a glitch, that our streets are safe even during the wee hours of the night, and that there should be a shopping mall at every nook and cranny so that we are able to escape from the suffocating heat and humidity. We often fail to count our blessings and realize that even though our tiny little island is not perfect, our merits far outnumber the demerits. For instance, we complain about how hot and humid it is here all the time when some people overseas are not even able to step out of their houses without being wrapped up in several layers of clothing first! Trust me; it is not easy tolerating the harsh cold weather especially when your skin starts cracking and bleeding due to the lack of moisture in the air.

Prior to leaving, I must admit that I had a very myopic view towards life and people in general. I think that Singaporeans can learn a thing or two from Europeans when it comes to judging others. Many Europeans respect and understand that different people have different hierarchies of priorities; most importantly, they believe that individuality should be respected and in fact encouraged!

Diversity and acceptance of idiosyncrasies are key ingredients in making a place a largely conducive and pleasant home for people of all races.

I have also learned to count my blessings and appreciate my family members and close friends more. I envy how many Europeans are able to live life to the fullest as most are able to strike a perfect balance between work and leisure. In Singapore, we are too often caught up in the never ending rat race that we fail to pause and appreciate the finer things in life – the things that money can't buy. By that, I am referring to relationships and strong bonds forged between you and your loved ones which cannot be bought by money or other material goods.

With that, I can conclude by saying that juniors should make a bold move and apply for student exchange to another part of the world – be it in Asia, America, Europe or even Africa! You will certainly not be disappointed. I strongly encourage students who have not been abroad, to step out of their comfort zone and travel out of Singapore for a few weeks at least, and experience first-hand how much the world has to offer. After all, university life is not all about chasing distinctions every semester and working from day to night trying to pull up our GPAs. My humble opinion is that most learning is ironically done outside of the classroom. Therefore, I fervently believe that spending 6 months abroad was without a doubt, the highlight of my entire university experience.

I guess the only downside is that I am already itching to go on my next trip... And I can’t wait!
Over the summer holidays, the Department of Real Estate organized a study trip, led by A/P Yu Shi Ming and A/P Tu Yong, to Chengdu, China, for the final year undergraduate students as part of a module “RE 4909 Topics in Real Estate”. The 6-day study trip featured a series of visits to real estate development projects covering almost all real estate sectors, local urban planning authority as well as some urban conservation projects, such as the 宽窄巷 (Kuan Zhai Xiang) & 洛带古镇 (Luo Dai Gu Zhen) — exploring the rich history, extensive culture, and beautiful natural landscape in Chengdu. We also attended a lecture in the South-Western University of Finance and Economics and interacted with the local students. The trip exposed us to an ocean of opportunities in China compared to that in Singapore.

China’s Market & Chengdu’s Real Estate

China’s property market on the whole has seen gigantic growth especially in the last decade, primarily in residential and commercial properties. The average house price has been increasing at alarming rates over the past decade, due to a combination of government policies, huge foreign investments and the local cultural attitudes. In fact, it has grown to become the largest real estate investment market in the entire world. In Cheng Du, residential properties investment is the leading sector, followed by the commercial and the office sectors. While the major office and retail micro-markets are located in the central area, luxury residential developments are heading south, with the emergence of ‘South New Town’.

There are speculations over whether a possible housing bubble could lead to a crisis. China’s high price-to-income, price-to-rent ratios and high number of vacancy rates seem to support this notion. The government, in a bid to ‘cool’ the market, has promulgated several policies such as increasing sales taxes, deposit rates and interest rates. The effects and success of these policies are yet to be seen.

Singapore real estate companies in Chengdu face great challenges because they are really tiny compared to the local giants in the industry. This truly reflects the Chinese saying “一山还有一山高”; there is truly a bigger and better player in every industry no matter how big one company is.

Contributed By: Participants of Summer Programme 2011, Department of Real Estate, School of Design and Environment, NUS
Internship Experience with Mapletree’s Xi’an VivoCity

The famous Chinese proverb goes: “the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. In a nutshell, my Real Estate Internship Programme (REIP) overseas with Mapletree’s VivoCity in Xi’an, China, was an excellent eye-opening experience for me as it exposed and enabled me to learn the many aspects of retail-mall management from such a big name in the industry in the challenging and dynamic business arena of China.

For this internship in June & July 2011, I was mainly attached to the Retail Operations team and the Asset Management department. It was a challenging yet fulfilling 9 weeks, as I was able both to learn in the organisation and the newly-opened mall, and to make contributions which had a positive impact on the setup.

During my Retail Ops stint, I was involved in the actual mall operations, and was tasked to oversee Level 2 of our mall, which consists of 26 fashion & lifestyle retailers and common areas. Being on-the-ground allowed me to interact with the retail tenants, cleaners and security personnel, and get to learn & apply the details and operating procedures of running a mall, which we don’t usually tangibly observe as retail shoppers. I had to work closely with my colleagues in the Leasing, Property Management (PM), and Development Management (DM) departments. Part of my job scope included tagging along with my Leasing colleagues to negotiate lease agreements (in Chinese!) with the store managers of our anchor tenants, which includes Starbucks, H&M and Golden Harvest Cinema.

The second half of my internship saw me ‘cross-over’ to Asset Management, where rent rolls, Profit & Loss spreadsheets and scenario forecasting are an integral part of life. I also spent this period working on an actual task given by my General Manager, which involved compiling & analysing our monthly utilities bill and usage in order to forecast future utilities usage in the mall. A bonus experience for me was going with my bosses for dinner & drinks with a Chinese government official at an uber-posh restaurant. This opened my eyes to the reality of the business culture in China.

During this whole period, one outstanding challenge that I faced was the need to converse, read, write and type almost everything in Chinese! It was tricky and sometimes frustrating, but this is a fact of this environment, and thankfully I managed to cope with it and adapt, through help from my friends and colleagues as well as my trusty dictionary!

As I reflect back, this 2-month stint with Xi’an VivoCity has been more than just a work internship; it has broadened my perception of the many social and cultural practices of the Chinese people. One of the key lessons that I’ve taken away is actually something that seems like common sense - to be able to give our word to do something and do it well and on time – that’s a virtue that is highly valued and important in the business world, especially in an industry like ours.

As much as I hope that I have contributed positively to the mall and the organisation, I know that I have surpassed my personal objectives for this internship because I have seen & learnt so much about Xi’an, China, and retail management, as well as built many new and blossoming friendships. This is a step that I would definitely encourage my fellow RE students to take. With much anticipation, I look forward to the thousandth mile ahead and beyond.

Wong Jun Yeen Victor
(NUS B.Sc Real Estate Year 4)
October 2011

Building and Estate Management Society (BEMS)

A new chapter has begun for the Building and Estate Management Society (BEMS) as we witness the transition from the 42nd Management Committee to the 43rd Management Committee for the Academic Year 2011/2012. BEMS is delighted to welcome the new batch of Management Committee which consists of 5 members from the 42nd Management Committee and 10 new members from both department of Real Estate (RE) and Project & Facilities Management (PFM).

Prior to the start of this academic year, BEMS organized a new event - BEMS Induction Day (BID). The objective of BID is to engage more RE and PFM students, especially the freshmen, to give them a better idea of what BEMS is all about and what our society can offer them during their time in NUS. We were extremely heartened to have 100 students participate in this event, and we are confident of holding a bigger and better induction camp next year to cater to more students.

This year, with a new organizational structure and new directions set for BEMS, students can expect to see some significant changes to BEMS. The 43rd Management Committee is dedicated to assisting students in bridging networks with the industry partners and realizing their potential as leaders by providing them with the opportunities to propose new events and to head those events when they are approved. In addition, the Management Committee is given the freedom to revamp the BEMS Room into one filled with warmth and coziness.

With regards to upcoming events, students can look forward to the Sentosa Cove Site Visit and a visit to DK Outsource Private Limited which is a quantity surveying firm. Both events are likely to be held in the month of October. In addition, BEMS will be actively involved in the preparation for the Real Estate Career Fair 2012 to be held at the beginning of Semester 2. We look forward to seeing you in our upcoming events.

On behalf of the 43rd Management Committee I would like to wish all students all the best in your studies. Thank you.

Koo Ying Ying
President
43rd Management Committee
Building and Estate Management Society
Email: k.ying@nus.edu.sg

Freshmen and seniors having fun during BEMS Induction Day

The newly revamped BEMS Room and the Sub Committee members
STUDENTS LIFE

Design and Environment Club (DE Club)

Welcome back to the start of the new academic year. As for the freshmen, I hope that you are coping well with your new environment. The holiday saw the successful accomplishment of several Freshmen Orientation Projects and I would like to thank the various Project Directors who have made them a success. It is also my honour to introduce you to the newly formed 22nd Management Committee who has officially taken over from the previous office bearers as of September 2011. The committee hopes to bring more vibrancy into SDE, and most importantly, to serve the student population better this coming academic year.

Here is the list of exciting events and initiatives that the Club has arranged for the year ahead:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>SDE Bash</td>
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<td>SDE Dinner and Dance</td>
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DE Club is currently recruiting Project Directors for the above projects. You can also join the various committees under the Club such as Welfare Committee, Publications and Publicity Committee, Corporate Relations Committee, and Sports Committee. To sign up, simply find us on Facebook or our website at nusdeclub.org for more information.

Thank you.

Tan Peng Chong
President
22nd Management Committee
NUS Students’ Design and Environment Club
BEMA Donates to University Town

8 June 2011 brought together 132 golf enthusiasts from the Building and Estate Management Alumni (BEMA) and industry professionals for a good cause. From this fund-raising golf, $50,000 was donated to support the NUS University Town, which aims to foster interactive and interdisciplinary learning amongst students in a diverse environment.

This is part of our on-going efforts to give back to our Alma mater and the community. Led by President of BEMA, Dr. Teo Ho Pin, we have been supportive of the university work through the setting up of Financial Assistance Fund to help needy students in the faculty, book prizes for performing students and donation to the Shaw Foundation Alumni House Building Fund, to name a few. Finally, BEMA wishes to thank all its members and our supporters for their generous donations.

Written by: Ong Yen Peng & Yvonne Yong

MRE Alumni Members

I am a recent graduate of the full-time Master of Science in Real Estate programme. Now I am back in Europe finishing my studies at the International Real Estate Business School (IREBS) in Regensburg, Germany.

The reasons for me to come to Singapore were to benefit from the excellent education in the field of real estate in NUS and to get to know the ever-growing real estate market in South East Asia. The programme allowed choosing modules in a very flexible way so that I could major in my desired subjects. I was also given the opportunity to attend MBA classes at the NUS Business School. One of the unforgettable highlights was the field trip to Seoul in South Korea which was reported in the April 2011 NewsREAL issue. By working together with other students from all over the world, I achieved my goals in order to become an experienced professional in the real estate business.

Honestly, I enjoyed living in Singapore. Spending time under the tropical sun and the local lifestyle made me happy. It was like a never-ending summer that I could spend in paradise. I can say that I found a second home with a lot of new friends and I will always remember the time that we had together. Thank you NUS for the great opportunities offered to me and the experience that I gained by studying and living in Singapore. I really hope that I can come back to Singapore one day and meet you all again!

Marlene (middle) on a field trip to Seoul during the MRE course
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Prize

Title of Research: A Review of the URA Concept and Price Revenue Tender System

Inspiration For Research:
The inspiration for my research came from my three-month internship with URA Land Sales Department in 2009 when I was a Year 2 Real Estate undergraduate. I was introduced to this unique two-envelope tender system and was extremely intrigued by the rationale, mechanics and effectiveness of it.

In Singapore’s pursuit of becoming a global city of design and architectural excellence, the Government Land Sales (GLS) programme plays the vital role of design review to determine the shape of development on sites that are sold under the programme. However, most of the studies on land sales focus on conventional open tenders and Request-for-Proposal with Fixed Land Price. Few studies deal with the URA Concept and Price Revenue Tender system from a design review perspective.

Thus, a whole set of issues in the URA Concept and Price Revenue Tender system may not have been discovered and documented as it is a relatively new tender system with under-researched policy implementation mechanisms and outcomes. Recognizing the increasing importance of design in planning in Singapore, I felt that it was vital to research what changes are occurring on the ground in order to inform practice more widely. Hence, my research is motivated by a dearth of literature on the two-envelope tender system. It aims to fill the gap by documenting, reviewing and evaluating the URA Concept and Price Revenue Tender system which the state uses to exercise its extensive power to implement key aspects of its planning control within the framework of the free market in Singapore’s planning system.

Summary of Research:
In 2005, the URA adopted a two-envelope tender system where design and price are evaluated in two separate stages. Under this tender system, concept proposals are first evaluated against a set of criteria which the concept proposals must satisfy to be shortlisted for the second stage of tender evaluation based solely on bid price. It is employed only for strategic sites where non-price factors such as design and architecture, business concept and track record are of prime importance. The first stage of concept evaluation, which values a certain aesthetic as worthy enough to be built on the strategic site based solely on expert discretion, illustrates that the Concept and Price Revenue Tender is another form of design review mechanism innovated by URA under the GLS programme.

In-depth interviews conducted with 15 real estate experts and three URA directors, and a survey of 100 Iluma shoppers and Collyer Quay visitors, reveal that design review through the two-envelope tender system makes a valuable contribution to Singapore’s urban, economic and national development. However, the high initial capital costs which possibly marginalise small developers, subjectivity in the concept evaluation stage, evaluation of business concepts, inflexibility in changing development’s design and concept, and the apparent lack of a mechanism to monitor business operations cast doubts on its effectiveness in achieving the best of both worlds in terms of design and concept in accordance with planning objectives with a competitive land price.

Therefore, while it is concluded in the study that there is value in employing the Concept and Price Revenue Tender system, there is a crucial need for it to be refined by engaging the public and incorporating anonymity in the design review process, exploring the possibility of assigning a weightage to concept proposals and price in the tender evaluation stage, and organizing design competitions to achieve better outcomes.

Reflections of Winning the Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Prize (OURP):
The process of writing my first academic research work has been an extremely challenging but rewarding one. I am deeply humbled to be awarded the Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Prize 2011 by NUS. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following people who gave me invaluable assistance to carry this dissertation to fruition.

- My dissertation supervisor, Dr Grace Wong, for her invaluable advice and guidance towards the completion of this dissertation;
- A/P Joseph Ooi for providing me with the contacts of two developers;
- URA Land Sales and Administration Group Director Mr Marc Boey and Deputy Director Ms Lim Hwee Hoon for agreeing to my interviews, as well as Executive Manager, Land Sales Ms Janelle See and Ms Serene Ng for meticulously collating the contact details of tenderers; and
- All the interviewees who participated in my interviews and assisted me in the development of my dissertation in their own unique ways. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

Goh Yu Tian, Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Prize winner
I was among the three NUS representatives selected by the university to attend the U21 Undergraduate Research Conference at Shanghai Fudan University from 13 to 18 July 2011. I presented my final year dissertation research on the URA Concept and Price Revenue Tender System to an international audience of students, faculty members and mentors from the U21 universities at the conference. U21 is an international network of leading research-intensive universities, comprising universities such as NUS, University of Queensland, University of Virginia and University of British Columbia. Its purpose is to facilitate collaboration and cooperation between member universities and create research opportunities for them.

This year’s theme was “Share Your Inspiration” to encourage young undergraduate researchers to share their passion for a research subject with other students from completely different disciplines around the world. As inspiration is the source of creativity, imagination and innovation, the conference did not only provide me with a platform to share my research inspiration and findings on the URA two-envelope tender system, it also gave me the opportunity to network with other passionate young researchers.

The six-day conference in Shanghai was not all work and no play. It started and ended with lots of fun and sight-seeing of the beautiful city with a blend of old and new architecture. Fudan University played a good host in organising activities for us to explore Shanghai to better understand China’s history, heritage and culture. For instance, we watched an impressive and stunning Chinese acrobat show, cruised along The Bund at night, visited Yu Garden and the silk factory, and travelled to Suzhou for more scenery, among other activities.

Participating in the U21 Undergraduate Research Conference was truly an awesome and memorable experience for me. It gave me a fantastic opportunity to share my humble research with a wider audience and witness first-hand China’s rapid urban transformation and development. If you have a passion for research and love to share it with others, be sure to join the 8th U21 Undergraduate Research Conference in Tokyo, Japan next year. I assure you that it will be one of the highlights in your university life!

Written by: Goh Yu Tian

Ms Goh Yu Tian presenting at the U21 Undergraduate Research Conference at Shanghai Fudan University
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

βETA- EDB 50th Anniversary Youth Competition

While most students were busy preparing for their end of semester examinations, a group of Year One Real Estate undergraduates (Caleb Joseph Leow Jia Le, Chua Xing Yi Clarissa, Dexter Sim Zhenyao, John Paul Chua Dong Jie and Tai Wai Kit) came together to form a team to take part in the βETA competition, a youth business case competition that was organized by the Economic Development Board (EDB) to commemorate EDB’s 50th Anniversary. The objective of the βETA competition was to identify breakthrough innovations from the youth, seeking the vision that they have for Singapore in Year 2030. Through this process, EDB aimed to showcase the talents of the youth to inspire the younger generation to see the relevance and importance of economic development so as to strategically plan for industries and/or opportunities that shape a more sustainable nation in the future.

Entrants to the competition were expected to design a video and business plan, displaying their vision for the Year 2030 and addressing issues that fall into one of the three identified themes- Urbanisation and Sustainability, Health and Wellness, and Lifestyle and Entertainment. The five undergraduates, who were collectively known as Team RENUS during the competition, chose to embark on the theme of Urbanisation and Sustainability, putting in relevant context and knowledge that they have learnt from their course of studies.

After much deliberation, Team RENUS decided on Artificial Photosynthesis, a form of alternative clean energy for the future, as their product for the competition. A report of 2500-word business proposal and a 3-minute video were submitted as part of the requirements for the preliminary round, to explain key concepts and the proposal’s potential for scalability. Despite facing intense competition from various outstanding tertiary institutions nationwide, Team RENUS managed to clinch one of the five spots to qualify for the finals of the competition.

One of the highlights of the βETA journey was the golden opportunity for RENUS to be under the mentorship of Rolls-Royce, a well established multi-national corporation. Three mentors of great calibre from Rolls-Royce, the Regional Director of South East Asia, the Sales Marketing Director and the Corporate Development Executive, were assigned to RENUS to help the team hone its ideas and presentation skills. The advice and suggestions of the mentors were invaluable in guiding RENUS in refining its business proposal and presentation details for the Final Round of the competition.

With a common goal in mind, the team worked hard on its business proposal and presentation for the final round of the competition. The presentation of the business case took place on 22nd June 2011 before a panel of outstanding judges that included directors of global firms such as Arup, DP Architects, Rolls-Royce, EDB etc. Even though there was intense pressure during the presentation as the judges persistently questioned the feasibility of the business proposal, Team RENUS seized the opportunity to explain its concepts in greater detail and address all the qualms of the judges.

The hard work of these five Year One undergraduates paid off as they emerged third in the βETA- EDB 50th Anniversary Youth Competition. The team was presented with a trophy, as well as a prize award of $3000. The ETA journey has given the team an experience that cannot be fully described in words. The bitter-sweet learning experience served as a platform for building great friendships among us as we struggled to put together a vision which all members of the team had in sync - capitalizing on urbanization to achieve sustainability.

In addition to Royce-Rolls, the team members would like to thank the Department of Real Estate, which gave them utmost support and assistance during the entire βETA journey. The great insights shared by the mentors from different aspects of various fields provided us a myriad of ideas and inspiration, which will benefit us in our future endeavours.
OTHER UPDATES

- Ms Wei Yuan, research student, won the best paper presented in doctoral session at the recent European Real Estate Society 2011 conference (15th to 18th June) held at the Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Her paper titled, “Managerial Risk-Taking Incentive and Secured Debt: Evidence from REITs” examines the impact of managerial risk-taking attitudes on secured debt.

- Ms Feng Jiayan Dorise, MSc (Real Estate) student, has been selected for the CapitaLand International Scholarship provided by the CapitaLand Group. The scholarship is offered to students from China and Vietnam who have the potential to be part of CapitaLand Group upon their graduation.

- Mr Tan Wai Kit, Year 2 Real Estate student, has been awarded the BCA-Keppel Land Scholarship 2011.

- Mr Cliff Goh, Year 4 Real Estate student, was a member of a team of four (with members from other universities) which emerged as 2nd runner up for the Shell Case Study Challenge 2011 on 4 March at Shell House. The participating teams were given a business case scenario, asked to assume specific roles and work together to formulate a solution.

ALUMNI

Upon graduation from NUS in 1999, Hwee Chin started her career with Jurong Town Corporation where she was involved in leasing, marketing and development of various industrial clusters such as IT, biomedical and chemicals. She was also involved in the initial master-planning and development of the one-north development hub at Buona Vista. Hwee Chin spent two years in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Singapore) from 2004-2006 where she was involved in ministerial and policy work. She also obtained her Masters in Business Administration from the University of Western Australia in 2004.

Hwee Chin subsequently joined GIC Real Estate Pte Ltd in 2007 and is currently serving as Vice-President in the Research and Strategic Planning Department. In addition to undertaking property research in Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia and South Korea, Hwee Chin also undertakes research in real estate asset portfolio allocation and risk management.

“The wide-ranging course modules of the real estate programme in NUS have certainly benefitted my career, allowing me to undertake responsibilities in different areas of the entire real estate development cycle. The well-rounded and vigorous training will definitely put one ahead in this increasingly competitive global real estate industry. Best of all, friendships forged with course mates, lecturers and professors remain intact and valuable years after leaving NUS.”

After graduating from the Department of Real Estate in 2008, Arun joined Lend Lease Investment Management’s graduate programme. At the final round of interviews, he faced very strong competition from a holder of MBA from the University of Melbourne and a Business graduate from Nanyang Technological University. He was confident that he would do well at the final interview because of the knowledge he had gained from the NUS Real Estate degree programme. The final round went very well but he was still slightly nervous about the competition. However his all-round undergraduate experience as a result of his extracurricular activities and the fact that his degree was specialised in real estate won the favour of the interviewers.

At Lend Lease, he was actively involved in fund management as an investment analyst. Arun worked on high profile projects such as 313@Somerset and Setia City Mall in Kuala Lumpur and advised clients of Deutsche Bank on real estate transactions across Asia-Pacific. The knowledge that he gained from his real estate degree has given him a strong foundation to leverage on real estate opportunities and overcome challenges encountered in the industry. In school, he used to wonder how applicable what he was learning in lectures was to jobs in the market but he has found first hand that the modules are very valuable up to this day.

Arun is currently with Savills as Manager, Regional Capital Markets. He recommends commercial real estate projects to funds, institutions, developers and high net-worth individuals regionally and globally. It is a job he has always aspired to have and he intentionally made decisions in his career to gain specific experience that would enable him to achieve career goals that he has set for myself.

“I will always remain grateful to all my lecturers in the Department of Real Estate who have guided me and given me a strong foundation to build upon for the rest of my career.”
PUBLIC LECTURES

The DRE Public Lecture offers an effective means of inviting experts in the local real estate industry and respected individuals from abroad and locally. The talk is open to our real estate undergraduates, postgraduates, research students, members of the real estate industry as well as the public.

Please contact Ms Huiming at rstzh@nus.edu.sg if you are interested in attending the following upcoming talks and/or want to be placed on our mailing list.

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<td>President, REDAS CEO, CapitaLand Resident Singapore</td>
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