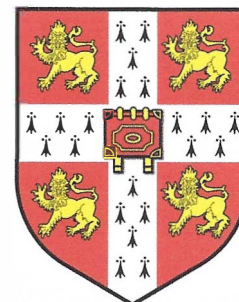


THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY OF SINGAPORE

Patron: H.E. Lee Hsien Loong
Prime Minister of Singapore



24 December 2020

GREETINGS FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

Dear Oxbridge Society Members and Committee,

May I congratulate the incoming Officials and Committee Members 2020-22 elected on 21 December 2020. It is a privilege to be elected and serve the Society as its President, and to have the support of such an outstanding and talented Committee and Office-bearers.

On behalf of the Society, may I thank the Society's out-going Officials and Committee, and in particular, our retiring President, Paul Supramaniam, and Past-President Michael Hwang, for their enormous contributions. May I thank Paul for his kind and encouraging speech, which inspires us to continue his good work and leadership. And I will be grateful and reassured if Michael will continue to advise and guide us through the challenges ahead.

I joined the Oxbridge Committee *circa* 1990, under the Presidency of the late Mr Eddie Barker, badminton Half-Blue from St Catherine's Cambridge, who held many Ministerial portfolios over a 25-year Cabinet career. The Oxbridge Society was famous for *Boat Race Dinners*, *Society Balls*, and *Christmas Concerts*. But even more notable was its tradition of intellectual leadership. The Society's signature events -- *Fireside Chats*, later joined by *Hard Seats*, and *Future Dialogues* -- were known for insightful perspectives, innovative thinking, and contributions to the national discourse. Leading figures were keen to address the Society; a strong vote of confidence in our Society; our integrity, standing, and influence.

I hope to continue our Oxbridge Society traditions of fellowship and intellectual leadership, ***re-invented for the Digital Age***. Here are some early ideas:

- 1) ***To maintain our tradition of intellectual leadership***: How should Singapore respond to the triple threats of technology, global disorder, and climate change? Can the Society find solutions and responses? May I propose the formation of Forums, to explore topics such as Technology, Law, Society, Economy, Governance, and Sustainability. Each Forum can present views at an annual *Oxbridge Conference*. Proceedings from this conference can be published in a *Journal of*



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the Oxford and Cambridge Society of Singapore, which will form a permanent record of the Society's deliberations. *Is this possible?*

- 2) **To re-invent the Oxbridge Society for the Digital Age:** I hope that our tech-savvy Members will lead the migration of the Society online and to a digital platform, enabling the Society to flow seamlessly between the virtual and the physical world. Technology can augment and enhance the Society's reach and network, activities and events, administration and efficiency. An online, virtual platform will enable us to reach each of the 3,000+ alumni in Singapore, and connect to alumni societies in Asia and elsewhere. This platform can host and shelter our activities in times of pandemic. *Can this be done?*
- 3) **To continue the fellowship, friendship and fun:** With the continuing pandemic, we need to find new ways of maintaining social contact and connections, using virtual means and through small groups. I hope the Society's members will step up to the task of championing and hosting small-group events, whether online or offline, for wine, food, art, music, poetry, photography, chess, sports, triathlon and all manner of interests. *Can sufficient champions be found?* In this same vein, we can enhance our Boat Club through linkage with the national rowing association and Singapore National Olympic Council. Champions for rowing, please do step up!

I hope that these early ideas will strike a resonance within our Oxbridge community. I will welcome your input in shaping our Society to better serve members' needs and aspirations. Please feel free to send me your feedback at mchew@arc.com.sg

I do hope that all Members will find, within the Society, the enlightenment, fellowship and friendships of a lifetime. With everyone's support, ideas, hard work and inspiration, we can continue the Oxbridge Society tradition of "*good thinking, good times, and good friends.*"

With warm personal wishes,

Melanie Chew, President