

# CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## Progress Report for Research Centres

Reporting Period: 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

### 1. Name of the Research Centre

Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC)

### 2. Membership and Management Structure

#### 2.1 Centre Director (Name & Department)

(RO will include the list of core members which have already been provided by Centres to this report)

Director: Prof. Mark R. Thompson (Professor of Politics & Acting Head, AIS)

Associate Director: Dr. Thomas Patton (Assistant Professor, AIS)

#### 2.2 Advisors/Consultants

SEARC's International Advisory Committee seeks to recruit outstanding scholars on Southeast Asia. The Committee provides SEARC with general advice about research developments in the region. Its current members include:

1. Prof. Mark Beeson (Winthrop Professor, The University of Western Australia, Australia)
2. Prof. Donald K. Emmerson (Director, Southeast Asia Forum, Stanford University, USA)
3. Prof. Hans-Dieter Evers (Eminent Visiting Professor, Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam; Professor Emeritus of Development Planning, University of Bielefeld; Senior Fellow, Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn)
4. Prof. Vedi Hadiz, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University
5. Prof. Kevin Hewison (Director, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University)
6. Prof. Paul D Hutchcroft (Director, School of International, Political & Strategic

- Studies, The Australian National University, Australia)
7. Prof. Michael Jacobsen, Director of Asia Studies Programme, Copenhagen Business School
  8. Prof. Kanishka Jayasuriya, Director of the Indo-Pacific Research Centre, University of Adelaide
  9. Prof. Pasuk Phongpaichit (Professor of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)
  10. Prof. Garry Rodan (Director, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, Australia)
  11. Prof. Robert Taylor (former Visiting Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies, City University of Hong Kong, now Visiting Senior Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, ISEAS, Singapore)

### 2.3 Steering/Management/Advisory Committee, if established

#### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee evaluates SEARC's longer-term aims, directions, and planning, likely budgetary resources, and projected outcomes. Its current members are listed below.

Chair: Prof. Xiaowei Zang (Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences)

Convener: Prof. Mark R. Thompson (Director, SEARC and Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies)

Prof. William Case (Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies)

#### Management Committee

Selected from its core membership, SEARC's Management Committee is responsible for everyday operations, including the management and allocation of resources for Centre members and projects. Its current members are:

Chair: Prof. Mark R. Thompson (Director, SEARC; Professor of Politics & Acting Head, Department of Asian and International Studies)

Dr. Thomas Patton (Associate Director, SEARC; Assistant Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies)

Prof. William Case (Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies)

Dr. Bill Taylor (Associate Professor, Department of Public and Social Administration)

Dr. Nankyung Choi (Assistant Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies)

**3. Mission statement and objectives**

*(Please highlight changes, if any, since establishment of the Centre)*

The Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC) was inaugurated on 27 February 2001 as a faculty-based research centre within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (now the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, CLASS). In less than a decade and a half, SEARC has established a strong international reputation as an important setting for the study of political, economic, and social issues in contemporary Southeast Asia. While receiving funding in most years from City University of Hong Kong (CityU), SEARC members have actively sought competitive external grant funding, helping to foster a steady output of high-quality publications and working papers. SEARC has also launched an effort, with the assistance of the university, to seek external donors for the centre based on its contacts and networks in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Co-sponsoring events with other leading organizations (such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Institute for Asian Studies and the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN)) or other universities (such as a recent workshop on religious minorities with Cornell University and Northern Illinois has also proved a promising future financial model).

The Centre has also attracted many respected scholars as visitors who, in carrying out research projects and conducting seminars, have further energized the Centre. And in regularly sponsoring international conferences, workshops, public addresses, and roundtables, SEARC has contributed widely to public debate and intellectual life at CityU.

SEARC brings together 27 board members at the CityU and several research affiliates at other Hong Kong universities specializing in various disciplines and working on all ten member countries of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN). SEARC core members are engaged in high impact research projects, often funded by outside grants, which focus on recent political changes in the region, economic and social developments, migration, and environmental issues, among others.

SEARC has particular strengths in politics, sociology, anthropology, international

relations, and history but we also bring together those interested in the economies and the cultures of this region. It holds regular academic seminars open to a CityU audience and a wider public and also organizes larger workshops and conferences as well as hosting major international congresses. SEARC members are often interviewed by the press and contribute opinion pieces on important contemporary issues regarding Southeast Asia. SEARC also regularly hosts visiting fellows from the region and around the world. We also actively involved in establishing research networks with universities in Southeast Asia as well as with other centres focused on Southeast Asia outside the region.

Southeast Asia is one of the most dynamic regions in the world with its rapid economic growth as well as profound political and social changes. It is also a region of fascinating cultural diversity and religious pluralism, a long pre-colonial and diverse colonial history, as well as an area of study for extreme climatic events (particularly typhoons), environmental issues, migration, tourism, and a number of other topics on which CityU researchers focus. SEARC core members research all ten Southeast Asia countries and are drawn from across 13 disciplinary research areas (Anthropology; Economics, Business, and Management; Energy and Environment; Information Technology; International Relations; Languages; Law; Mathematics, Politics; Political Economy; Public Policy; Sociology; and Urban Studies) from nine departments and schools (Applied Social Sciences; Asian and International Studies, Energy and Environment, English, Information Systems; Law; Management; Mathematics, and Public Policy).

Southeast Asia is near to Hong Kong, but far from the minds of too many Hong Kongers. China is ASEAN's largest trading partner (and ASEAN one of China's biggest) while ASEAN is Hong Kong's second biggest partner in trade, with particularly close trading ties to Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar. Hong Kong businesses have major investments in a number of Southeast Asia countries (it is the fifth largest destination for outward investment from Hong Kong). There is a long tradition of Hong Kong's engagement with the region and it is now emerging as a gateway to Southeast Asia's free trade area to be established at the end of next year (as of this writing, negotiations are ongoing for a Hong Kong-ASEAN free trade agreement), with foreign investment (much of it channeled through Hong Kong) now outpacing investment into China. Southeast Asia is a favourite tourist destination for Hong Kongers, and its culinary culture is widely appreciated here. Hong Kong's geographical proximity also means it shares extreme climatic events with the region, particularly typhoons. There is much migration

between Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Many prominent Southeast Asian families and businesses have close ties to Hong Kong, often as Hong Kong residents. Hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asians work in Hong Kong, primarily as domestic helpers but there are also tens of thousands of professionals from the region in the Special Administrative Region. Knowledge of contemporary Southeast Asia is thus essential and of significant importance to economic, societal and community matters in Hong Kong.

The Southeast Asia Research Centre has close ties with the business community, for example through its associate member Bernhard Charnwat Chan, chair of the Hong Kong-Thailand Business Association. Led by SEARC core member Dr. Reuben Mondejar, Department of Management, SEARC has been working closely with the Hong Kong business community to provide greater information about the Hong Kong ASEAN free trade negotiations (most recently at a September 15, 2014 forum held in the Hong Kong Club about the Hong Kong-ASEAN Free Trade Zone at which Dr. Mondejar was a panel speaker and SEARC's activities in promoting the importance of Southeast Asia were highlighted). SEARC is also in discussions with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) about hosting a joint forum on the ongoing ASEAN-FTA negotiations. As a new research area for postgraduate education, SEARC could expand its orientation towards economics, linking up even more closely with the Hong Kong business community about investment opportunities and other business-related matters in the regions.

Through SEARC, CityU already has close ties to the Southeast Asian migrant community (over 300,000 strong) in Hong Kong through its focus on migration issues. SEARC hosted an international conference on migration "[Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships](#)" in December 2014. The previous conference on migration was held in September 2013 "[Asian Migration and the Global Asian Diasporas](#)" co-hosted with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) which brought together leading scholars to discuss Asian migration along many different dimensions.

#### **4. Research activities carried out during the reporting period**

4.1 Collaboration among CityU members in terms of joint projects and publications

4.2 Conferences/seminars organized

- *please list conferences organized, the impact of these conferences and how these*

*contributed to networking at local, regional or international levels*

*- please also include, as appropriate, professional courses or training organized for the industry/business/community which help strengthen the links with these sectors*

SEARC held fifteen (15) research seminars, four (4) workshops, one (1) international conference and one (1) roundtable discussion during the reporting period.

Fifteen (15) research seminars were held:

8 August 2014 (Fri)

Title: *Migration and Family Relationships: The case of “Gay Indonesia” in Paris*

Speaker: Mr. Wisnu Adihartono, (PhD candidate in Sociology, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) – Marseille, France)

6 October 2014 (Mon)

Title: *The 2014 Indonesian Elections and the Politics of Post Post-Suharto: A Class Analysis*

Speaker: Dr. Max Lane (Senior Visiting Fellow, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; Lecturer in Politics and International Studies at Victoria University, Melbourne)

8 October 2014 (Wed)

Title: *Trade Union Engagement in Indonesia’s 2014 Legislative and Presidential Elections*

Speaker: Prof. Michele Ford (Director, Sydney Southeast Asia Centre, The University of Sydney)

6 November 2014 (Thur)

Title: *Democracy and the market economy: Examples of Hong Kong and Singapore*

Speaker: Dr. Chee Soon Juan (Leader of the opposition Singapore Democratic Party (SDP))

10 November 2014 (Mon)

Title: *Urban governance and housing policies in Indonesia: the case of Yogyakarta*

Speaker: Dr. Sonia Roitman (Lecturer in Development Planning, Coordinator of Development Planning (Master of Development Practice), School of Geography, Planning, and Environmental Management, The University of Queensland, Australia)

17 November 2014 (Mon)

Title: [\*What Voters Want: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Thailand\*](#)

Speaker: Dr. Allen Hicken (Associate Professor of Political Science, Research Associate Professor at the Center for Political Studies, and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan)

24 November 2014 (Mon)

Title: [\*In the Shadow of the King: Rural Resistance and Special Rebellion Law in Colonial Burma, 1930-1937\*](#)

Speaker: Dr. Mairii Aung-Thwin (Associate Professor of Myanmar/Southeast Asian History, National University of Singapore)

1 December 2014 (Mon)

Title: [\*Why NIE Fails: Institutional Persistence and Development Dilemmas in Middle-income Countries\*](#)

Speaker: Dr. Veerayooth Kanchoochat (Assistant Professor of Political Economy, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS, Tokyo))

12 January 2015

Title: [\*Between Colonial Legacies and National Policies: The Racialization of Religious Groups and its Impact on Social \(Dis\)unity \(1910s-2010s\)\*](#)

Speaker: Dr. Chiara Formichi (Assistant Professor, Southeast Asian Studies, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University)

26 January 2015

Title: [\*Money politics: patronage, clientelism, and electoral dynamics in Southeast Asia\*](#)

Speaker: Prof. Paul Hutchcroft (Lead Governance Specialist, Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy Philippines; on leave from the Australian National University)

9 February 2015

Title: [\*Good Neighbours: Ethnic and Religious Tolerance in Myanmar\*](#)

Speaker: Prof. Roman David (Professor, Department of Sociology and social policy, Lingnan University, Hong Kong)

2 March 2015

Title: [\*Governing ASEAN's Borders: The National/Regional Nexus of Labour\*](#)

Migration

Speaker: Dr. Kelly Gerard (Assistant Professor, School of Social Sciences, The University of Western Australia and as recipient of a prestigious Endeavour Fellowship a SEARC visitor Semester B 2014/15)

23 March 2015

Title: *Evaluating Competing “Democratic” Discourses: The Impact on Human Rights Protection in Southeast Asia*

Speaker: Dr. James Gomez (Associate Professor, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, Beijing Normal University and Hong Kong Baptist University: United International College, Zhuhai, China)

20 April 2015

Title: *Intimate Colonialism? Family Law and Anti-Asian Racism in Colonial Burma, Southeast Asia, and Beyond*

Speaker: Dr. Chie Ikeya (Associate Professor, Department of History, Rutgers University)

27 April 2015

Title: *Deferential Surrogates and Professional Others: Recruitment and Training of Migrant Care Workers in Taiwan and Japan*

Speaker: Prof. Pei-Chia Lan (Professor of Sociology, National Taiwan University)

Four (4) workshops were held:

20-21 November 2014

*The Politics of Southeast Asia under “Multipolarity”*

Description:

This was an inaugural workshop co-organized by the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS), the Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC), City University of Hong Kong and the Asia Research Centre (ARC), Murdoch University. It brought together leading international scholars to present papers on the political economy of contemporary Asia.

30 January 2015

*International Workshop “Beyond the Developmental State: Neo-liberalism, New Public Management and Contemporary Development in Asia?”*

Description:

This international workshop built off of a very large project that was previously conceived and organized by Prof. Darryl Jarvis and Dr. Toby Carroll at the National University of Singapore. That project involved three workshops and looked specifically at the impact of market-oriented reform measures in Asia, with a focus upon how market reform has variously involved and impacted upon the public and private sectors and civil society.

26 May 2015

[Current Political Developments in Thailand](#)

Description:

This workshop discussed possible scenarios for Thailand's political economics future bearing into mind the impact on society as a whole.

On June 12 & 13

[Religious Minorities in Asia](#)

Description:

This workshop was co-organized with the Southeast Asia Program (SEAP), Cornell University and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Northern Illinois University. Amidst a surge of new conflicts—both political and physical - involving religious minorities across Asia and beyond, the workshop offered a valuable opportunity to discuss empirical research experiences, research methodologies, and findings. The broader aim was to contribute to theoretical as well as policy debates on religious minority rights, religious conflict, and freedom in general.

The papers presented country cases from South, East, and Southeast Asia (including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, China, Japan, Indonesia, and Malaysia) to comparatively investigate broader questions of diversity, accommodation, and integration, multi-culturalism and pluralism.

One conference was held:

International Conference

8-10 December 2014

[4th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network: Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships](#)

The conference was organized by the Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC), City University of Hong Kong, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Netherlands and the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN). It featured

papers and panels that addressed continuities and transformations along routes and borders in Asia, broadly related to the theme “Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships.” About 150 participants attended this conference.

One roundtable discussion was held:

January 29

*Roundtable “Managing Regional Economic Integration: Economic and Political Security in APEC”*

Description:

This roundtable was co-organized with Centre for Governance and Citizenship and Hong Kong APEC Study Centre of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED). Amid a context of uncertain economic developments in Europe and North America and continued economic development in Asia in terms of sustained growth over the last decade and a half, there has been a growing demand for deeper economic and social development among countries in Asia Pacific. This roundtable critically examined what major strategies the Asia Pacific can adopt in promoting more economic and social cooperation.

- 4.3 Collaboration (local, regional and international) and publicity (e.g., Centre prospectus, newsletter and updated web page )

Collaboration (local, regional and international):

20-21 November 2014

*The Politics of Southeast Asia under “Multipolarity”*

Description:

This workshop was co-organized by the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS), the Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC), City University of Hong Kong and the Asia Research Centre (ARC), Murdoch University, Australia. Besides participants from Hong Kong, most participants were from Australia and the United Kingdom.

8-10 December 2014

*4th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network: Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships*

This conference was organized by the Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC),

City University of Hong Kong, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Netherlands and the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN) which brought together scholars from local, regional and international, not to mention those from Southeast Asia.

29 January 2015

*Roundtable “Managing Regional Economic Integration: Economic and Political Security in APEC”*

Description:

This roundtable was co-organized by SEARC, Centre for Governance and Citizenship and Hong Kong APEC Study Centre of the Hong Kong Institute of Education. The speakers were Dr. Alan Bollard (Executive Director, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat (Singapore)), Prof. Mark Beeson (Professor of Political Science and International Politics, School of Social Sciences, The University of Western Australia, Professor Richard Stubbs (Professor of McMaster University, Montreal, Canada, and Dr. Simon Shen (Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Science, The Chinese University of Hong Kong). The moderator was Prof. Stephen Cheung (President, The Hong Kong Institute of Education; Chairman, The Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation).

30 January 2015

*International Workshop “Beyond the Developmental State: Neo-liberalism, New Public Management and Contemporary Development in Asia?”*

Description:

This international workshop was co-organized by SEARC and the HKIED which brought together from local, regional and international scholars. Prof Richard Stubbs (York University, Toronto), Prof Mark Beeson (Murdoch University, Asia Research Centre, Western Australia), Dr Shigeo Hayashi (Independent Researcher, London, United Kingdom), Dr Elizabeth Thurbon (University of New South Wales, Australia), Dr Wu Xun (LKY School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore), Dr Jamie Davidson (Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, Singapore), Prof M Ramesh (LKY School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore), Prof Anthony Welch (Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney), Prof Darryl Jarvis (Hong Kong APEC Study Centre and Department of Asian and Policy Studies, HKIED), Dr Toby Carroll (Department of Asian and International Studies, CityU), Prof Paul Cammack (Department of Asian and International Studies, CityU), Dr Jonathan London (Department of Asian and International Studies, CityU), Prof Joshua Mok (Hong

Kong APEC Study Centre and Department of Asian and Policy Studies, HKIEd), Prof Richard Walker (Department of Public Policy, CityU), Dr Scott Valentine (Department of Public Policy, CityU), Dr Lee Siu-yau (Department of Asian and Policy Studies, HKIEd), and Prof Mark R Thompson (SEARC and Department of Asian and International Studies, CityU).

26 May 2015

*Current Political Developments in Thailand*

Description:

SEARC was proud to have Dr. Charnvit Kasetsiri (Renowned Thai historian, Rector of Thammasat University (1994–95), Thailand, prior to his retirement), Dr. Pavin Chachavalpongpun (Associate Professor, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan), Dr. Prajak Kongkirati (Lecturer, Faculty of Political Science; Head of Southeast Asian Studies Center (CSEAS), Thammasat University, Thailand), Dr. James Gomez (Program Director and Associate Professor, International Journalism, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, United International College, Beijing Normal University & Hong Kong Baptist University, Zhuhai, China), Mr. Anan Krudphet, (Graduate student, ASEAN Studies Programme, Pridi Banomyong International College, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand). SEARC's Prof. Mark R. Thompson and Dr. Federico Ferrara as well as research student Ms Ewelina Karas attended this workshop.

On June 12 & 13

*Religious Minorities in Asia*

Description:

This workshop was co-organized with the Southeast Asia Program (SEAP), Cornell University and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Northern Illinois University. SEARC invited Prof. John Sidel (Sir Patrick Gillam Professor of International and Comparative Politics, London School of Economics and Political Science), Dr. Chiara Formichi (Assistant Professor, Southeast Asian Studies, Cornell University), Dr. Matthew Nelson (Reader in Politics, Dept. of Politics and International Studies, SOAS), Dr. Kikue Hamayotsu (Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Northern Illinois University), Prof. Yongjia Liang (Professor, College of Humanities and Development Studies, China Agricultural University), Prof. Mark Mullins (Professor, Asian Studies, The University of Auckland, New Zealand), Dr. Meera Ashar (Lecturer, School of Culture, History & Language, Australian National University College of Asia and the Pacific), Dyan A.H. Shah (University of Malaya Law Faculty/KITLV) and Emiko Stock (PhD candidate,

Anthropology Department, Cornell University). SEARC associate director, Dr. Thomas Patton (Assistant Professor, AIS) also participated this workshop and was one of the workshop's coordinators.

## Publicity

The [SEARC website](#) has been updated and revitalized and much of the information provided there about SEARC members and activities is also available on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Searc.CityU>. SEARC seminars were videotaped and were posted on the SEARC website which also helped to document SEARC activities and make them available to the wider public and academic community. An example of such a research seminar video is <https://youtu.be/AkokzXuFJqk>. In order to keep the public informed of SEARC events and news, there is a section on the Centre's website for upcoming events and for news related to SEARC in which we post media appearances of SEARC board members, calls for papers, as well as news that is of interest to academia as well as to those who are interested in knowing more about Southeast Asia. [http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/Events\\_News.aspx](http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/Events_News.aspx).

### 4.4 Applied work undertaken

(patents, consultancy work and professional collaboration, etc.)

SEARC Director, Prof. Thompson is the member of the following journal editorial boards: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, *Southeast Asia-European Journal of Law and Governance*, *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies and Philippine Political Science Journal (PPSJ)*. Prof. Thompson is the past president (2013-14) of the Asian Political and International Studies Association (APISA), the only association dedicated to the study of political science and international studies issues across Asia in Asia which holds annual Congresses (including one at CityU in 2012) in which hundreds of (often young) academics, many from developing countries, attended. He is the co-editor Routledge/City University of Hong Kong Southeast Asia Series since 2011. He is also the member of the Academic Advisory Board (Southeast Asia), German Academy of Sciences (DGA) since 2012.

Prof. Thompson and Dr. Mondejar began collaborating closely with the Hong Kong Trade and Development Council (HKTDC), in particular with Nicholas Kwan (Director of Research) on the issue of Hong Kong's Free Trade Agreement negotiations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Several meetings were held with a workshop on this issue planned for the fall of 2015. In addition, with the strong support of the HKTDC, Prof. Thompson (PI) and Dr.

Mondejar (co-PI) submitted a Public Policy Research Grant proposal to the Central Policy Unit (CPU) in May 2015 (with the outcome pending as of this writing). Furthermore, Thompson and Mondejar worked together closely with Bernard Chan, a leading Hong Kong politician and businessman, the grandson of the Sino-Thai founder of the Bangkok member, and a member of the Executive Council (former member of the Legislative Council (Legco)), a deputy to the National People's Congress of the PRC and the chair of several government advisory bodies. As chair of the Hong Kong-Thailand Business Council, he has worked closely with Thompson and Mondejar on the issue of HK-ASEAN FTA (with Dr Mondejar invited to speak at a major even of the Hong Kong-Thailand Business council: "ASEAN – Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement: Challenges and Opportunities " on 15 September 2014).

Dr. Johnathan London participated in the United Nations Development Program, Project on Governance of Essential Services in Vietnam in January 2014. He is also working as a consultant on World Bank reports about Vietnam. Dr London also provides editorial services for *Social Sciences and Medicine*, *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* and *The Journal of Contemporary Asia*.

Dr. Yuk Wah Chan has continued her close collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the leading international organization concerned with migration globally. After organizing a conference in collaboration with IOM in 6-7 September 2013 at CityU attended by more than 70 leading scholars to discuss Asian migration along many different dimensions with the keynote by Ambassador William Swing (IOM Director General). Dr Chan has continued to work closely with IOM with future joint events planned in the near future.

Prof. William Case, SEARC former director is an editorial board member of *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* (De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines), *Philippine Political Science Journal* (PPSJ), (Philippines Political Science Association), *Journal of Asian Politics and History* (JAPH), (Asian Politics and History Association/Clarewood Asia Foundation). He is also the Advisory board member, *East Asia: An International Quarterly* (Springer/University of Durham). He is the elected President of Asian Politics and History Association (Asian Politics and History Association/Clarewood Asia Foundation), 2012-13. He has been the co-editor, Routledge/City University of Hong Kong Southeast Asian Series (London: Routledge) since 2006. He is member of the following association: Association of

Asian Studies (AAS), Comparative Democratization Section Best Book Prize Committee, American Political Science Association, and American Political Science Association (APSA). Prof Case is the referee of the *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Policy*, *Philippine Political Science Journal* and *Pacific Review*. He is also the reader of Palgrave Macmillan, East Asia, and International Political Science Review.

Dr. Toby Carroll is the Conceiver and Co-editor (with Darryl Jarvis and M. Ramesh) of the Palgrave book series, *Studies in the Political economy of Public Policy*. He is the editor of *Asian Studies Review* (political economy and international politics), published by Taylor and Francis, listed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index. He was also the Conceiver and lead researcher for the New Approaches to Building Markets in Asia research project. The project involved two grants, three workshops and around 50 academics from around the globe. It included a working paper series (approximately 50 papers), 4 special issues of journals (two published, a third accepted, a fourth under contract) and 1 edited volume (in press). The project also included a seminar series.

An important part of applied work at SEARC is knowledge transfer through media outreach by SEARC board members. We are the only centre for the study of Southeast Asia in Hong Kong and thus the only group of academics able to comment on the issues related to this region of concern to the Hong Kong as well as to international media who contact us here in Hong Kong. Our ability to comment authoritatively on these issues is of great benefit to the Hong Kong community (such as the Manila hostage crisis, the missing Malaysia Airlines jet, political turmoil in Thailand, elections in Indonesia, regime crackdown and leadership conflict in Vietnam).

Below is a list of SEARC board members' media outreach during the reporting period:

Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC board member, appeared on [Reuters|Video: Dateline Asia](#) on escalating tensions in maritime Southeast Asia on 22 April 2015.

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Prof. Mark R. Thompson, SEARC director, was cited in the article “Why Japan has been crazy about the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and One Belt One Road (OBOR)” in [www.jrj.com](#) (the leading provider of financial data

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and information in China, and a major Chinese finance portal) on 9 April 2015.

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Dr. Jonathan London, assistant professor at AIS/board member of SEARC, was quoted in story featured on front page of The Financial Times on March 27, 2015 in “[Hanoi residents mobilize to save city’s cherished trees.](#)”

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Prof. William Case, board member and former SEARC director, recently published an article in the [Nottingham’s China Policy Institute Blog](#) entitled “[Hong Kong’s Window on China, Mahathir, and Democratic Change](#)”.

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Prof. Mark R. Thompson, SEARC director, and Dr. Stephan Ortmann, SEARC board member, were quoted in the New York Times' sinosphere blog about Singapore's influence on China in the context of Lee Kuan Yew’s death earlier that week. Please click [here](#) to read the blog entry.

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Dr. Jonathan London, assistant professor at AIS/board member of SEARC, wrote an essay, “[Getting Rights Right at Vietnam’s Crossroads](#)“, featured by US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies on 19 March 2015.

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Prof. William Case, former SEARC Director, now professor at AIS/board member of SEARC, was interviewed by RTHK programme “Backchat” about the [legacy of Lee Kuan-yew](#) on 2 March 2015.

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Dr Jonathan London, assistant professor at AIS/board member of SEARC, was quoted in an article entitled “[On the Beach where US Troops Landed 50 Years Ago, a New Vietnam Flourishes](#)“ in the *Guardian* on 28 February 2015.

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Dr. Reuben Mondejar, SEARC board member, wrote an op-ed piece “[China's superiority Complex must be Carefully Managed](#)“, in the *South China Morning Post* on 26 February 2015. He said China is increasingly showing signs of the imperiousness it flaunted in its dealings with outsiders in the past.

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Dr. Jonathan London, assistant professor at AIS/board member of SEARC, was quoted in an article entitled “[Punch Lines and Laughs as TV Show in Vietnam Mocks Government Policy](#)“ on satire in Vietnam in the prestigious *New York Times* newspaper on February 20, 2015.

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Dr. Jonathan London, assistant professor at AIS/board member of SEARC, was quoted in an article entitled “[Vietnam’s ‘King of Danang’ Nguyen Ba Thanh](#)”

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[Mourned by All](#)“ in the *South China Morning Post* on 16 February 2015.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC board member, wrote an article for the Asia Sentinel titled “[Vietnam: Open Secrets on the Road to Succession](#)” on 30 January 2015.

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Dr. Reuben Mondejar, SEARC core member, and his research assistant Mr. Rafael Nite wrote an op-ed piece, “[Hong Kong-Asean Trade Pact will Open Doors to Richer, Deeper Relations](#)”, in the *South China Morning Post* on 20 January 2015.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC core member, wrote a featured commentary for the Washington-based think tank, Center for Strategic and International Studies, on the politics of leadership succession in Vietnam on 20 January 2015. Please click [here](#) for the commentary.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC board member, was interviewed by BBC Vietnam service via Google hangouts with two noted Vietnamese commentators on 18 January 2015 to Vietnam - China relations and the implications and impacts of developments at the 10th Plenum of the Communist Party of Vietnam’ 11th Party Congress. Please click [here](#) for the YouTube video.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC board member, was recently cited in an article “[Can Vietnam have its Cake and Eat It?](#)” in the *South China Morning Post* on 17 January 2015.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC board member, was recently quoted in an article “[Thai PM to Meet Kindred Spirit on Myanmar Trip](#)”, in the *Financial Times* on 8 October 2014.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC board member, appeared on 7 October 2014 on [Channel NewsAsia](#) discussing the US partial lifting of arm sales to Vietnam.

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Prof Mark R Thompson, SEARC Director, published a piece in the East Asia Forum, “[Aquino’s Reformism Hits a Dead End](#)”, about the problems of governance reforms under the Aquino administration in the Philippines on 30 September 2014.

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Prof. William Case, SEARC core member, was quoted in today's SCMP in an

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article, "[Many Asian Leaders are Currently the Scions of Political Dynasties](#), about political dynasties on 9 September 2014.

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Dr. Jonathan London, SEARC core member, was interviewed by [CNBC](#) on 26 August 2014. He said the visit of a Vietnamese high-ranking official might repair bilateral ties, but larger territorial issues will remain.

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Prof. Mark R. Thompson, SEARC director, was quoted in the [China Daily Asia](#) newspaper on August 1 about the recent presidential election in Indonesia.

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## **5. Critical self-evaluation of the work of the Centre during the reporting period**

### **5.1 Summary of achievements/esteem measures**

*(Please give an account of the achievements/esteem measures of the Centre during the reporting period, including evidence of the added value of the Centre and highlight the three top achievements/esteem measures with emphasis on their impact)*

We see ourselves as a meeting place for scholars whose research is focused on Southeast Asia and for those wishing to learn more about it. SEARC hosts top internationally recognized scholars as seminar speakers, workshop and conference participants, and as visitors at the centre. We reach out to the larger community of Southeast Asians in Hong Kong and to people in Hong Kong with events and information about this region. SEARC has particular strengths in politics, sociology, anthropology, international relations, and history but we also bring together those interested in the economies and cultures of this region. We hold regular academic seminars open to a CityU audience and the wider public. We also organize larger workshops and conferences as well as hosting major international congresses.

During the reporting period, SEARC held fifteen (15) research seminars, four (4) workshops, one (1) international conference and one (1) roundtable discussion.

### **5.2 Self-evaluation**

*(Please provide an evaluation of the Centre's work with respect to e.g. meeting Centre objectives, effort in identifying/targeting Government or other sizable external funding initiatives, and in mapping/teaming faculties to areas of the identified initiatives to prepare for bidding these funds, collaboration among members/research teams, added value of Centre support, impact of Centre's work, uniqueness, competitive edge, visibility and*

reputation, ability to attract people and resource etc.)

SEARC is constantly thinking of ways to enhance its already substantial research output and its ability to obtain grants. SEARC's 27 board members have awarded 19 grants in 2014-15. For "Grants of SEARC board members", please see below.

**Prof. Johnny Chung-leung CHAN 陳仲良教授 (SEE)**

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*More research-related*

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Demonstration of the Potential Application of TEC (Tidal Energy Converter) in Hong Kong</a> Grant Type Contract Research-RO (ConRes-RO)
2.	<a href="#">Tropical Cyclone Size: Climatology, Physics and Prediction</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)

**Dr. Yanto CHANDRA (POL)**

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Change Making Rhetoric for Public Benefit: How For-Profit Social Enterprises Pursue Multiple Goals and Redefine Success</a> Grant Type CityU Start-up Grant for New Faculty (StUp)

**Prof. Felipe CUCKER (MA)**

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Art and Mathematics</a> Grant Type CityU Research Project – Infrastructure Support from Central (APRC)
2.	<a href="#">A Theory of Complexity, Condition, and Round-off</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)

**Dr. Federico FERRARA** (AIS)

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">The Rise and Decline of Thailand's Royalist Order: A Study in the (De-)Legitimation of Power</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)

**Prof. Chee Wah LIM** 林志華教授 (ACE)

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Modeling, Experimentation and Bioengineering Applications of Carbon Nanotube Focused and Intensified Ultrasound</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)
2.	<a href="#">Theory and Applications of CNT Thin Film Thermo-acoustic Transducer</a> Grant Type CityU Strategic Research Grant for unfunded GRF/ECS (SRG-Fd)

**Dr. Jane Elizabeth Mary LOCKWOOD (EN)**

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Diagnostic English Language Tracking Assessment (DELTA) Writing Project</a> Grant Type CityU Teaching Development Grant (TDG(CityU))

**Dr. Rebecca Yoke Chan ONG (SLW)**

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Mobile-bullying: Whose Problem is it?</a> Grant Type CityU Strategic Research Grant for unfunded GRF/ECS (SRG-Fd)

**Dr. Thomas Nathan PATTON (AIS)**

*Email : [tpatton@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:tpatton@cityu.edu.hk)*

*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Muslim Voices in Buddhist Myanmar: A Comparative Study of Indo and Sino-Burmese Islam</a> Grant Type Early Career Scheme (ECS)

**Dr. Poomintr SOOKSRIPAISARNKIT (SLW)**

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Insurance Law in Hong Kong - Adequate Protection for Consumers? - Critical</a>

<a href="#">Evaluation and Suggestions for Reform</a>	
Grant Type	CityU Strategic Research Grant for unfunded GRF/ECS (SRG-Fd)

**Dr. Bill W K TAYLOR** 戴威廉博士 (POL)

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List of Projects involved in as *Principal Investigator*

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Case Studies in Informal Collective Labour Disputes Resolution in Shenzhen: Emergence of Real Collective Bargaining?</a>
	Grant Type CityU Strategic Research Grant (SRG)
2.	<a href="#">Chinese Direct Investment: A Critical Review</a>
	Grant Type CityU Strategic Research Grant for unfunded GRF/ECS (SRG-Fd)

**Dr. Nicholas David THOMAS** 唐寧思 (AIS)

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List of Projects involved in as *Principal Investigator*

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Asian Diseases in International Affairs</a>
	Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)

**Prof. Mark Richard THOMPSON** (AIS)

Email : [mark.thompson@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:mark.thompson@cityu.edu.hk)

*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Teaching Authoritarian Developmentalism: The “Singapore Model”</a> Grant Type CityU Strategic Research Grant for unfunded GRF/ECS (SRG-Fd)
2.	<a href="#">Democracy and its Discontents in Southeast Asia</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF) With Prof. William Case as Co-Principal Investigator

**Dr. Bradley Rowland WILLIAMS** (AIS)

*Email : [bwilliam@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:bwilliam@cityu.edu.hk)*

*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Anatomy of a "Friendly Spy": Japan and Intra-alliance Intelligence with the United States</a> Grant Type Early Career Scheme (ECS)

**Prof. Ngai-ming YIP** 葉毅明教授 (POL)

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Neighbourhood in an Increasingly Mobile Society</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)

**Dr. Wei Thoo YUE** (IS)

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*List of Projects involved in as **Principal Investigator***

	Project Title
1.	<a href="#">Cyber-attacks and IT Innovations in the Age of Insecurity</a> Grant Type RGC General Research Fund (GRF)
2.	<a href="#">The Age of Insecurity: The Impact of Information Security Attacks on Market Returns</a> Grant Type CityU Strategic Research Grant for unfunded GRF/ECS (SRG-Fd)

SEARC hosts numerous seminars, workshops, and conferences, and places much emphasis on international networking, community outreach, and knowledge transfer.

SEARC has worked with non-government organizations, government institutions, and businesses, and welcomes further engagement with any such groups with an interest in Southeast Asia. We help provide links to academics who are capable of providing policy and other advice as well as organizing events and conferences that may be of interest to NGOs, business, and governments.

SEARC is well positioned to further enhance its reputation as a leader in the study of Southeast Asia worldwide. At the same time, SEARC will continue to seek competitive external grants (as of this writing several GRF grant applications by SEARC board members are pending approval and the SEARC director has submitted a PPR grant application to the Hong Kong government), to collaborate with major international organizations (such as the IOM with which SEARC works closely). SEARC also works closely with Hong Kong-based organizations (such as the ten Southeast Asian consulates, advocacy groups, and organizations such as the Asia Society that also focused on the region). Receiving university funding for most of its activities, SEARC has also launched an effort, with the assistance of the university, to seek external donors for the Centre based on its contacts and networks in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. SEARC's strong global reputation is an important contribution to CityU's commitment to internationalization. This is of particular importance at this juncture when the centre is expanding and reaching out – regular international visitors and short-term visiting fellows are and will continue to be a key component of further raising the profile of the Centre, as discussed more below.

In the next few years SEARC will continue in this direction of research excellence, internationalization and collaboration. In the immediate future SEARC will focus on three main areas: increased grant acquisition (with a special emphasis on policy-oriented external funding) and top quality research output; hosting topflight international academics to give seminars, attend workshops and major international conferences as well as coming to SEARC as visitors; and collaboration with other leading Southeast Asia centres and related centres in CLASS as well as major international organizations such as the IOM. Thus, SEARC is well positioned to enhance its reputation as a globally recognized centre for the study of Southeast Asia, making it a major asset to CLASS and CityU generally.

In its effort to improve further its competitiveness among the top universities in Hong Kong and the world, the CityU benefits not just from strengthening academic areas it shares in common with other institutions of higher education in Hong Kong but also in further fields of interdisciplinary research excellence that distinguish it from other universities in the Special Administrative Region. CityU has the only major concentration of research experts devoted to the study of contemporary Southeast Asia in Hong Kong who are organized into the Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC). SEARC has 27 board members drawn from across 13 different disciplinary research areas in nine departments and schools at CityU, as well as eight research affiliates of scholars working on Southeast Asia at other Hong Kong universities, five community leader associate members and an international advisory committee of distinguished academics working on the region from leading universities around the world. This is a fortuitous moment to put more emphasis on Southeast Asia as an interdisciplinary research field for research postgraduate education at City University because it comes at a time when the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) nears the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) as an integrated economic and free trade area at the end of 2015 which will create the second largest market in the world for which Hong Kong is increasingly serving as a gateway.

In terms of research output, the number of high profile conferences and workshops held, and the breadth of coverage of the region, SEARC compares favourably with other leading research centres for the study of contemporary Southeast Asia in the world. Benchmarked in per capita terms against other major Southeast Asian research centres in the world (at Cornell University, US; the school of Oriental and African

Studies, UK; the University of Sydney, and the University of Kyoto), SEARC performs well in terms of grants and publications (particularly in indexed journals such as SSCI), number of research activities (seminars, workshops, and conferences), as well as community service (measured by events aimed at the larger community and media outreach). SEARC, in consultation with the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, will be invited to join the Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) within the coming academic year. This is an important initiative for the networking of Southeast Asian centres in Asia which will encourage greater research collaboration as well as strengthen the standing of Southeast Asian studies in the Asian region.

It has recently established close contacts with Cornell University (the best-known Southeast Asia centre in the world from which several SEARC members are holders of PhDs from its PhD programme and SEARC's former associate director, Dr. Chiara Formichi, has just taken a position at Cornell; SEARC's associate director, Dr. Thomas Patton, is a recent graduate of Cornell), Northern Illinois University, the School of Oriental and Africa Studies (SOAS), University of London, the University of Sydney, Gadjah Mada University (generally considered one of Indonesia's two best universities), Thammasat University (one of Thailand's two best known universities), the University of Brunei Darrusalam, and the University of Pausau in Germany. SEARC also has close contacts with leading educational institutions in all ten Southeast Asia countries as well as ties with major centres for Southeast Asia in Australia, Europe, Singapore, and the United States. SEARC benchmarks its research output and international competitiveness with leading Southeast Asia centres such as those at the Australian National University and the National University of Singapore as well as Cornell, Kyoto, SOAS, and Sydney as mentioned above.

Southeast Asia is one of the most dynamic regions in the world with its rapid economic growth as well as profound political and social changes. It is also a region of fascinating cultural diversity and religious pluralism, a long pre-colonial and diverse colonial history, as well as an area of study for extreme climatic events (particularly typhoons), environmental issues, migration, tourism, and a number of other topics on which City University researchers focus. SEARC is ideally situated to coordinate interdisciplinary postgraduate research on this important region at CityU.

In short, SEARC appears to have fulfilled its mission of establishing and maintaining its international reputation as a centre of excellence in academic and applied studies of contemporary Southeast Asia. Much attention is given to theoretical and

cross-disciplinary analysis, through which the intention of addressing real-world challenges in national political systems, economic development, workplace inequalities, gender relations, disaster management, environmental concerns, and international relations. SEARC has done well in attracting competitive external grant funding, collaborating internationally with other leading institutions for the study of Southeast Asia, and conducting disciplinary-based and cross-disciplinary research in compelling academic debates in the social sciences, generating high-quality research publications, and reaching the public through open community events and media engagement.

## **6. Planned activities for 2015-16**

### *Research activities*

SEARC will hold regular seminars in Semester A of 2015/16. The following speakers have been invited to give research seminars:

Dr. Samson Lim (Assistant Professor, Singapore University of Technology and Design); Dr. Xiaojiang Yu (Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Hong Kong Baptist University); Dr. Michael Nelson (Senior Research Fellow, German-Southeast Asian Center of Excellence for Public Policy and Good Governance); Dr. Cherion George (Associate Professor, Department of Journalism, Hong Kong Baptist University); Mr. Benny Subianto (political consultant, businessman, and major scholar of Indonesia with a long publication list and a Cornell PhD); and Prof. Teresa Tadem (Professor of Political Science, University of the Philippines, Diliman).

SEARC has been hosting on average about 10-12 research seminars each academic year since 2011 and this will continue in the foreseeable future, funding permitting. This allows SEARC to bring in some of the most influential scholars on Southeast Asia to discuss their work with SEARC board members and others in CityU and beyond interested in their research. (Though the status of SEARC affiliates, SEARC has reached out to a number of prominent academics at other Hong Kong university, prominent journalists, influential businesspeople and politicians, and leading civil society activists who regularly attend SEARC seminars which are also all filmed and upload on YouTube so they may viewed by an even wider audience). It will invite, through its extensive network, speakers from around the world who are doing cutting edge research on Southeast Asia in the fields of Politics, Political Economy, Public Policy, Sociology, International Relations, Urban Studies, Anthropology, Economics,

Business, Management, Energy and Environment; Information Technology, Languages and Law.

In addition SEARC will continue to host major academic workshops and conferences. Over the past four years SEARC has hosted major conferences such as the [6th Asian Political and International Studies Association \(APISA\) Congress 2012](#) and two conferences on migration, [Asian Migration and the Global Asian Diasporas](#) and [Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships](#). It also recently hosted a workshop on [“Current political developments in Thailand”](#) in which several prominent Thai scholars attended and a workshop on [“Religious minorities in Asia”](#) attended by prominent academics from Cornell University, Northern Illinois University, the London School of Economics (LSE), the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), among others. SEARC will host a section on Southeast Asia studies at the prestigious International Studies Association (ISA) meeting to be held at CityU in the summer of 2016. It will also host a major international workshop in Myanmar/Burma, which follows up on the path breaking workshops it held on that country’s political opening in 2012. In addition, a workshop is planned about political stability and instability in Southeast Asia’s electoral democracies as well as about China and the “Singapore model”. The workshop will call for leading experts both on the Singapore model and China’s interest to gather further expert opinions. SEARC also plans to host another major migration conference, probably in late 2016, again in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration.

#### *Grant acquisition and research output*

SEARC board members have several GRF grant applications pending as of this writing. In addition, the SEARC director, as PI and SEARC board member, Dr Rueben Mondejar of the School of Business recently submitted a grant proposal “Hong Kong-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and the prospects for developing the scale and scope of trade and investment relations between Hong Kong and ASEAN economies”, to the Hong Kong Government Central Policy Unit’s Public Policy Research Funding Scheme. This application represents a major shift in direction towards economic policy for SEARC which had previously focused more on political and social issues related to Southeast Asia. SEARC also plans to host a workshop in cooperation with the HKTDC with which it is already working closely (and has held several meetings about this research proposal on the HK-ASEAN FTA negotiations). SEARC is also working closely with Bernard Charnwat Chan, a prominent Hong Kong businessman and politician, a member of the Hong Kong Executive Council, on this issue in his

capacity as Chair of the Hong Kong-Thailand Business Council.

Dr. Thomas Patton, SEARC associate director, along with colleagues at Whittier College in the USA, has been awarded a Henry Luce Foundation Grant to develop projects and organize conferences related to the environment in Southeast Asia. Through SEARC, Dr. Patton plans to organize activities that will benefit students in Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and the US. This may entail the crafting and honing of environmentally oriented courses and other pathways for student learning across the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. The goal of the project is to enhance and strengthen capacity across key areas of curriculum to teach about Asia and the environment.

SEARC will also continue its working paper series which remains a major source of cutting edge information about Southeast Asia and raises the Centre's profile worldwide. These are available on the SEARC website <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/> and on regular updates on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Searc.CityU>. SEARC has 24 videos of SEARC seminars which are all uploaded on YouTube and linked to SEARC website which helped to document SEARC activities and make them available to the wider public and academic community.

#### *Networking and collaboration*

SEARC will also continue to enhance its network with its aim to cement its status as a hub of Southeast Asian studies (not in but near Southeast Asia). SEARC signed MoUs with the following leading centres for the studies of Southeast Asia: Southeast Asia Program (SEAP), Cornell University; Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University; Area Study Centre, Far East & Southeast Asia, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan; Asia Research Centre (ARC), Murdoch University; The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (SSEAC), The University of Sydney; ASEAN Studies Center, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia; Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei; Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University, Thailand and Centre of South East Asian Studies, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, United Kingdom. SEARC also will continue to strengthen its ties with major Southeast Asian centers in mainland China, particularly at Xiamen University, Sun Yat Sen University and the University of Beijing.

Prof. Thompson has organized a panel at the prestigious European Association for

Southeast Asian Studies in Vienna, 11-15 August, entitled “Perilous Presidentialism in Southeast Asia?”

Panel description: Presidentialism has Long had a Bad Name in the Political Science Literature.

Commonly understood as a regime form in which a chief executive is independent of the legislature, critics argue it is inherently unstable. Following the insights of Juan Linz, they suggest that because the president and legislature are elected separately competing claims to legitimacy are likely to arise as both can point to popular support through elections. Given that there are usually few institutions empowered to resolve disputes between president and legislature except an often politicized court system, presidential systems are more likely to break down.

Recent empirical studies however suggest that the situation is more complicated, as parliamentary systems (without a separately elected and independent executive) are just, if not sometimes even more likely to become unstable due to elite competition. In Southeast Asia, this point seems particularly valid given the instability of Thai parliamentary democracy over the last decade. Yet recent events in Indonesia, in which a newly elected president Joko Widodo and a hostile parliament suggest that the presidentialism has become perilous in Southeast Asia as well. The panel also looked at the cases of the Philippines, Myanmar and East Timor.

Prof. Thompson has attended the EuroSEAS conference regularly since the organization was founded in the early 1990s. SEARC members are now active participants in the organization and involved in governance. Prof. Thompson, and SEARC board member William C Case, who will also attend the conference, presenting a paper on presidentialism in Southeast Asia in comparative perspective, aim to increase EuroSEAS ties at the conference. Thompson. Thompson will also discuss a proposal from the director of University of Naples “L’Orientale” for signing a MoU with SEARC. Expanding SEARC’s ties with European universities is potentially an important area for both SEARC networking and research in the near future. Several SEARC board members are either from and/or have worked in Europe previously and have been active in EuroSEAS. By strengthening SEARC’s ties with EuroSEAS and with European Universities with Southeast Asia study programmes, SEARC also opens the potential for joint grant applications through the European Union (EU) or individual national government research grants (such as the German Research Fund, DFG).

A major part of SEARC networking and collaboration involves continued engagement with the community. Through the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS) which has applied for funding for a major East Asian Cultural Festival, SEARC hopes to work within this larger East Asian framework to replicate some of the successes of its Southeast Asian Cultural Festival three years ago which involved a major film festival, inviting major writers from Southeast Asia as well as a food festival and dance and drama events that were attended by several thousand Hong Kong students and interested members of the community.

Such networking may also prove useful to SEARC in financial terms in the near future. Receiving university funding for most of its activities, SEARC has also launched an effort, with the assistance of the university, to seek external donors for the centre based on its contacts and networks in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Co-sponsoring events with other leading organizations (such as the IOM) or with other universities (such as a recent workshop on religious minorities with Cornell University and Northern Illinois University) has also proved a promising future financial model.

SEARC will also continue to engage in knowledge transfer with SEARC members continuing to write for or appear in major media outlets such as *Reuters*, the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *South China Morning Post*, *Asia Sentinel*, and [www.jrj.com](http://www.jrj.com) (the leading provider of financial data and information in China, and a major Chinese finance portal).

## **7. Future plans and long-term strategic development strategy**

*(Please include plans to generate income for sustaining Centre activities and plans to become financially independent for Centres which are more than three years of their establishment; bringing in new members; and where appropriate succession strategies with impending retirement/departure of the Director or its member)*

In the coming few years, SEARC will focus on three main areas:

- increased grant acquisition (with a special emphasis on policy-oriented external funding) and top quality research output (with particular emphasis on publication in high ranking journals according to SSCI/SCImago and top ranked university presses);
- hosting topflight internationally recognized academics to give seminars, attend workshops and major international conferences;

- collaboration with other leading Southeast Asia centres and related centres such as the Global China centre in CLASS as well a major international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

#### *Grant acquisition and research output*

SEARC will continue to strive to produce top quality research from an interdisciplinary perspective on Southeast Asia. An important part of this research strategy is grant acquisition. SEARC board members have several GRF grant applications pending as of this writing. In addition, the SEARC director, as PI and SEARC board member, Dr. Rueben Mondejar of the School of Business recently submitted a grant proposal “Hong Kong-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and the prospects for developing the scale and scope of trade and investment relations between Hong Kong and ASEAN economies”, to the Hong Kong Government Central Policy Unit’s Public Policy Research Funding Scheme. This application represents a major shift in direction towards economic policy for SEARC which had previously focused more on political and social issues related to Southeast Asia. SEARC also plans to host a workshop in cooperation with the HKTDC with which it is already working closely (and has held several meetings about this research proposal on the HK-ASEAN FTA negotiations). SEARC is also working closely with Bernard Charnwat Chan, a prominent Hong Kong businessman and politician, a member of the Hong Kong Executive Council, on this issue in his capacity as Chair of the Hong Kong-Thailand Business Council.

But SEARC’s emphasis in terms of research output will remain publication in top-ranked journals. Working through the Academic Units of its respective members and research coordination at the College level, SEARC can play an important role in encouraging research related to Southeast Asia to be published in top journals and books. For example, several recent SEARC seminars were given by core members who, thanks in part to the feedback they received, later published their presentations in leading journals (such as an article in *Pacific Review* 2014 published by Stephan Ortmann and the SEARC director) or books (such as the recent single-authored book *The Political Development of Modern Thailand* by Federico Ferrara published in early 2015 by Cambridge University Press). By bringing top flight international academics to CityU, SEARC also helps expose its members to cutting edge research. Workshops further encourage collaboration and have led to high quality outputs (for example the papers presented at a recent SEARC workshop on the Asian developmental state, has just been accepted for publication by Cambridge University

Press in a volume co-edited by SEARC core member Toby Carroll).

SEARC has been hosting on average about 10-12 research seminars each academic year since 2011 and this will continue in the foreseeable future, funding permitting. This allows SEARC to bring in some of the most influential scholars on Southeast Asia to discuss their work with SEARC board members and others in CityU and beyond interested in their research. (Though the status of SEARC affiliates, SEARC has reached out to a number of prominent academics at other Hong Kong university, prominent journalists, influential businesspeople and politicians, and leading civil society activists who regularly attend SEARC seminars which are also all filmed and upload on YouTube so they may viewed by an even wider audience). It will invite, through its extensive network, speakers from around the world who are doing cutting edge research on Southeast Asia in the fields of Politics, Political Economy, Public Policy, Sociology, International Relations, Urban Studies, Anthropology, Economics, Business, Management, Energy and Environment; Information Technology, Languages and Law.

SEARC will also continue its working paper series which remains a major source of cutting edge information about Southeast Asia and raises the Centre's profile worldwide. These are available on the SEARC website <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/> and on regular updates on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Searc.CityU>. SEARC has 24 videos of SEARC seminars which are all uploaded on YouTube and linked to SEARC website which helped to document SEARC activities and make them available to the wider public and academic community.

#### *Networking and collaboration*

SEARC will also continue to enhance its network with its aim to cement its status as a hub of Southeast Asian studies (not in but near Southeast Asia). SEARC is also currently negotiating MoUs with other leading institutions with major Southeast Asian studies programmes such as the University of California, Berkeley, Michigan University, and the University of Sydney. SEARC also will continue to strengthen its ties with major Southeast Asian centers in mainland China, particularly at Xiamen University, Sun Yat Sen University and the University of Beijing.

A major part of SEARC networking and collaboration involves continued engagement with the community. Through the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS) which has applied for funding for a major East Asian Cultural Festival, SEARC hopes to work within this larger East Asian framework to replicate some of

the successes of its Southeast Asian Cultural Festival two years ago which involved a major film festival, inviting major writers from Southeast Asia as well as a food festival and dance and drama events that were attended by several thousand Hong Kong students and interested members of the community. Such networking may also prove useful to SEARC in financial terms in the near future. Receiving university funding for most of its activities, SEARC has also launched an effort, with the assistance of the university, to seek external donors for the centre based on its contacts and networks in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Co-sponsoring events with other leading organizations (such as the International Organization for Migration) or with other universities (such as a recent workshop on religious minorities with Cornell University and Northern Illinois) has also proved a promising future financial model.

SEARC will also continue to engage in knowledge transfer with SEARC members continuing to write for or appear in major media outlets such as *Reuters*, the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *South China Morning Post*, *Asia Sentinel*, and [www.jrj.com](http://www.jrj.com) (the leading provider of financial data and information in China, and a major Chinese finance portal).