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25
YEARS IN
MALAYSIA

ENCORE: THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES NEWSLETTER



Why We Continue...

When we look at what it takes to run a university, we wonder how it can happen at all. It is a marvel that anything gets done. And yet, somehow, it does.

There are the usual answers: Salaries to survive. The publish-or-perish culture. The machinery of the institution grinding on because it always has. But pay closer attention and we notice that the very fact of its continuation is anchored to a plain truth. We are here because we want to make the world better.

Institutional cynicism is an all too convenient and lazy defence. So when we notice the operational mundanity, let us also notice how the work is powered by tiny battles, or dare we say victories, the moments when a student's eyes light up with understanding or when a concept finally clicks. These small transformations colour the bigger picture of what could be possible in spite of it all.

Lauren Berlant might call this cruel optimism. I would call it a leap of faith. And faith, to be biblical for a moment, is the evidence of things not seen. We, on the other hand, see it all too clearly, the widening gap between institutional rhetoric and lived reality. And yet we also see the slow, unglamorous work of building a world that does not yet exist.

That perspective might help shine some light on the usual good news we bring. The student-led AI manifesto that has caught the attention of policymakers. The global recognition for our business school's commitment to positive impact. The publications that shape public discourse on Malaysia's political economy. Together, these stories remind us that the work, the inspiration, and the love of learning endure.

The new Common Room is also ready with its new trajectory. You will notice it is more serious, but the rootedness to reality remains. Click Teaching and Learning on the last page and you will see.

Dr Fuad Rahmat

Associate Dean
Admissions, Recruitment &
Marketing and Faculty Global
Engagement Lead
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Nottingham Malaysia

In this newsletter you can expect:

Celebrating FASS
Staff Birthdays in
July

Student-Powered
AI Manifesto

Malaysia's Political
Economy

Southeast Asia's
Infrastructure
Politics

Positive Impact
Rating 2026

International
Higher Education
Collaboration

FASS Spotlight | Celebrating FASS staff birthdays in July

July Birthday Wishes

Happy Birthday to
Dr Meenachi Muniandy, also
fondly known as **Jessica**,
**Associate Professor of
Practice, School of Politics,
International Relations and
Economics**

Hasnita Tajuddin,
Administrative Assistant,
Faculty Office

You remain highly cited in the
acknowledgements section of
our hearts. May your year
celebrations be free of revisions,
your impact factor soar, and
your deadlines always
self-extend.

Let's take a moment to share
our warmest wishes and make
their birthdays extra special.
Their contact details are
available on the **University's
website**.



Best wishes from your FASS
colleagues.





Humanities Students Publish Southeast Asia's First Student-Powered AI Manifesto

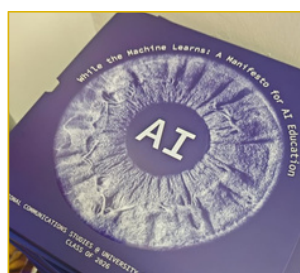
Final-year students from the **School of Humanities** have published *While the Machine Learns: A Manifesto for AI and Education*, believed to be Southeast Asia's first student-powered manifesto on AI and education.

The manifesto emerged from the **Writing for the Media** module, where students worked in project teams to produce investigative narratives examining different aspects of artificial intelligence in education and society. Each clause of the manifesto was informed by a final-year project, resulting in a publication grounded in research, critical inquiry, and lived student experience.

Responding to growing discussions about AI and the future of work, the manifesto advocates for a critical, human-centred approach to AI literacy. Rather than viewing AI as something to be either embraced uncritically or rejected outright, the students argue for responsible, thoughtful, and ethical engagement with emerging technologies.

Beyond the classroom, the project has evolved into a platform for dialogue with policymakers and industry. Student Manifesto Ambassadors **Yuktha Kandasamy**, **Erin Hendrikse** and **Kristin Tan** alongside postgraduate research representative **Hannah Kuah** have presented the manifesto to stakeholders including **Professor David FitzPatrick**, Provost of the University of Nottingham Malaysia, and YB Adam Adli, Deputy Minister of Higher Education. Further engagements are planned with the National AI Office, the World Bank, government ministries, and industry partners.

The initiative demonstrates how teaching and learning can extend beyond assessment to contribute meaningfully to public conversations on contemporary issues. It also reflects the Faculty's commitment to equipping students to engage critically with emerging technologies and to contribute confidently to society through evidence-based ideas.





Balancing Malaysia's Economic Ambitions and Political Constraints

by Dr Tricia Yeoh

Malaysia is at a critical juncture. Amid a rapidly shifting global geopolitical landscape, the country benefits from multinational companies adopting a China+1 strategy - a business approach in which companies diversify their manufacturing and supply chains beyond China to reduce risks associated with rising costs, geopolitical tensions, and potential disruptions. At the same time, Malaysia continues to maintain an open trading relationship with the United States, further strengthening its position as an attractive alternative hub for investment and production.

While Malaysia has a clear roadmap for high-value growth, especially in the logistics,

legacies that, if not managed efficiently, will weigh it down. The country's success is still tethered to a political economy defined by its State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) dominance, ethnic distributive policies and federal-state friction. As the next general election is due by February 2028, at the latest, there is only about a year left for any significant policy implementation. This could be even less if early polls are called, possibly as soon as the last quarter of 2026, with the intention of holding national elections simultaneously with the state elections of the two Peninsular states - Malacca and Johor.

The country has long established itself in the

moving into front-end integrated circuit (IC) design and advanced manufacturing.

The federal government's deal signed with UK chip design firm Arm Holdings was meant to do precisely this. Under the 10-year agreement, Malaysia would pay US\$250 million (RM1.11 billion) to Arm in exchange for its intellectual property licences and computer subsystems (CSS), assets that would be made available to domestic companies in the electrical and electronics sector.

Domestic politics, however, has introduced some complications. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is currently investigating several individuals involved in alleged mismanagement and haste in the deal. The investigation, however, has been accused by a former Minister of Economy of being politically motivated and retaliatory. This follows his public calls for the suspension of the MACC Chief Commissioner after incriminating Bloomberg reports alleged that the commission was involved with "the corporate mafia". While the Arm deal is still ongoing, these developments risk spooking other investors who may fear being caught in a similar political-economy quagmire.

Malaysia has also been keen to showcase other industrial Foreign Direct Investment, particularly in the data centre space. Clusters in the central Klang Valley region and the southern Peninsular state of Johor have benefitted from global demand for data centres and the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI). While some local infrastructure sectors - particularly construction and ICT - as well as

is expected to place unprecedented strain on Malaysia's water sustainability and energy supply, and may also risk jeopardising the nation's own climate goals. The National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR), for instance, aims for 70% renewable energy capacity by 2050.

Another major policy decision Malaysia will have to grapple with is whether the state should continue to be the primary engine of its economy. SOEs, better known in Malaysia as Government-Linked Companies (GLCs), have a heavy presence in the economy. Nine of the 13 largest listed companies in Malaysia are GLCs. Just 41 GLCs account for 55% of assets, 40% of revenue, and 42% of equity and market capitalisation among the 1,043 publicly listed companies in the country. They crowd out private investment and dominate sectors ranging from public utilities to banking, property and plantations.

The Economic Planning Unit (EPU) has now introduced a new regulation that may affect market liquidity and investor perception even further. Under the new ruling, companies intending to acquire properties of GLCs and GLICs (government-linked investment companies, of which there are seven in the country) valued at RM20 million and above will be required to "have at least 50% bumiputera equity ownership", increased from the previous 30% threshold. The Ministry of Economy states that this is meant to align with national socioeconomic objectives and the bumiputera agenda.

In Malaysia, bumiputera comprises the Malay

SPIRE Academic Explores Malaysia's Political Economy in Royal Society for Asian Affairs Publication

The **School of Politics, International Relations & Economics (SPIRE)** congratulates **Dr Tricia Yeoh** on the publication of her latest article, "Balancing Malaysia's Economic Ambitions and Political Constraints" in the latest edition of *Caravanserai*, the magazine of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs. The article examines Malaysia's evolving political economy, exploring how national development ambitions are shaped by institutional realities, governance dynamics, and political constraints. Through this analysis, Dr Yeoh offers insights into the opportunities and challenges influencing Malaysia's economic growth and policy direction.

Published by the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, *Caravanserai* provides a platform for independent scholarship and informed discussion on issues affecting Asia. Dr Yeoh's contribution reflects the School's commitment to producing research that informs public discourse and advances understanding of contemporary political and economic issues.

By engaging with audiences beyond academia, the publication demonstrates how research can contribute to evidence-based dialogue on national and regional developments.

Academic research plays an important role in informing public discourse by providing evidence-based perspectives on contemporary political, economic, and societal issues.

Read Dr Tricia Yeoh's article to explore insights into Malaysia's evolving political economy and discover more research from the School of Politics, International Relations & Economics.

[!\[\]\(c724c83fe216b2427610afdbd31f92cc_img.jpg\) **Read the full article on the Royal Society for Asian Affairs**](#) (Spring 2026, Issue 9)



SPIRE Head of School Publishes New Book Chapter on Southeast Asia's Infrastructure Politics

The **School of Politics, International Relations & Economics (SPIRE)** congratulates **Dr Benjamin Barton**, Head of School, on the publication of his latest book chapter, "Building Bridges to Asia? A Critical Appraisal of the Global Gateway's Place in Southeast Asia's Complex Infrastructure Politics."

The chapter examines the European Union's Global Gateway initiative and its role within Southeast Asia's evolving political and economic landscape. Through a critical analysis of regional infrastructure governance, Dr Barton explores how local priorities, political dynamics, and geopolitical interests shape the implementation and impact of global connectivity initiatives.

The publication contributes to ongoing discussions on international relations, political economy, and infrastructure development, highlighting the opportunities and challenges of balancing strategic ambitions with regional realities. It also reinforces the importance of Southeast Asia in an increasingly interconnected global environment.

Dr Barton's work reflects the School's commitment to producing research that informs policy discussions and contributes to a deeper understanding of contemporary regional and global issues.

Research that examines contemporary geopolitical and economic challenges contributes to informed debate and strengthens understanding of Southeast Asia's role in an evolving global landscape.

Read Dr Benjamin Barton's latest book chapter to learn more about the European Union's Global Gateway initiative and Southeast Asia's infrastructure politics.

[!\[\]\(8bba887393ca45b761e5cb49e755e762_img.jpg\) **Read the full chapter on Oxford Academic International Affairs**](#)

Visit the **School of Politics, International Relations & Economics [LinkedIn page](#)** for the latest news, publications, and research highlights.



Global Recognition for the Nottingham University Business School Community in Positive Impact Rating 2026

The **Nottingham University Business School** community has been recognised in the Positive Impact Rating for Business Schools 2026, with **Nottingham University Business School Malaysia**, **Nottingham University Business School UK**, and **Nottingham University Business School China** all achieving the highest Level 5 'Pioneering' distinction.

Based on responses from nearly 20,000 students across 87 business schools in 32 countries, the three Nottingham campuses are among only 12 business schools globally to receive the top rating. The recognition reflects a shared commitment to creating positive societal impact through responsible management education, sustainability, research, and institutional practice.

For **NUBS Malaysia**, the achievement is particularly significant as the School has progressed from Level 4 in 2025 to Level 5 in just its second year of participation. The recognition also reinforces the School's commitment to listening to student perspectives and preparing graduates to become responsible future leaders.

NUBS Malaysia is also among the 24% of business schools worldwide that hold triple accreditation, reflecting its continued commitment to academic excellence and global standards.

The Positive Impact Rating recognises business schools that create meaningful societal impact through responsible education, research, and engagement, as reflected in the voices of their students.

Learn more about the Positive Impact Rating 2026 and how the Nottingham University Business School community is advancing responsible management education.

🔗 Find out more: <https://lnkd.in/ey4Bbhe7>



Shared Perspectives on International Higher Education Collaboration

Following the successful Inter-University Executive Programme held in April, the **School of Education** has released a series of interviews featuring lecturers from the University of Nottingham Malaysia and visiting academics from Lingnan University's Master of Arts in International Higher Education and Management (IHEM) programme.

The interviews capture reflections on the collaboration between the two institutions, the value of the academic exchanges, and the opportunities created through the programme. Contributors also shared their perspectives on strengthening international partnerships, enhancing student learning, and fostering future collaboration in higher education.

The interview series offers insight into the relationships that underpin successful international partnerships, highlighting the shared commitment of both institutions to advancing knowledge exchange and global engagement through education.

International partnerships are strengthened through meaningful academic dialogue, shared expertise, and a commitment to collaborative learning.

Watch the full interview series and learn more about the collaboration between the **University of Nottingham Malaysia** and **Lingnan University** through the **School of Education's [LinkedIn page](#)**.

Thank you for reading!

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