

## 2020 LAS Professional Service Award

### Joan Wee Jee Foon

Joan Wee has more than 10 years of Academic Library experience and is an author, educator, technologist, and leader. In her Library career, she has held academic library positions at the Singapore Management University (SMU), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and is presently the University Librarian with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) Library.

Since joining SIT Library in 2016, Joan has strengthened the Library's role as an essential learning and research partner of students and faculty, and in support of the University's goal of transformational teaching and learning. Under her leadership, the Library has successfully embedded Information and Digital Literacy (IDL) in SIT undergraduate programmes. The IDL programmes are designed to align with university pedagogy and are able to assess the impact of learning by incorporating IDL learning competencies with the University's captured student competencies.

Joan has been able to ensure the sustainability of SIT Library's initiatives through strategic positioning in the University and foresight in Resources Management. For example, SIT Library has taken the direction of being an E-preferred library with 99 per cent of the Library's resources available online. In early-2020, the team also began developing customised IDL micro-modules for students. Students could choose to take these modules at their point of need, and Librarians would use these modules as pre-lesson resources for a flipped-classroom approach. As a result, when SIT Library had to be closed due to COVID-19 Circuit Breaker measures, library staff were able to adapt IDL sessions quickly and easily.

Joan also actively seeks out opportunities to expand SIT Library's plans and to prepare staff to meet these changes. Some initiatives at the forefront of technology include SMART Lockers, Robotic Automatic Processing (RPA) processes, and a facial-recognition walk-through lane to borrow Library items. For her efforts, she received the University's Gold Award for Staff Appreciation in 2020. A Gold Award is awarded to a staff member who is consistently seen as a role model and has made an impressive contribution to the University that shows unique thinking, leadership, and risk-taking, and leads to delighted clients. Apart from being the University Librarian, Joan has also taken on the Culture Lead role at SIT where she works closely with the University President to drive university culture.

In her four years with the Nanyang Technology University (NTU) Libraries as a New Media Librarian, Joan partnered with the faculty to design and provide consultation and training on various social media tools and strategies that effectively supported the teaching, research, community building and marketing needs of the user. She worked on meaningful projects with many NTU researchers and even presented one of the projects with a faculty member in the first Singapore WordCamp in 2016. She was in the pioneer team to roll out alternate metrics (Altmetrics) services monitoring for researchers and was invited and sponsored to speak at the first Altmetrics conference, 1: AM, held at London in 2014. She has shared about her work in local and international conferences, and has selflessly served and volunteered at several initiatives contributing to professionalism in libraries in Singapore. She was a co-opted Council member with the Library Association of Singapore (LAS) for 2011. She organised the LAS New Year Bash, Annual General Meeting (AGM), and an engagement session "What makes a Librarian? A SWOT analysis". She continued to stay on after her term as a LAS membership committee member in 2013 and has remained a Website / IT Committee member from 2015 till date.

In the international arena, Joan was the Information Coordinator and Editor for *Trends & Issues in Library Technology (TILT)* of IFLA from 2017 – 2019. She shared and raised the professional profile of libraries in Singapore by showcasing Singapore library initiatives in TILT. Together with Ms Karryl Sagun from Rizal Library, she also started the 23 Mobile Things Programme in Singapore and the Philippines. This tailored, self-paced, self-exploratory online course brought together media-savvy professionals to share about different mobile tools and applications available on 23 Mobile devices for a period of 23 weeks in 2014. More than 200 Librarians and paraprofessionals from Singapore and the Philippines joined in the learning.

Joan is also an active mentor of young Librarians who have just joined the profession or are considering switching careers to become information professionals. She believes in modernising the image of Librarianship and takes efforts to instil this in the team members training student ambassadors as they are actively involved in the Library's projects and advocate for the Library as their learning partner. A comprehensive training programme was conducted for the students to understand the transformative role of the Library as a connector and to discover ideas, knowledge, and people.

With her significant contributions to the development of the Library profession in Singapore and representation of Singapore on an international level, Joan has been awarded the LAS Professional Service Award for 2020.