

Citation for OEA 2013 – Associate Professor Willie Tan

Willie is a dedicated and versatile teacher who can translate the modules he teaches into very effective and highly acclaimed books. He has written books on project finance, research methods and housing investment. His books are regularly featured in the libraries and reading lists of universities across America, Asia, Australia and Europe.

Willie is influential in print and on paper; as his students attest, one can only imagine how engaging he is in person. Willie's teaching philosophy stems from a genuine respect for all types and abilities of learners, and a belief that those who think of themselves as "not that smart" can still do it.

What stands out in Willie's teaching is his ability to grasp of the needs of students who come from diverse backgrounds, and he tailors his teaching for students to maximise their learning. If you are a student with little or no statistics or finance background, Willie is able to present concepts in a clear and lucid manner and then ignite a strong interest in the subject; students are able to pick up, catch up and forge ahead.

Willie also engages students in discussions and arouses their curiosity in complex problems so that students no longer 'fear' the subject, or

dismiss certain complexities as ‘the realm of academics’ – a refrain that we commonly hear. Willie introduces students to the systems approach where he skillfully integrates the many different components of learning outcomes in a coherent manner with many interesting field examples, and with his experience across industry and government. His students have found this particularly useful and illuminating.

Willie’s served as Vice Dean (Academic) at the School of Design and Environment from 2006 to 2010. He also served as Deputy Head of Department of Building for two terms, where he led the curricular revisions to the Bachelor of Science in Project and Facilities Management.

Willie is a three-time recipient of the NUS Annual Teaching Excellence Awards and a four-time recipient of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Awards. Willie was twice awarded the General Education Module Incentive, and has been inducted into the NUS General Education Committee. This evening, I am pleased to confer Associate Professor Willie Tan Chee Keong, the 2013 Outstanding Educator Award.