

Students' conference a big success

300 participants from universities in US, Europe and Asia attend AIBC, report **MARCUS AW** and **ENG PINGNI**

THE inaugural Asia Investment Banking Conference (AIBC) took place on Sept 23-24 at the Singapore Management University (SMU) campus.

Students from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the SMU Investment Club set out to organise the conference – the largest student-run conference in Asia – with three main objectives in mind.

First, to establish an avenue for students to develop a deeper understanding of the investment banking market in Asia; secondly, to facilitate interaction between like-minded peers from universities all over the world; and lastly, to promote the financial services industry in Asia as an attractive career option.

Close to 60 schools and 30 nationalities were represented by a group of 300 participants from universities across Asia-Pacific, Europe, the United States and the Middle East. The appeal was that it was a conference organised "for students, by students" to give everyone a chance to network and interact

In the light of work commitments and regular travelling schedules, many speakers asked how the team managed to bring everyone together under one roof at the same time. In jest, our reply was often that we enticed them with the offer of grandstand tickets to the F1 race during that coming weekend!

Jokes aside, there were several notable difficulties that the team faced during the organisation; first, seeking out the appropriate speaker and then convincing him/her that the AIBC was an event worth supporting; second, marketing the event to the targeted group of 100 universities worldwide; and third, working with a venue that would be financially and logistically feasible.

Led by vice-chairman Yangqi Zheng from

LSE, the speakers' team worked to source for contacts via their personal and professional networks.

Pursuant to establishing contact, it was crucial that they communicated effectively the goals that the AIBC sought to achieve. We were delighted that many of the professionals shared the team's enthusiasm for educating students about the industry and were keen to provide insights into their respective fields of expertise.

Before the financial crisis, there was much talk of Asia decoupling from the West and as we rise from the ashes, the world seems to be looking towards Asia to lead us out of the recession. It was of great interest that we examine the new face of investment banking in this part of the world.

While there has been talk about whether the next generation of Singaporeans can withstand the storms ahead, we think that pulling this conference off shows that we do have what it takes to succeed in an ever-changing global landscape.

With the successful closure of the AIBC 2009, we are all very proud of the AIBC team for making the impossible possible.

The writers are the co-chair of the Asia Investment Banking Conference 2009. Marcus is a final-year student at the LSE pursuing a Bachelor of Law degree, while Pingni is a second-year student at SMU pursuing a double degree in Bachelor of Business and Economics

'The AIBC conference provided an interesting and diverse perspective on investment banking in Asia. The impressive schedule of industry leaders and the stimulating panel discussions made the conference a truly worthwhile experience.'

– Mitch Kosev, Australian National University

with senior speakers from major financial institutions.

The AIBC attracted many of the most senior professionals from investment banks, law practices, accounting firms and management consultancies in Asia. Over 40 speakers from 20 organisations took part, spread over keynote speeches, discussion panels and interactive workshops. On top of those based in Singapore, speakers flew in from Hong Kong, London, Japan, India, Australia and China.



For students, by students: AIBC aimed to give everyone a chance to interact with senior speakers from major financial institutions