

NUS and MPA conduct joint research in ocean governance

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New S\$1.56 million research programme to examine issues such as international regulation of shipping, access and use of oceans and protection of coastal marine environment

The Centre for International Law (CIL) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) will be setting up a joint research programme to build up institutional expertise in ocean governance and to spearhead thought leadership in areas critical to bolster Singapore's global maritime knowledge hub status.

CIL received a three-year research grant of S\$1.56 million from the Singapore Maritime Institute (SMI) supported by MPA to establish the CIL-MPA Oceans Governance Research Programme. The dynamic and complex challenges facing the shipping industry brought about by stricter regulations, climate change, growing number of vessels and new technologies require maritime leaders to challenge conventional modes of thinking. Research activities under the programme will focus on three areas: Arctic shipping governance; transit passage regimes under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and marine environmental governance.

The grant agreement was signed between NUS and SMI at the sidelines of the annual Singapore Maritime Week, which is held from 17 to 22 April 2016.

The CIL-MPA Oceans Governance Research Programme will be headed by Associate Professor Robert C. Beckman, Director of CIL and concurrent head of CIL's Ocean Law and Policy Programme, who will lead research in areas such as opportunities and challenges in Arctic shipping, contemporary developments in UNCLOS transit passage regimes and measures available for marine environmental protection. The research team will also conduct an analysis of the development of a new international agreement to govern the sustainable use and conservation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In addition to generating quality research publications and presentations at esteemed academic journals and international platforms, CIL will be exploring joint academic and research collaboration with leading legal academics and experts globally. It will also convene annual conferences and roundtable workshops to share and discuss research findings with top international experts from governments, intergovernmental organisations, industry and academia.

Professor Robert Beckman, CIL Director, said, "We are pleased to have the opportunity to expand our research programme in oceans law and policy through this grant. As a major flag State and port State and an active member of the International Maritime Organisation, Singapore has an interest in ensuring that the international legal regime governing international shipping

ensures the safety of navigation, addresses threats to maritime security, and minimises the risk of ship-source pollution.”

Mr Andrew Tan, Chief Executive of MPA said, “Having established the Centre for Maritime Law and MPA Professorship in Maritime Law at NUS Faculty of Law in September 2015, we are pleased to deepen our partnership with one of Asia’s leading universities in jointly developing a three-year maritime research programme at NUS’ Centre for International Law. As a leading global hub port and one of the world’s largest ship registries, Singapore can contribute to better understanding of maritime law, ocean governance and emerging issues such as Arctic shipping that impact on the international maritime community.”
