

# NUS don is law firm's judicial review adviser



NUS assistant professor of constitutional and administrative law Jaclyn Neo joined the firm last month. PHOTO: WONGPARTNERSHIP LLP

## WongPartnership appoints her as consultant in area of law that is fast rising

**K.C. Vijayan**  
Senior Law Correspondent

In a ground-breaking move, law firm WongPartnership has hired a law don to advise on judicial review cases, a fast-growing area of law.

Dr Jaclyn Neo, assistant professor of constitutional and administrative law at the National University of Singapore (NUS), joined the firm as consultant last month.

At a conference in May this year, she said more parties are now turning to the courts to review public agencies' decisions that affect them.

She noted then that more than a third of the 127 court cases involving constitutional issues in the past 50 years surfaced in the last decade.

Judicial review cases involving administrative law cover an even broader spectrum of respondents than in constitutional cases. They include statutory boards, disciplinary boards and other review panels, such as those involving the Law Society and the Singapore Medical Council.

Recent high-profile cases include the action against the Singapore Exchange by an independent director of China Sky Chemical Fibre involving a public reprimand.

There was also OpenNet's action against the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore in relation to the construction and rollout of the Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network.

Another case was property developer Chiu Teng's challenge to the Singapore Land Authority's assessment of the differential premium applicable to one of its projects.

"It is an important area of law that is developing rapidly in Singapore's maturing democracy," said Dr Neo in a statement to *The Straits Times*.

"Many decisions that public agencies and bodies make tend to have large financial or reputational impact on private individuals and businesses.

"Singapore's judicial system is well regarded and respected, and so citizens trust our judges to examine administrative decisions with rigour."

She added: "This development should be welcomed as it helps the Government to refine its administrative functions and processes, thereby improving governance."

Dr Neo said the spike in business and industry compliance regulations also spurred growth in this area of law.

"Invariably, with increased oversight will come increased disputes over the nature, degree and manner in which the oversight is conducted.

"This is where judicial review becomes an important avenue to scrutinise the exercise of public power," she said.

WongPartnership chairman Alvin Yeo lauded her joining the law firm.

He noted her other focus – to help migrant workers – which resonates with the firm's pro bono practice.

The firm is working with NUS law students in a legal clinic for migrant workers.

"Our firm is committed to not only serving the marginalised in society but thereby also developing law students in their practice after graduation.

"We hope that the experience will ignite the passion of young men and women to fight for the rights of the needy and exploited, such as in cases of salary disputes and workplace injuries.

"Jaclyn is a great addition to our team, with her multi-faceted abilities and contributions," said Senior Counsel Yeo.

[vijayan@sph.com.sg](mailto:vijayan@sph.com.sg)