

SAAP Member Spotlight: Sim Siew Gek - Our President's Journey



Leading with Heart: A Conversation with SAAP President 2025/2026, Ms Sim Siew Gek on her 30 Years of Growth, Grit, and Gratitude

As the Singapore Association of Administrative Professionals (SAAP) celebrates its 55th year in 2026, we sat down with our President to reflect on her inspiring journey — one that spans decades of dedication, transformation, and community building.

SAAP Journey & Leadership

What inspired you to join SAAP in the first place?

I joined the association in 1995, when it was still known as "SAPES". Back then, private secretaries were very much in demand and being part of the association was a privilege. The members who formed the group were strong and professional; applicants even had to attend an interview before being accepted!

I became more active only in 2009, after a senior member encouraged me to get involved. That's when I started taking part in council work and really saw how much effort goes into keeping the association alive and relevant.

You've been a member for many years and served multiple terms as President. What has kept you committed to SAAP all this time?

It's the people. Every council term brings a new mix of members with different strengths and personalities. We may not always agree, but we work through our differences with respect and teamwork. The learning along the way has been rewarding, and the friendships formed have lasted through the years.

How has SAAP evolved since you first joined?

So much has changed! In the early days, everything was done manually — newsletters and notices had to be in hardcopies. Volunteers met at the Maxwell office regularly to sort them into

envelopes and put a postage stamp to each envelope before heading to the nearest postal box. Today, we've moved into the digital age with social media, online forms, and e-newsletters. But what hasn't changed is the heart of SAAP — a warm, professional community that supports one another and keeps learning together.

What has been your experience working with different council term members over the years? Any lessons or memorable collaborations?

Each term feels like joining a new team. Everyone brings different ideas and energy, and sometimes we have to adjust to each other's working styles. But that's also where the best lessons come from. I've learned that teamwork, patience, and humor go a long way. When we share the same goal and put our hearts into it, we always manage to achieve something good together.



A workshop conducted after office hours at the NUSS Guild House

What has been your most memorable SAAP event or initiative, and why does it stand out to you?

Attending six ASA Congresses — in Taiwan, Bangladesh, Manila, Bangkok, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka - has been unforgettable. Each one gave me a chance to meet admin professionals from different cultures and learn how they grow in their careers. But my favorite memories are still the local ones — late nights planning events, brainstorming with council friends, and seeing an idea come to life.



26th ASA Congress



Delivering SAAP donations to selected charity by PNGGAAP

Are there any issues or challenges within SAAP that keep you awake at night? How do you approach them?

Our biggest challenge is always renewal — keeping the association relevant and encouraging younger members to join. We need to balance tradition and innovation, which means being open to change while keeping our values strong. I remind myself that SAAP has lasted this long because of passion and teamwork, and that gives me hope for the next generation.

As President, what is your current vision, mission, or direction for SAAP moving forward into its 55th year and beyond?

My vision is to make SAAP ready for the future — more digital, more connected, and more inclusive. I hope we can attract younger members, bring in new learning opportunities, and continue to be a trusted platform for all admin professionals in Singapore.

Member Engagement & Community Building

What do you believe are the most effective ways to engage SAAP members today?

Simple, personal contact. Sometimes just calling or messaging a member to invite them makes a big difference. People appreciate sincerity. When members feel welcomed and see that events are fun and meaningful, they naturally want to stay involved.

How does SAAP ensure that members feel valued and heard?

We remind members that the council team are all volunteers who also have full-time jobs. We spend evenings and weekends planning events, thinking up new ideas, and finding ways to bring people together. Members know the effort is real — and that builds appreciation and trust.

Can you share any successful engagement strategies or campaigns that have worked well in the past?

Our themed gatherings and professional development sessions always do well because they mix learning with fun. For example, when we add creative booths, games, or small charity activities, members enjoy it more and connect better with one another.



Musical Box Workshop



Culinary workshop

How do you see member engagement evolving in the future, especially with younger professionals joining the workforce?

The younger generation wants to feel that what they do has meaning and impact. We need to give them space to contribute ideas and lead projects in their own way. They prefer quick, flexible engagement, and more digital touchpoints.

What role do digital platforms and social media play in SAAP's engagement efforts?

A big role! Platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok and Instagram help us reach the younger members quickly and show what we are doing. But we still value face-to-face connection - real friendships and teamwork will always be at the heart of SAAP.

Personal Reflections & Light-Hearted Questions

How do you balance your professional responsibilities with your SAAP commitments and personal life?

It's a juggling act! But I do it because I care. My full-time job as an Executive Administrator keeps me grounded in daily office life, while SAAP gives me a chance to serve a bigger purpose. I've learned to plan ahead, pace myself, and take short breaks when I can.

What's your favourite way to unwind after a busy day?

I often find myself multitasking at home — watching thrillers and crime dramas while ironing. I also enjoy reading magazines, newspapers, and books on spirituality, and I often turn to YouTube talks or attend classes that explore life's deeper meaning. I've always been curious and love learning from different sources.

Do you have a hobby or pastime that brings you joy or helps you recharge?

I enjoy Sundays with my eight siblings, catching up with each other over our favourite board game — mahjong. And nothing beats a good chat over coffee to lift the spirit.

If you could describe your SAAP journey in three words, what would they be?

Curious. Committed. Connected.

Do you have a personal favourite quote to share with us?

Kindness is a boomerang — it always comes back!

What advice would you give to young administrative professionals considering joining SAAP today?

Don't wait — join early! SAAP is a great place to grow, learn, and build confidence. You'll meet people who understand your challenges and support your goals. It's not just about networking — it's about being part of a family that helps you become the best version of yourself.

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always comes back.**

Sim Siew Gek
SAAP President