iMagination Week 2017: Political City, the Politics of the City
A unique learning by doing experience

Cergy & Singapore, January 11, 2017 - Organized for the past six years for the MSc in Management students and deployed in 2015 for all other programs, iMagination Week is a unique seminar dedicated to imagination, transdisciplinarity and creativity and is an innate part of the pedagogical innovation at ESSEC. The 6th edition of iMagination Week - France which took place on the Cergy campus on January 2-6, welcomed over 700 students and centered on the theme “Political City, the Politics of the City: My role in the city of 2050.” The 2nd edition of iMagination Week – Singapore began on Monday and revolves around a similar theme: Shaping the City-State: Politics, policy and society.

“Ever since its inception, the purpose of iMagination Week has been to raise ESSEC students’ awareness on the subjects of creativity, transdisciplinarity and imagination, in order to train decision-makers who are as free as they are responsible, as imaginative as they are realistic, and who are capable of producing ideas and actions which are truly innovative. Our objective is to encourage students to go beyond their limits, to overcome their prejudices, to change their habits and to challenge what they take for granted.” explains Professor Xavier Pavie, Director of the iMagination Center at ESSEC.

iMagination Week at ESSEC Cergy

The theme of the sixth iMagination Week focused on the notion of the city: “Political city, the Politics of the City”. During the week, students were given the opportunity to reflect on the relationship they have with the city and society and how they can evolve as individuals. Leading experts who, each in their own way, have found ways to bring creativity into a great variety of disciplines came to share their testimonials. Guest speakers included Dr. Jean Louis Etienne, French physician and explorer; Rob Spence, Canadian filmmaker and Cyborg; Jean Jouzel, climatologist and glaciologist (Nobel Peace Prize 2007); and Michael Lonsdale, French actor and winner of the Cesar 2011 best supporting actor award for the film, Of Gods and Men to name a few.

At the end of the week of testimonials and workshops, the students were asked to present a proposal explaining their vision of the city of the future through an artistic, literary or multimedia medium. Their proposals had to answer the questions: What will the cities of tomorrow look like? What community (political, geographic) do you hope to live in? What are the beliefs and values that this city should uphold? And what role do you hope to play in shaping them and bringing them to life? Among all of the final presentations the three that stood out for their creativity and inventiveness and that were voted for by the 720 students and the jury were:

- **1st Place**: In the form of a humorous rap, the group proposed that one week per year, all students are required to complete civic service (soup kitchen, cleaning of public spaces) as a way to reinvest in the city.
- **2nd Place**: The students performed a live rap song they had written themselves on the themes of the downward spiral of political power and corruption.
- **3rd Place**: The students presented a video in which they explained their vision of the ideal city of 2050 and they presented a 3D model representing a city of the future they baptized “New Babylon.”
Build Your Own Course, a unique Learning by doing experience

Launched in 2015, Build Your Own Course (BYOC) is a unique and innovative approach to give students the opportunity to imagine new courses, the way they would like them to be taught, by co-creating the course content and format together with the professors. During this 2017 iMagination Week, five new courses were proposed to the students.

Professors had six minutes to present a pitch to students about the research they wanted to develop in to a course through the Build Your Own Course format. This year, and for the first time at ESSEC, any professor wishing to develop a new course had to go through the BYOC system. At the end of the session many ideas emerged and allowed the professors to adjust their course syllabi. A vote assessed students’ interest in attending these new courses and 4 of the 5 courses will be co-developed with students in the second and third trimesters:

- Guillaume Chevillon: Economic & social sciences after the crisis and for the digital age
- Thierry Sibieude: Doing Business in Africa
- Mickaël Kouklakis: Reflective Learning Portfolio
- Laurent Bibard: Ethics & Decisions

iMagination Week at ESSEC Asia-Pacific

The second edition of iMagination Week – Singapore began on Monday on the ESSEC Asia-Pacific campus. Derived from iMagination Week in Cergy, the week-long seminar will, in continuity with the France edition, focus on the same theme which is the notion of City: “Shaping the city-state: Politics, policy and society”. This program will provide an opportunity for students to leave their mark on the ESSEC community through their final projects which will be presented at the end of the week. The week will also be the opportunity for students to get involved in the design of new courses within the framework of the “Build Your Own Course” project.

The opening lecture of iMagination Week – Singapore was delivered by Janadas Devan, Director of the Institute of Policy Studies and Chief of Government Communications for the Ministry of Communication and Information. Additionally, several high level guests from various fields of expertise will also be present to lead the various workshops and plenary sessions including: Pascal De Petrini, ESSEC alumnus and Executive Vice-President of Danone; Jean François Milou, the founder of studioMilou architecture; Hossan Leong, a Singaporean stage and screen actor; Andrew Tan, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, Prof Nadia Magnenat Thalmann, Director of the Institute for Media Innovation (IMI) in Singapore at Nanyang Technological University, and founder and head of the MIRALab Research Laboratory at the University of Geneva; and Tan Ying Hsien, first and only Master Sommelier in Singapore and owner of Taberna Wine Academy in Singapore.

Pascal De Petrini, patron of the program and a firm believer of innovation remarked, “I wish iMagination week was already in place when I was a student at ESSEC many years ago! This is a unique opportunity for students to shift their perspective and strengthen their ability to develop an unconventional vision of the world, which will be an asset – not only in their professional life but also in their personal life. The topic of ‘Shaping the City-State’ and the quality of the different speakers and workshops will undoubtedly stimulate the students’ imagination and creativity. I am looking forward to their contributions.”

During the week, students will benefit from workshops such as Humanoid -man vs. robots; A City-State shaped by the seas; Building on historical ground; as well as Stand Up Comedy - Speaking in Public. Additionally, coaches will accompany the students all week to guide them in their creative choices and to help them work as teams. Their collective projects will be the opportunity for students to challenge their imagination, creativity and innovation on a topic of their choosing.

To find out more about iMagination Week and BYOC, follow the event on Facebook and Twitter.
About ESSEC Business School
ESSEC, founded in 1907, is one of the world’s top management schools. With 5,330 students; a faculty comprised of 158 full-time professors, 19 of which are emeritus professors, in France and Singapore, recognized for both the quality and influence of their research; a wide range of management training programs; partnerships with the world’s best universities; and a network of 47,000 alumni, ESSEC continues to foster a tradition of academic excellence and a spirit of openness in the fields of economics, social sciences and innovation. In 2005, ESSEC opened a campus in Asia. ESSEC’s operations in Asia Pacific, strategically located in Singapore, present the perfect foothold for ESSEC to be part of the vibrant growth of Asia and to bring its expertise to the expanding region. For any additional information, please visit www.essec.edu or www.essec.edu/asia.

About ESSEC Business School, Asia-Pacific
ESSEC Business School, Asia-Pacific was established in Singapore in 2005. The campus has since welcomed over 5,500 students and managers. ESSEC’s operations in the Asia-Pacific region present the perfect foothold for ESSEC to be part of the vibrant growth of Asia and to bring its expertise to the expanding region. ESSEC Business School, Asia-Pacific offers innovative academic and executive programs with Asian insights and Western perspectives. Backed by a multicultural faculty, ESSEC Business School, Asia-Pacific aims to achieve influential world-class research in Asia. The school also leverages on its Asian experience and regional network of premium academic and corporate partners to offer customized corporate and open-enrolment programs designed to suit the specific needs of organizations and individuals. For more information, please visit www.essec.edu/asia.