

Professor Simon S. M. Ho

President's Welcome Address at the Convocation for New Students 2015/16

1 September 2015 College Hall, HSMC

Dear Colleagues and Students,

On behalf of the College community, I wish to congratulate over 1,200 new students for joining HSMC and my warmest welcome to all of you to the College Family!

I am very glad to see many smiling faces in this Hall and I am certain that it would be a good start of your university journey ahead.

For our freshmen, you are moving onto a new crucial stage of your life and you will be opening yourself to new horizons. You will be going through a transition period of mixed excitement and anxieties. You are excited to meet new friends here and to explore many new campus activities. At the same time, besides academic coursework, many may also encounter new challenges such as independent living, time management, inter-personal relationships, finance, social engagements, etc. I encourage you to play a proactive role and make the best of the many learning opportunities and resources here. Do rest assured that our teachers and staff will inspire your studies, and help you handle various challenges and mature into a responsible citizen.

Did you ever ask yourself why you bother to pursue university study? Many of you may think by studying hard in your professional subjects and receiving a good degree, you will be getting a good job and salary after graduation, and even a brighter future. I would not disagree with these objectives although no one can guarantee such especially in the current less stable, competitive and demanding global environment.

But just like a university's achievement cannot be judged by its funding, ranking or graduates' income, I believe human happiness is not built on material, wealth, fame or power, but meaning and purposes of life.

In my opinion, in fact, I think university education does not just prepare for one's first job but also for your future work and life. In other words, it is about transforming or shaping one's life. University is the place where you have a deeper understanding of yourself and the needs of others, identify ideals for your future lives including how to impact the world. It is also a place where you learn to be a self-reflective, soulful,

grateful and happy person. If you come to HSMC with these ideas in mind, your university education will have more and visible values which will lead you to a more fruitful and rewarding life.

To prepare you to pursue a liberal approach to life, one distinction of our College is that we adopt the unique "Liberal + Professional" education model. Our Common Core Curriculum provides all students with common learning experiences and broadens your horizons. In addition to professional knowledge, we advocate to nurture our students with the so-called 21st century competencies by 'deep learning'. Among these competencies, I especially emphasize a balanced development of Attitude/Character (A), Skills (S) and Knowledge (K).

The quality of our undergraduate experience is also characterized by small class teaching, close student-teacher interactions, innovative learning methods, guidance for individual students outside classrooms, and vast opportunities for internship, international exchange, and independent research. You will be impressed by our faculty members' commitment to a student-centred culture. They all share a passion for teaching and student all-round achievement.

Another exciting development here is our new 1,200-bed student residential halls. These would allow our students a unique residential college experience combining living with learning. We are also proud to be the first and only private university in Hong Kong adopting the residential college system.

Dear students, I urge you to work hard and empower yourself to quest for knowledge and wisdom. Here you will meet people from different backgrounds with different views, and we need to learn to respect each other's freedom and views. I invite you to interact deeply with at least one teacher each semester, as some of them may be your mentors and friends for the rest of your life. I suggest you to embrace the sustainability ideals in this green campus and in your daily habits, and to learn how our attitude and habit changes can bring impact to our future life. I encourage you to take part in more service activities and civic engagement to show your care for other people. I remind you to lead a simple, honorable and humble life.

Remember, it is entirely up to you to derive the level of achievement and satisfaction from your university education. And at the end attitude matters most and it is a matter of choice.

We believe in the transformative power of undergraduate education. No matter where your starting point is, we will try our best to add values to your development. We will ignite your imagination, stir your spirit and guide your passion.

I believe if all students and staff do our parts earnestly, the College will become a more cohesive learning community and continue to scale new height of excellence.

We also look forward to having your presence and support in the pursuit of becoming a leading private university in the near future.

I wish you a fruitful and meaningful life experience at HSMC, and look forward very much to chatting with you somewhere on the campus.

Again our warmest congratulations and welcome to be Members of this big Family!

Thank you.