

Professor Simon S. M. Ho

Welcome Address at the Convocation for New Students 2016-17

1 September 2016 College Hall, HSMC

Dear Colleagues and Students,

On behalf of the College community, I wish to congratulate the over 1,400 new students and some 40 exchange students for joining HSMC. And my warmest welcome to all of you to the College Family!

I am also very delighted to see so many new smiling faces in this Hall today 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 go through a transition period of mixed excitement and anxieties. You will be excited to meet new friends here and to explore new classes and development activities. At the same time, many of you may also encounter new challenges such as new learning styles, independent living, time management, inter-personal relationships, financial management, social engagements, etc.

I encourage you to have an open mind, 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 guide and inspire your new campus life, and help you handle various challenges and mature into a responsible adult.

Before I move on, I would like to ask you two questions here: Why you bother to pursue university study? What competencies do you wish to acquire in order to be successful in the future? Many of you may think that by studying hard in your professional subjects and receiving a good degree, you will get a good job and salary after graduation, and even higher social mobility in the future. I would not disagree with these objectives although no one can guarantee such especially in the current less stable, more competitive and demanding global environment.

Just like a university's achievement which cannot be judged by its student admission scores, funding, ranking or graduates' incomes, I believe human life cannot be measured by success indicators such as academic achievement, income, wealth, fame or power. Albert Einstein once said, "Strive not to be successful, but rather to be

of value". Many important life goals or values are in less physical or tangible forms, such as exercising honesty and justice, feeling happiness, finding love, building strong relationships, realizing one's potential, contributing to the community, and enhancing the life of others.

So I believe university education does not just prepare for your first job but also for your future work and life. It also allows you to have a deeper understanding of yourself and establish your own personal values, so that you can confidently handle future challenges and achieve life goals. University is a place where you learn to be a self-reflective, soulful, grateful and satisfying person. If you come to HSMC with these ideas in mind, your university education will have more 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 cross-disciplinary learning experiences and broadens your visions. Together with the rigorous major programmes studies and out-of-classroom development activities, we aim to nurture you with the so-called 21st century transferrable competencies comprising needed knowledge, skills and attitude/character.

HSMC has developed the 'iGPS' Desired Graduate Attributes framework in order to more systematically nurture our students with the four dimensions of competencies: i = Intellectual competencies which include professional knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving, and life-long learning skills; G = Generic skills which includes communication, inter-personal relationships and teamwork; P = Personal development which includes self-awareness, self-management and personal attitude and character development, and S = Social engagement which includes public and community services. The acronym iGPS also carries the symbolic meaning of "i" and the "GPS"; with "i" referring to the individual student and "GPS" taking on the metaphor of "Global Positioning System" which guides the development of students through their 4-year education process.

Dear students, to follow this iGPS framework, let me give you four pieces of practical advice.

Firstly, you will meet people from different backgrounds with different views here, and we need to learn to respect each other's freedom and views. Always exercise your independent critical thinking before making a judgement. Being 'critical' means to act with a careful attitude, an open mind and rational reasoning, and not to easily follow the authority, the current or the crowd without raising enough questions starting with 'why?'.
'why?'

Secondly, I encourage you to greet, smile or even chat with individuals you meet on

campus, even if you don't know them. I also 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. We do not only think, we should also feel and show our care to others.

Thirdly, I suggest you to embrace the sustainability ideals in this green campus, and to learn how our personal attitude and daily habit changes can bring impact to the environment and our society.

Lastly, I encourage you to take part in more service learning and service leadership activities to make contributions to your peers, your College and the community.

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.

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

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

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

Thank you.