University learning aimed at what's good for all

Hong Kong graduates are expected to be global citizens able to work anywhere, an education forum of 10 presidents of universities and institutions heard yesterday.

University of Hong Kong vice chancellor Peter Mathieson said "we shouldn't be producing graduates just for Hong Kong, just for China. We should produce graduates for the world."

Chinese University of Hong Kong president Joseph Sung Jao-yiu added: "We want to train our students not only to find a job in Hong Kong [but to] play a role . . . anywhere in the world."

Sung also said students should retain uniqueness and traditions, as "internationalization is not McDonaldization." He went on: "No matter how great and rich a university is, how high the ranking is, the most important thing is the talents they contribute to a society." And graduates do not have to be the highest earners to contribute to a society.

Albert Chan Sun-chi of Hong Kong Baptist University and Simon Ho Shun-man of Hang Seng Management College backed the broad outlooks.

"Of course a well-paid job is good," Chan said, but graduates using knowledge for society and to benefit more people "is what's most important."

Ho said the college is not a "training grounds for careers" but for society.

And Timothy Tong Wai-cheung of Hong Kong Polytechnic University noted a requirement for "service learning" for students – not just volunteering for few hours a week but to apply what they learned into serving.

Chan said Baptist U students were also expected to interact with teachers and participate in group activities, while Ho said Hang Seng wanted students and teachers to maintain lifelong relationships of mentors and friends.

Sung also remarked that current social science studies take in changes brought about by immigration to Hong Kong and friction between the SAR and the mainland, adding: "Global and regional studies are both important, humanities and science are inseparable."
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University presidents present a united front to say graduates need a world view.