

President's Letter to the HSUHK Family

19 February 2020

Dear Members of the HSUHK Family,

Hope all students and colleagues (especially those who are still staying in the Mainland) are all very well amid this special period!

Given the continued spread of novel coronavirus, all sectors as well as our daily lives and work have been affected. To safeguard the health of teachers and students, the University has to, inevitably, suspend face-to-face classes in this semester and replace them with online teaching temporarily until the epidemic is under control. Thanks to the full co-operation and concerted efforts of the entire HSUHK community, we manage to achieve continual learning despite class suspension.

Dear students, thank you for your understanding and co-operation; I also thank the Students' Union for being an important bridge of communication between the University and fellow students during this period. Although for the time being you cannot return to campus for classes, I believe that as an HSUHKer, you will persist in your learning with self-discipline, and participate in real-time class discussions according to the scheduled class timetable. In your spare time, you may reflect more on your personal values and life goals, and the ways to enhance yourself. You can also use this period to spend more time with your family, and express your care for your relatives, friends, teachers, and neighbours by phone or e-messaging to regain the human touch that may have been forgotten amid your busy life in the past.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of colleagues of the Student Affairs Office (SAO) and the Residential College Unit to ensure that the environment of RCs remains infection-free, to assist with the quarantine and isolation arrangements for students returning from the Mainland, and to help local students choose early departures from RCs to return home. Apart from strengthening some special student services, our SAO staff also serve as case officers to follow up closely with individual students staying in the Mainland, to address their enquiries and to reassure them and their parents ease of mind.

Thanks to the Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC) which, with the experience of online teaching gained at the end of the last semester, began to search for and tested in early January 2020 a better option of real-time interactive video teaching software in the market - MS Teams, making HSUHK the first higher education institution in Hong Kong to implement full use of MS Teams since class suspension. With urgency and tight timeframe, ITSC has also arranged many on-site and online training workshops for teachers and students, worked day and night to upgrade the system, added accessories, compiled user guidelines and set up an enquiry hotline so that teachers and students can use online teaching and learning resources smoothly wherever they are.

Thanks to the Registry (REG) for convening several cross- unit urgent meetings, and with a people-centered approach handled some special teaching and learning arrangements. These include extension of teaching week for make-up classes on campus; allowing students to withdraw certain modules and retake in the summer term or the next semester; and ensure as far as possible that Year-4 students can graduate as scheduled. During this period, REG has also handled many enquiries from teachers and students and provided appropriate assistance.

Thanks to colleagues of Schools and Departments for their collaborations on real-time teaching to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. I believe students will appreciate our teachers' devoted preparations and extra hard work, such as revising the subject teaching plan, assessment details, teaching materials, and new ways to interact with students, etc.

Thanks also go to the other academic support offices and administrative units (especially CDMO) for their continued commitment which demonstrate HSUHK's spirit of unity and perseverance. Given the limited time, resources and experience, some operations will unavoidably be less perfect, I plead for your forbearance and suggestions for improvements.

Lastly, although good progress has been made in the fight against the epidemic, there is still uncertainty. We should be alert, face it with a rational, calm, cautious and optimistic attitude, but not panic. We should fill our heart with caring, gratefulness, sharing and hope. With perseverance, Hong Kong people will succeed in fighting the epidemic.

There is no endless rain and the sun will rise one day. Tomorrow morning will be another scene. Once again, I sincerely wish you all happy teaching and learning, and good health!

Simon S. M. Ho
President
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