

### Remarks at the Junior Chamber International Queensway 35th Anniversary Banquet

1 June 2019 Hilton Garden Inn

It is a great pleasure to join this special event tonight. I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of JCI Queensway.

For the last 35 years, JCI Queensway has been devoted to serve the community and to inspire young people enhance their personal development, such as developing their leadership skills, entrepreneurship and the sense of social responsibility. JCI Queensway has built a strong community of highly-motivated young members who share the mission to contribute to the advancement of the global community.

As a non-profit private liberal-arts-oriented university, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) shares JCI Queensway's mission in terms of grooming young talents to become future responsible leaders of society.

The human society has encountered unprecedented changes (e.g technological, economic, political, social, etc.), What and how should we as university teachers nurture our youngsters to handle future uncertainties, changes and challenges? What competencies do they need to realize their potentials and have fulfillment in future work and life?

It is very difficult for us to predict how the world would be in 2050, especially when technology can mimic a human body, brain and mind. What we can be certain is that a lot of knowledge and skills we learn today will be obsolete or redundant in 10 years' time. Education certainly needs to be reformed to inspire students using IT and information wisely, thinking freely and critically, enhancing human relationships, and determining their own value system and life goals.

In the internet and big-data age, you would agree that we are flooded by the huge amount of instantly available but unfiltered data and information. Many entities intentionally disseminate biased or wrong information for different interests, or release unimportant information to divert our attention from the other more important information. These have already become the concerns of many people.

In recent years, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) has advanced rapidly, and humankind has entered an era of smart learning machines. Mimicking the complex way our brains works, AI will have a huge impact on people's work and life. Will AI turn many people redundant and useless? How can AI enhance human values and improve our well-being?

Technology is a double-edged sword. AI technology can bring us productivity, convenience, comfort and well-being, including the elimination of intermediaries and providing more personalised experiences. For pattern recognition and other association tasks, a machine can do it better than a human; this can then free up the professionals to do other more valuable and creative/challenging things.

Nonetheless, apart from the loss of many jobs and specialties, AI also brings hidden concerns such as infringement of personal privacy, incorrect program logics, more social inequality, more alienated interpersonal relationships, and other ethical and legal disputes.

With big data and machine learning, the algorithm will monitor your every step, breathe and heartbeat, and may even understand you better than yourself in many aspects. If you rely too much on technology saddling your life, technology could treat you as a hostage. Technology is not bad. Nonetheless, if you do not know what you want, technology can easily overtake you to set your objectives, and may control your life. It will be more like you serve technology, and not technology serves you.

### **What makes us different from AI machines?**

After all, artificial intelligence was invented by humans, and the algorithm behind it was designed by humans as a tool to serve people. It is difficult for AI to completely replace human intelligence, imagination, creativity, emotional feelings, human caring, aesthetic judgement, and the spirit of inclusion, etc. Therefore, saying "AI replaces people" or "AI outperforms humans" is still far-fetched at this stage. In this new era of AI, the greatest manpower requirement will be jobs that are unstructured and cannot be replaced by AI, especially those that can lead AI with a humanity perspective.

While computers can crunch numbers and analyse data, it is the non-computational or non-programmable part of us, i.e. our soul, to make us human. And this is the part that AI cannot reach and needs most to be developed.

Free, critical and creative thinking allows you to develop a deeper understanding of yourself, including your value system and life goals. And when you are able to understand and express yourself, then you know your life purpose and can become who you truly are. And this would increase your genuine relationships with others and you will be able to make a bigger impact on the world. Machines cannot do this – a machine does not have a soul. AI can mimic a human but hardly compose a song or an art piece making one cry or laugh. And that is what makes us human.

Computers generally don't fail, human sometimes do. It is by struggling through the up and down moments and understanding our weaknesses, we can then develop our persistence and resilience against adversity. Instead of reprogramming like a computer, we look inside ourselves, discover and rediscover, adjust and readjust continuously throughout our life.

### **Liberal arts education nurturing 5 'Cs' qualities**

I always believe that any young person that satisfies the university minimum entrance requirements should be given the opportunity to pursue quality undergraduate studies. This will ensure equal education opportunities. A knowledge society will never have too many university graduates, A university degree these days is only an admission ticket to the job market, it does not imply a good job and a good salary after graduation. All graduates, regardless which university they graduate from, have to work hard and learn continuously to demonstrate their abilities, performance and values.

In this era, the least that teachers should teach students is more information, as many hard subject knowledge could easily become obsolete. Students already have too much information. What they really need is the ability to understand, analyze and judge which information is more important, and connect the piecemeal information to form a holistic world view. Also, schools need not emphasize specific job competencies, but to stress on generic work skills and life competencies.

I believe that the liberal arts education approach is the most effective way to cultivate students' key qualities. "Liberal" implies a broad-based and cross-disciplinary approach to connect knowledge domains and facilitate critical thinking. I believe that the purpose of undergraduate education is not solely for acquiring more knowledge and a better job prospect after graduation, but also for cultivating student's personal values, interests and transferrable core competencies, preparing them to become well-rounded responsible individuals who can handle future work and life challenges confidently with fulfillment.

Adopting the “Liberal + Professional” education model, the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) identifies quality teaching and students’ all-round development as its highest priorities, nurturing in students the above-mentioned 5 ‘C’ core qualities: (1) Critical thinking, (2) Creativity, (3) Communication & Collaborations, (4) Caring attitude, and (5) Community Engagement.

HSUHK adopts many liberal arts education elements in its education process. Some distinctive features include:

- A primary focus on undergraduate education which is student-centered;
- A smaller size of student population;
- Platinum award-winning campus buildings/facilities with extensive bamboo features;
- A cross-disciplinary Common Core Curriculum, blending humanity with technology;
- Innovative degree programmes, many of which are the first of its kind in Hong Kong;
- Interactive small-class teaching;
- Residential College System combining living with learning;
- Close student-teacher relationships;
- Guidance and mentorship for individual students in and outside classrooms;
- Extensive outreaching and experiential learning opportunities including service learning, internships, international exchanges and independent research;
- Provision of scholarships and bursaries amounting to about HK\$20 million per year; and
- A full-time employment rate of close to 80% within four months of graduation.

Through the provision of an all-round, transformational and empowering educational experience, we aim to nurture students to become future leaders of society with critical thinking, innovative minds, caring attitude, moral values and social responsibilities.

HKUHK allows Hong Kong students and teachers another option of undergraduate education, making Hong Kong’s higher education ecology more diverse and balanced. It aspires to become be a leading non-profit private university in the region with a difference.

Young people have an important role to play in building a sustainable and promising future. With the spirit of “THE POWER OF WE”, I have no doubt that JCI Queensway will achieve many new goals and continue to thrive in the years ahead.

Thank you.