

Welcome Remarks at the HSUHK Chinese New Year Staff Party 2026

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Yip Kit Chuen and Yuen Yuk Hing Hall, Yuen Campus, HSUHK

Dear Colleagues,

Good afternoon! I am delighted to join you all today at our annual Chinese New Year Staff Party to welcome the vibrant and hopeful Year of the Horse. Thank you for your hard work and dedication over the past year. My special congratulations go to the 22 colleagues who will be receiving the “Outstanding Staff Award for Administrative and Academic Support Staff” today. I wish you all good fortune and success in the Year of the Horse!

More than Twelve Years of Memories

Since ancient times, the horse has symbolised forward momentum and unyielding vitality - values that reflect the educational mission we have always upheld at The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK). In this new year, let us draw inspiration from this spirit, carry forward our passion, and continue to strive together to create an even brighter future in education, research, and service.

In the blink of an eye, I have served as President for twelve years, and I will step down at the end of August this year. When I joined in 2014, the Hang Seng University was still the “Hang Seng Management College” (HSMC). Together with colleagues, we were full of aspirations to build a truly student-centred, liberal-arts-oriented private university that values both teaching and research. After twelve years, the Hang Seng University has become a unique institution widely recognised in Hong Kong and the region. These achievements are the result of the collective efforts of every one of you here.

When I joined, the campus had far fewer buildings, the facilities were much less developed, and there were not as many students, staff and programmes as there are today. Over the years, we have together witnessed the University’s rapid growth and transformation. But one thing has never changed — our passion and commitment to the University’s mission, and our connection as a family.

I recall that in my first few years, on the first teaching day of each new academic year, I would visit different campus entrances in the morning to welcome and shake hands

with every freshman I met. Some colleagues asked me, "President Ho, do you really need to be so serious?". I have always felt that students are the protagonists of the University. I want them to feel from their very first day that this is a university that truly cares for them. Even today, when I'm walking around campus or attending external events, some students or alumni come up to me and say, "President Ho, you shook my hand and chatted with me on my first day". Those close interactions have been my sources of motivation over the years. Just yesterday evening, after returning to campus from work, a student majoring in Asian Studies approached me at the entrance of S H Ho Academic Building and said, "Hello, President Ho, I'm about to graduate.". He told me that we had chatted on his first day and recalled some of the words of encouragement I had shared with him.

Campus Memories: Those Unforgettable Moments

Over the past 12 years, we have shared many unforgettable moments together.

One day in 2015, the Students' Union leaders and a group of students staged a sit-in protest outside the Chamber on 8/F of Lee Quo Wei Academic Building. They opposed the University's annual adjustments to tuition fees, arguing that students could not estimate in advance the total cost for the four years of university study. They called on the University to fix the tuition fee increase rates for the forthcoming four years before they joined so that prospective students could determine whether they could afford the full cost of their studies.

That afternoon, after attending a meeting with the Board of Governors outside, I received a call from a colleague suggesting that I should not return to my campus office for the time being, to avoid direct confrontation and any awkward situation that may arise from the protest. After giving some thoughts, I decided to return to campus and meet the student protesters. After listening to the concerns of the student leaders, I suggested that they end the sit-in and that we would arrange a separate meeting to discuss the matter further.

A few days later, I met with the student representatives. I agreed to recommend to the Board to fix the total tuition fee increases throughout the four years of study. The proposal was initially rejected by the Board. I subsequently worked with the student representatives again (together with a helpful teacher) to develop a more comprehensive and workable proposal, which was ultimately approved by the Board. The incident reflected the maturity and quality of the student leaders at HSMC at the time, who engaged with the University Management in a sincere and constructive manner, and together we found a solution. To this day, I remain grateful to those student leaders.

After years of advocacy to the HKSAR Government by me and my colleagues, within a year of Mrs Carrie Lam assuming office as Chief Executive, the Government

announced a subsidy covering about half of the tuition fees for all local undergraduate students at recognised self-financing institutions, bringing their tuition fees broadly in line with those of publicly funded universities.

In 2015, I organized the first "Along with the President" series event. I simply sought an opportunity to go hiking and chat with students. To my surprise, the response was far more enthusiastic than I had expected, so we continued holding it every year. During those hikes, some students told me they were worried about the shortage of bed spaces in the Residential Colleges. Others asked how they could secure more internship opportunities. Some shared their relationship and family issues with me. These outdoor gatherings continued until being suspended in 2020 because of the pandemic, and they have only resumed recently. Whenever I see students willing to open up and share their thoughts with me, I feel that this University is not just a place for imparting knowledge, but also a place where people are heard and where they can grow.

I also remember the moment on 30 October 2018, when we successfully attained the retitling of The Hang Seng Management College to The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. When the Government announced the news, cheers burst in the entire campus. Some colleagues were overcome with emotion that they embraced one another in tears. Some student leaders even lifted me into the air (lucky that they caught me!). On 8 November 2018, nearly a thousand students, faculty, staff, and alumni gathered in the College Hall for the official retitling ceremony. The sense of belonging and pride that filled the room is something I can still vividly remember today. Retitling was not the finish line, but the beginning of a new chapter that we achieved together.

Furthermore, at each graduation ceremony, as I stood on the stage watching graduates come forward to shake hands and take photos, I am often moved by their words. Some would say, "President, thank you for listening to my concerns during our hike together.", "President, I still remember you encouraging us to pursue our dreams with courage and be proactive in solving problems.". I often reflect on these moments and struggle to hold back my tears — because I know that behind every graduate lay the unwavering commitment and dedication of the entire Hang Seng University community.

Thank You to Everyone Who has Shared this Journey

I have often said that the University's greatest asset is neither its campus nor its rankings — but its people. It is every one of you: our dedicated leaders, faculty, and staff, whose passion and commitment have shaped the Hang Seng University.

I remember one weekend when Typhoon Signal No. 8 was hoisted, a tree on campus had fallen. Early the next morning, I saw colleagues from the Campus Development

and Management Office had already arrived to clear the debris. They reassured me, "President, don't worry. We'll take care of it properly. Students returning for classes tomorrow will not be affected.". On another occasion, a cleaning staff member told me, "President, my son is also a student at the Hang Seng University. He often says the University is so nice, and I am very happy working here.". These countless moments have made me deeply realise that the Hang Seng University is not just a workplace, but a big family brimming with warmth and humanity.

Whether in teaching, research, administration, student development, or campus management, every colleague has devoted immense dedication and effort to the Hang Seng University. It is because of your hard work that our students have been able to grow, realise their potential, and become individuals who contribute meaningfully to society. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you. Thank you!

Looking to the Future

The Year of the Horse symbolises vitality, hope, determination, and the drive to gallop forward. Although I will step down as President at the end of August, I have every confidence in the future of the Hang Seng University. I believe, under the leadership of the new management team and with the continued dedication of all colleagues, the Hang Seng University will continue to "lead the way" (一馬當先), break new ground in higher education, and create even greater values for our students and society.

I have often told our students, "Never forget where you came from, and always know where you are going." For me, the Hang Seng University has been my home for the past twelve years. Once again, I would like to thank each and everyone of you for your unwavering support, understanding, and partnership throughout this remarkable journey. It has been the most cherished experience of my life to work alongside with you. The friendships we have built and the experiences we have shared will always hold a special place in my heart. Even after my retirement, wherever life may take me, I will continue to care deeply about the University's development and will always be cheering you on.

Blessings for the Year of the Horse

Today, as we celebrate the Chinese New Year together, I hope everyone will relax a little, enjoy the gathering, spend time chatting with your colleagues, and exchange your best wishes for a prosperous year ahead!

May the Year of the Horse bring you boundless energy, happiness for your family, and every success in the year ahead!