

New Academic Year Message (2020-21) from the President

27 August 2020

Dear Members of the HSUHK Family,

My warmest welcome to all of you to the new academic year 2020-21, especially to the new staff members and students who have joined the HSUHK Family!

To the 18 new academic staff members, you have joined a strong cohort of scholars with a common drive to achieve excellence in teaching, learning and research. I encourage you to contribute your expertise and ideas, inspire others and be inspired in this vibrant community.

To the some 2,000 new students, after the novel virtual New Student Orientation Programme on 21 August 2020, you are about to embark on an exciting learning journey at HSUHK, despite that many classes will be delivered online until the pandemic situation significantly improves. Here, you will explore your interests and passions, and expand your competencies; you will also be challenged by new ideas and new learning opportunities that will broaden your horizon, help your personal growth and build up your personal values. I encourage you to be open-minded, appreciate different ideas and views, take charge of your learning, and make the most of your university experience. Our teachers, staff, and senior students will support you throughout your time at HSUHK.

As we forge ahead with new plans and ideas despite the uncertain COVID-19 situation in the new academic year, I would also like to recap some of our key developments/achievements in 2019-20 in this letter.

1. **40th Anniversary of the Founding of HSUHK**

2020 marks the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of HSUHK when our founders, including the late Dr. Ho Sin Hang, the late Dr. Lee Quo Wei and others, established the then Hang Seng School of Commerce (HSSC) in 1980 which was transformed to the then degree-granting Hang Seng Management College (HSMC) in 2010. With our founders' foresight and the collective efforts of all stakeholders of the institution, HSMC was granted approval by the HKSAR Government in October

2018 to be renamed as “The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong” (HSUHK), a private liberal-arts-oriented university offering a wide range of innovative programmes.

To celebrate the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the founding of HSUHK, a commemorative book titled ‘*Of Grace and Talent 鍾靈敏秀*’ was published reviewing the past and present accomplishments of the University. A collection of commemorative videos with members of the HSUHK community sharing their stories and memories with HSSC/ HSMC/ HSUHK were also publicised. The inaugural Honorary Doctorates Conferment Ceremony cum Reception for the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of HSUHK will be postponed to early December 2020.

2. Launch of New Programmes

During the year, HSUHK was granted approval to offer three new undergraduate programmes, namely BBA (Honours) in Economics, BBA (Honours) in General Business, BA (Honours) in Art and Design, and Executive MSc in Insurance. The last 3 new programmes are the first of its kind in Hong Kong. With these four new programmes, HSUHK offers in sum 23 undergraduate programmes and 6 taught postgraduate programmes.

For better management and synergy, the Department of Art and Design has been established under the School of Humanities and Social Science, to house the new Art and Design programme and the current Cultural and Creative Industries programme (formerly under the Department of Social Science). The School of Translation also changed its name to ‘School of Translation and Foreign Languages’ to better represent the current strengths and the future development of the School.

Furthermore, subject to accreditation exercises and approval, the University plans to launch in 2021-22 two new undergraduates programmes: BSS in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and BA in Psychology as well as four taught postgraduate programmes: MA in Business Management, MSc in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, MA in Drama and Performance Studies, and MA in Global English Literacy and Cultural Studies.

3. Student Admissions

With the tremendous efforts of academic and administrative staff, the University conducted a successful student admission exercise for the 2020-21 entry. The

undergraduate student intake of about 2,000 (including 89 non-local students) was recorded, a slight drop from 2019-20 due to the pandemic and a year-on-year decrease in the number of students taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). Nonetheless, there was a significant growth in the number of senior-year intake. This still shows the increasing recognition by the secondary school students, teachers, parents and the general public on HSUHK's distinct features and quality.

4. Teaching and Learning

QESS

The University has seen a remarkable success in the 2019-20 round of the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS) of the HKSAR Government, with a total funding amount of over HK\$12 million in support of three projects. They included HK\$8.7 million for a theme-based project "Development of Real-time Cooperative VR multi-CAVE systems for collaborative and team learning"; HK\$2.3 million for an open-ended project "Towards Student Success - Developing Holistic Support for Students with Special Educational Needs"; and HK\$1.2 million for another open-ended project "Interactive Artificial Intelligence Assisted Chatbot for Self-improving Oral English Proficiency". We will strive to maintain our upward trajectory in securing the funding and resources necessary to foster excellence in teaching and learning.

Survey on Online Teaching and Learning

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face teaching was switched to online teaching since 31 January 2020 for Semester Two, 2019-20. To evaluate the effectiveness of online video teaching and learning and ways for future improvement, a Survey on Online Teaching and Learning was conducted during the period from 20 April to 11 May 2020 to collect feedback from students and teachers.

The Survey results showed that students considered (i) availability of learning materials, (ii) care and support to students, (iii) clear and concise teaching, (iv) effective use of technology, (v) engaged and interactive teaching and learning, (vi) feedback and consultation, and (vii) good preparation for online teaching as good teaching practices. Teachers indicated their concerns mainly in the areas of preparation, technical support, and student engagement. Together with the feedback collected in the findings from the Schools, the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) made recommendations to the University on ways to improve online teaching and learning and to better accommodate teachers' and students'

needs. The recommendations and the summary of survey findings were posted on the CTL website on 21 August 2020.

In view of the challenges and difficulties arising from switching from face-to-face to online teaching, the CTL and Staff Development Committee jointly organised a seminar “From F2F to Online Teaching: Keys to Delivering Effective Classes” on 24 June 2020. Four academic colleagues of HSUHK shared their keys of delivering effective online classes and exchanged insights with academic staff and participants on the topic. Similar seminars would be organized again in 2020-21.

Establishment of the Honours Academy

With the aim of nurturing high-performing and promising HSUHK students to become future global leaders, the University pioneered the establishment of the Honours Academy ("HA") in Hong Kong in May 2020.

Under this pioneering initiative, a cohort of up to 20 high-achieving year-two students would be selected each year starting from 2020-21 to engage in a three-year focused leadership development programme covering a broad range of professional development opportunities, including tailor-made interdisciplinary modules, professional mentorship, internship, residential colleges experience, senior research projects, service leadership, global exposures, etc. In the inaugural year, over 70 applications were received and many of them were nominated by Schools. After two rounds of interviews, group and individual, 20 committed and passionate students were finally selected as the 1st cohort of HA students. Under the strategic leadership of its Head Prof Jeanne Fu and her team, we aim to maximise the potentials and future impacts of these HA young scholars.

5. Research

RGC

In the academic year 2019-20, HSUHK secured a total funding of HK\$16.33 million for 18 Faculty Development Scheme (FDS) projects, four Inter-institutional Development Scheme (IIDS) projects and one Institutional Development Scheme Collaborative Research Grant (IDS CRG) project under the Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the Local Self-financing Degree Sector of the Research Grants Council (RGC). For this year, HSUHK's total number of approved projects in FDS and IIDS were the highest among all the eligible institutions. In the six-year period since 2014-15, HSUHK received the highest cumulative funding amount as well as the highest total number of research projects awarded by RGC.

Research Matching Grant Scheme

Starting from 1 August 2019, the Government has earmarked \$3 billion as matching grants under the Research Matching Grant Scheme (Research MGS). Under the Research MGS, a guaranteed “floor” amount of HK\$50 million was set aside for each eligible institution to match with donations / research funding secured from non-government / non-public sectors on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis over a three-year operation period. For 2019/20, HSUHK secured research funding and in-kind sponsorships from private or non-public sectors with a total value of about \$22 million. A matching grant amounting to \$20.7 million was also approved on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis.

Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (Special Round)

HSUHK secured a funding of HK\$1.44 million for four research projects under the special round of Public Policy Research Funding Scheme launched in November 2019. The funding granted was to support research studies on topics relating to the underlying causes and recommending solutions for the social incidents which started in June 2019; as well as on important political, economic, cultural and societal issues relating to the deep-seated problems of Hong Kong’s society.

Establishment of the Big Data Intelligence Centre

The Big Data Intelligence Centre (BDIC) was established during the year under the School of Decision Sciences to undertake relevant, high-quality applied research in Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Business Analytics. The BDIC would also disseminate big data related knowledge to academics, practitioners, and government units in Hong Kong to address the growing demand across industries for a fuller understanding of Big Data.

Establishment of the Chinese Family Succession Research Centre

The Chinese Family Succession Research Centre (CFSRC) was also established under the School of Business during the year. As a pioneer in the related field, CFSRC would assist the sustainable development of Chinese family businesses through conducting academic and empirical studies, help design and execute succession plans, and nurture the next generation of Chinese family businesses. It would also provide training and education opportunities for service providers in wealth management and family-succession-related business.

The above outstanding progress in research reflects our persistent endeavours to explore across frontiers and contribute to the advancement of society through impactful applied research.

6. Student Achievements

Outstanding student achievements in various open competitions were recorded throughout the year, some of which included:

- Champion in the 10th International Logistics Case Competition 2019 by Hong Kong Logistics Association and Youth Society of Hong Kong Logistic Association;
- “The Enlightenment Post” won Champions in Best in Tech News Reporting and Best in Headline Writing, both in the English group, in China Daily Hong Kong Edition 2019 Campus Newspaper Awards;
- HKIE Best Students Paper Award 2019 in The HKIE LTD Best Students Papers Awards 2019 organised by The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers Logistics and Transportation Division (HKIE LTD);
- HKICPA QP Scholarship 2020 and HKICPA Scholarship 2019-20 by The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA); and
- CILTHK Scholarship (Bachelor Degree Category) 2018-19 by Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong (CILTHK).

7. Fund-raising for Residential Colleges

In 2019-20, HSUHK fundraising efforts continued to bear fruit, with major donations including:

- HK\$50 million from The S. H. Ho Foundation Ltd. in support of the development of the University and the Wellness College of the HSUHK Jockey Club Residential Colleges (RCs); and
- HK\$50 million from The Wei Lun Foundation in support of the development of the University and the Mosaic College of the RCs.

We hope to secure the donation for the Evergreen College in 2020-21 so that all four Residential Colleges will be named after their respective generous benefactor.

8. Awards Received by HSUHK

HSUHK received various awards during the year in recognition of our significant efforts in providing public financial education to the community on a pro bono basis, our commitment to sustainability excellence, and our caring for our employees:

- Financial Education Leadership Gold Award 2020 awarded by The Institute of Financial Planners of Hong Kong;
- Yazhou Zhoukan Asia Excellence Brand Award 2018 and 2019; and
- “Certificate of Excellence” of Hong Kong Sustainability Award 2018/19 by the Hong Kong Management Association (“HKMA”).

The Pandemic and Concluding Remarks

2019-20 had surely been a hard year for everyone. Apart from intensifying conflicts and tension in society, the outbreak of COVID-19 which exacerbated since February 2020 had changed the world to a new scene. Since early February 2020, besides implementing many urgent precautionary measures on campus and staff flexible work arrangement, almost all face-to-face classes and events at HSUHK were replaced by online mode. The sudden shift to remote learning had presented us with both technical and pedagogic challenges. I would like to sincerely thank all teachers and staff for their painstaking efforts to maintain the quality of teaching and learning and continuously seek improvements and innovative solutions; and students for their understanding and cooperation during this difficult time.

As you may have known, in view of the uncertain development of COVID-19, after consulting teachers, Deans and SU leaders, the online video mode of teaching will be adopted for all undergraduate modules from the start of Semester 1, 2020/21 until further notice to safeguard the health of teachers, staff and students. However, teachers may still arrange optional on-campus small-group consultation sessions for students. Based on experience and feedback we received in the last six months, we have implemented improved measures and will continue to do our best to attend to teachers’ and students’ needs.

The pandemic has been destructive, but it has also produced “creative destructions” which have brought innovations and new opportunities in teaching, learning and business. As we now understand more about the characteristics and transmission channels of COVID-19, we know that it will take a longer time before the pandemic will completely subside. Therefore, instead of just canceling or suspending physical activities or changing to online mode, we should be prepared that as long as we have the right mindsets, adequate precautionary measures and effective planning and management, we can gradually return to our normal work and lives and treasure the human face-to-face interactions.

I also convey my deepest appreciation to the benevolent colleagues, alumni, partners and friends who have offered a helping hand to HSUHK amid the pandemic through

donations in cash, in kind or other means of support. In particular, cash donations to set up the COVID-19 Student Hardship Relief Fund to offer relief to students under financial hardship due to the pandemic. Their compassion and support have encouraged HSUHKers in the most difficult times of the pandemic.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks also go to members of our Board of Governors and Council for their continuous leadership and guidance to HSUHK. With a positive mindset, resilience, mutual deeper caring with each other, and the collaborative spirit of the HSUHK family, we will emerge from this global health crisis stronger and more united than ever.

Looking forward, we will continue to uphold the spirit of our founding motto "Erudition and Perseverance" by advancing our unique Liberal + Professional education model and nurturing more young talents with critical thinking, innovative minds, human caring, moral values and social responsibilities. We will also make further strides toward achieving the goals set out in our Strategic Plan 2018-2023: *Riding on the New Era: Private University with a Difference*.

Challenging times often bring out the best in us. I look forward to working with you closely in another intriguing year ahead. For now, please stay well and healthy.

Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Simon S.M. Ho', written in a cursive style.

Professor Simon S.M. Ho 何順文教授

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