

New Academic Year Message (2021-22) from the President

1 September 2021

Dear Members of the HSUHK Family,

My warmest welcome to all of you in the new academic year 2021-22, especially to the new staff members and students who have just joined the HSUHK Family! This year, we have a total of 20 new academic staff members, ten administrative and academic support staff members, and around 1,800 new students on campus.

As you may well know, the COVID-19 pandemic has swept through the globe since January 2020. Despite the profound challenges, the University's resilience, responsiveness and adaptability have ensured that our core work of teaching and learning continue unabated. Thanks to the outstanding efforts, hard work and perseverance of our faculty, administrators and support staff, we have risen quickly and competently to the challenges. It has been my distinct honour to work with a team of dedicated and outstanding colleagues.

With the commencement of the new academic year 2021-22 and the more stable local COVID-19 situation, we shall resume face-to-face teaching on 8 September 2021 with additional epidemic precautionary measures in place. As we forge ahead with new plans and ideas, I would like to recap some of our key developments/ achievements in 2020-21 in this letter.

1. New Programmes

HSUHK was granted late approval by the Government in June 2021 to offer two new undergraduate (UG) programmes, namely Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology, and Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (being the first of its kind in the region), as well as three new taught postgraduate (TPG) programmes, namely Master of Business Management, Master of Arts in Global English Literary and Cultural Studies, and Master of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. The latter two would only be offered in 2022-23 due to the late approval. With the above new programmes, HSUHK has in sum 26 UG programmes and nine TPG programmes.

Furthermore, the University plans to launch in 2022-23 four new TPG programmes, including Master of Arts in Chinese, Master of Arts in English Language Teaching and Assessment, Master of Arts in Global Theatre Studies

(title to be confirmed), and Master of Social Sciences in Public Policy and Risk Governance.

2. Student Admissions

To enable students with distinguished high school performance in academic and/or non-academic areas to study at HSUHK, the special Principal Recommended Admission Scheme was introduced for the 2021-22 entry with firm offers, regardless of students' HKDSE examination results, issued alongside conditional offers before the announcement of the HKDSE results. Five nominees were given admission offers via the special Scheme and three were finally admitted. HSUHK was the first higher education institution in Hong Kong to allow this alternative admission route for talented students based only on their high school performance.

Despite the pandemic and the continuous drop in the Form Six student population, with the commitment and tremendous efforts of our staff members, the University was able to conduct an effective student admission exercise for 2021-22, with around 1,800 new undergraduate student intake, comprising 800 year-1 and 1003 senior-year (inclusive of 101 non-local students), though we still recorded a drop of about 10% in total when compared with that of last year. The University will continue to step up its efforts in recruiting quality non-local students especially from the Mainland, Taiwan and the ASEAN economies.

3. Honours Academy

The Honours Academy (HA), established in 2020, was the first of its kind initiated by a Hong Kong higher education institution. It aims to be an incubator in nurturing high-achieving students to become servant leaders with academic excellence, interdisciplinary perspectives, cross-cultural competencies and civic leadership to initiate positive changes in the local and global communities. The 1st cohort of 18 HA students started their learning journey in 2020-21 and completed various components including a workshop series on leadership and public policy engagement. After selection by the admission panel, the 17 best-performing year-2 students were admitted as the 2nd cohort of HA students in August 2021, who will be matched with a HA buddy from the 1st cohort for coaching and peer support.

4. Research Development

Competitive Research Funding Schemes

HSUHK continued to achieve very good results in the Research Grants Council (RGC) Competitive Research Funding Schemes. For the academic year 2020-21, HSUHK secured a total funding of HK\$14.84 million for 16 Faculty

Development Scheme (FDS) projects and two Inter-institutional Development Scheme (IIDS) projects, securing the greatest number of approved projects among the 15 eligible institutions. In the seven-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. The encouraging result demonstrated the University's commitment and continuous effort to support impactful research. The outcome for 2021-22 will be announced by RGC very soon.

Research Matching Grant Scheme

In 2020-21, HSUHK secured research funding and in-kind sponsorships from private or non-public sectors with a total value of about HK\$18.7 million. A research matching grant amounting to HK\$16.8 million was approved by the Research Grants Council on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis. After eight funding cycles since the launch of the Scheme, HSUHK has received a matching grant of \$37.67 million. There remains a balance of \$12.33 million for guaranteed matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis by HSUHK in the remaining cycles until July 2022.

Partnership Research Programme

Launched in January 2019, the Partnership Research Programme of the Innovation and Technology Fund (PRP) aims to support applied research and development (R&D) projects undertaken by R&D Centres or designated local public research institutes in collaboration with companies. In 2020-2021, HSUHK received an industry sponsorship and a matching funding support totaling HK\$1.75 million under the PRP for a collaborative research and development project on Smart Robotic Workforce System for SMEs.

5. Student Achievements

HSUHK encourages students to broaden their horizons and put their knowledge into practice through active participation in local and international competitions. Some of the outstanding student achievements in various open competitions during the year included:

- Champion in the Grand Final, MonsoonSIM Enterprise Resource Management (Online Business Simulation Game) Hong Kong Competition 2021, organised by MonsoonSIM Pty Ltd;
- Champion and Technological Innovation Award, HSUHK x SCMP Entrepreneurship Challenge 2021, organised by Wu Jieh Yee Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (WUCIE), Department of Marketing (MKT) and South China Morning Post (SCMP);
- Best Innovative Award, Hong Kong Logistics Case Contest 2021, organised by Hong Kong Logistics Association;

- the 1st in the Hong Kong region and the 149th worldwide, IEEEExtreme 14.0 Programming Competition 2020, organised by The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers; and
- Best Chapter (Gold Award), Wofoo Leaders' Network Best Award 2019, organized by Wofoo Leaders' Network.

6. Graduate Employment

According to the annual Graduate Employment Survey conducted for the class of 2020 graduates by SAO from October 2020 to March 2021, an average full-time employment rate of over 71% within seven months of graduation was recorded with positive feedbacks from employers. The job appointments for the 2021 graduates seemed to have much improved.

To gear up our support for graduates' employment during the pandemic and economic downturn, SAO has built closer ties with the industries and alumni, including the launch of an exclusive careers campaign partnering with external job portals which gained support from over 180 employers recruiting our graduates and students. Proactive nominations have also been made to external large-scaled recruitment programmes, including opportunities in the Greater Bay Area. The results have been very encouraging.

7. Campus Development and Sustainability

To create space conducive to the long-term development of the University, the Board of Governors approved the construction of a new academic building of 5-storey high in the West Lane near the Lee Shau Kee Complex. The new building is expected to be turned into a creative humanities hub encompassing a gallery, multi-media facilities and faculty offices for the School of Humanities and Social Science, for completion by late 2022.

With the aim to enhance the student-centred learning environment, existing learning facilities were also improved/ created, e.g. the Learning Commons on 2/F of S H Ho Academic Building and The Inspiring, an innovative and flexibly designed supportive facility on G/F of Lee Shau Kee Complex, where students can mingle, meet and seek advice from staff members of the student-support units, conduct seminars and workshops, etc.

The University is also committed to campus sustainability. Apart from extensive bamboo features, recent initiatives include the extended use of solar energy, the adoption of withering plants for composting, the study of decomposing food waste more efficiently to facilitate existing organic farming on campus, the complete phasing out of plastic bottled drinks from all vending machines, the installation of water dispensers in all major campus buildings, the installation of motion-sensor

activated lightings, etc., thus living up to our principle of “Environment Nurturing People”.

8. Institutional Advancement

In 2020-21, HSUHK fundraising efforts continued to bear fruit, with a total amount of HK\$149.8 million secured/ pledged. Major donations (over \$10M) included:

- \$50 million from The Fung Yiu King Charitable Foundation in support of the Evergreen College development; and
- \$80 million from Mr. Francis Yuen and Dr. Rose Lee in support of the campus development project.

In recognition of the benevolence and substantial support from the donors, the Evergreen College was named as “Fung Yiu King Evergreen College”; whereas the South Campus of the University was named as “HSUHK Yuen Campus”.

9. Public Recognitions/ Awards Received by HSUHK

HSUHK received various prestigious awards and recognitions during the year, such as:

- listed among the top 200 globally on “Quality Education” and “Decent Work and Economic Growth” in the latest 2021 *Times Higher Education* (THE) World University Impact Rankings;
- *Yazhou Zhoukan* Asia Excellence Brand Award 2020 (being awarded for the third consecutive year); and
- Financial Education Leadership Gold Award 2020 awarded by The Institute of Financial Planners of Hong Kong.

10. Concluding Remarks

The above University achievements have only been made possible by the dedicated efforts of the University family. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to members and supporters of the University for their long-standing support, which has continuously helped the University scale new heights. In particular, I would like to thank Ms. Louisa Cheang, our former Board Chair, for her leadership and wise counsel in the past three years. Taking the opportunity, I would like to welcome on board our new Governor and Board Chair, Ms. Diana Cesar, effective 2 September 2021.

HSUHK is well-positioned in our unique “Liberal + Professional” education model. We will continue to uphold the spirit of our founding motto "Erudition and Perseverance" by further advancing our unique education model and nurturing more young talents with critical thinking, innovative minds, human caring, moral

values and social responsibilities. After all, our biggest reward is to see our students find meanings and fulfilments in their future lives and work.

Let us embrace the opportunities and energy that come together with the beginning of the new academic year. I earnestly look forward to working closely with you for another fruitful academic year!

Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon S.M. Ho', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon S.M. Ho

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