

Address at the Graduation Ceremony 2023

4 December 2023
College Hall, Yuen Campus, HSUHK

Mr. James Tsien, Vice-Chairman of the Council, Governors, Council Members, Graduating Students, Parents, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Graduation Ceremony for the Class of 2023! I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to our graduates for reaching an important milestone in your life. The Graduation Ceremony is not only a time for you to celebrate the fruits of your hard work, but also to show your gratitude to your teachers, family members, mentors, fellow classmates and friends, who have cared for you and been by your side throughout your learning journey at HSUHK.

As you begin the next chapter in your lives, I would like to share with you a little story about rocks, pebbles, and sand. A professor showed his class a big glass jar. He started filling up the jar with rocks and asked his students if the jar was full, the students said yes. The professor then poured some small pebbles into the jar, which filled the space around the bigger rocks. “Is the jar fuller now?” the professor asked again. The students agreed that the jar was now fuller. The professor finally poured sand into the jar, which took up all the remaining space. This stimulated the students to think about the meaning of “fullness” or “fulfilment”.

This metaphor inspires us on some self-reflections. The jar represents your life, the rocks represent the most important aspects of life, which help us lay a strong foundation and give us strength, especially in times of challenges. The pebbles and the sand are other aspects that also matter, as they add richness, colour and a sense of completion to your life. However, if you do not prioritise your rocks, but spend most of your time and energy pursuing pebbles and sand, you may have little room left for the things that will help you build a stronger foundation in life.

Throughout my own life journey, I have explored and discovered by time that my rocks are my personal values and attitudes. This self-discovery enables me to follow my passions for higher education and community services, and live a simple life with a sense of fulfilment.

Dear graduates, as you explore new experiences in your next stage of lives, I urge you to prioritise the values that you pursue. Values define who you are, and serve as the guiding principles which affect your behaviors, attitudes and performance. Values guide you to make important decisions and set your life priorities. Persistence in upholding your values in your pursuits will help you create a life that is more fulfilling.

In a world where success is often measured by indicators such as wealth, fame, power and social status, it is easy to lose sight of what truly matters. In fact, success can have different meanings for different people. Success can be non-traditional, non-material and intangible such as finding happiness and love, leading a simple life, building strong relationships, realising your interests and potential, and giving back to the community. For me, success is about choices that align with our values and passions, and contribute to the wellbeing of others and society at large. What does success or values mean to you?

As a non-profit private liberal-arts-oriented university, HSUHK adopts the unique “Liberal + Professional” education model, which has empowered you to explore your personal values and develop the competencies of the 5 Cs, “Critical Thinking”, “Creativity”, “Communication/Collaborations”, “Caring Attitude” and “Continuous Active Learning”. With these 5 Cs, you will be more able to tackle the challenges ahead with grace and fulfilment. Whichever path or mission you choose in the future, I encourage you to reflect on your personal values and craft your own jar with rocks, pebbles and sand.

Once again, congratulations to the Class of 2023! I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.