

Convocation for New Undergraduate Students 2024-25
5 September 2024
President's Speech

Dear Students and Colleagues,

My heartiest congratulations and warmest welcome to all new students and faculty members joining the Hang Seng University family! I am delighted to see the happy faces of about 1,900 new undergraduates embarking on a new learning journey here.

As a new student, you will encounter exciting opportunities and experiences here. You will meet new people, make new friends and engage in many learning development activities. You will experience diverse teaching and learning methods and adapt to your new university life. At the same time, you will face new challenges such as balancing your academic life with your social life, managing your time and finances effectively, and coping with new stress.

Speaking of challenges, I am inspired by the remarkable stories of the Hong Kong sportsmen who made history in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. For instance, fencing athlete Cheung Ka Long, the first athlete in Hong Kong who won two Olympic gold medals, said his journey is guided by his motto, "Don't Lose Your Way". He stressed that we should persevere and stay true to our purpose, even when the path ahead is unclear. He shared that after experiencing a painful period of low point and self-doubt when his world ranking dropped from ten to 19 and he did not know how to improve, he realized it is important to understand ourselves and face our weaknesses honestly. He then set off again to improve himself continuously with a positive mindset. In his last three points in the final match (while we may have all held our breath), Cheung remained calm, focused and composed, and with full confidence, he finally turned a 14:14 tie into a victory.

Another model example is swimming athlete Siobhan Haughey who won two silver medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and two bronze medals at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. She once suffered a serious ankle injury that threatened her swimming career. She reminds herself to stay positive and keep moving forward. She thus boldly stepped up to the recovery plan despite all the pains and challenges, and returned to the pool confidently. Racing against the world's best swimmers, she pushed her limits and became one of

the most admired Olympian in the Hong Kong history.

Dear students, I share the experience of the above athletes to inspire you to scale new heights amidst limitations and challenges. Their stories have manifested that they have stayed true to their purposes, and shown how their core values such as resilience, perseverance, and determination have helped them overcome countless difficulties and challenges on the path to their achievements. So, when you encounter obstacles, or find yourself at crossroads, or when you may even think you are a loser, whether in sports, university studies, or other aspects of life, let their stories and values belief inspire you. Know your strengths and weaknesses, learn from every setback, seek continuous improvement, and always give your utmost efforts in pursuing your values and goals.

On this point, I am glad to share with you that the HSU family also has our own “Olympic athletes” who have testified their talent and diligence globally. In 2024, our student team of three BSc-DSBI students outperformed 1,800 university teams and early-career professionals worldwide and clinched the World Championship in the prestigious EY Open Science Data Challenge 2024. This proves our students are among the most competitive in the region.

Adopting the unique “Liberal + Professional” (L+P) education model, the Hang Seng University places its highest priorities on quality teaching and students’ all-round development. “Liberal” represents our commitment to nurture students’ freedom to think and thrive in the global village. Our aim is to empower students to pursue their aspirations by fostering the 5 “C” transferrable core competencies: Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication and collaborations skills, Caring attitude, and Continuous active learning. “Liberal” also represents a broad and cross-disciplinary approach to connect different knowledge domains, facilitate thinking, and solve problems embracing diversity and inclusiveness.

“Professional” represents the incorporation of professional subject elements in many of our major programmes, which equip students with transferable professional competencies, professionalism and ethics that are required in future careers options. But there seems no need for you to decide on your career field too early, as your future job may not match with your major study, and the world/ job market changes so rapidly.

There is an array of learning opportunities and resources available at HSUHK that help you fulfil yourself. Academically, besides your own major programme and our cross-disciplinary Common Core Curriculum, you are free to choose many free electives from any Department/ School. Also, you can engage in many experiential activities outside the classroom including overseas exchanges, internships, service learning, student body leadership, independent research projects, arts and sports teams, residential college life, entrepreneurial endeavours, and so forth. These learning opportunities help broaden your global horizon, and develop your potentials, goals and life values. All these help you seize future opportunities and handle future challenges in work and life with confidence and fulfillment. As what Albert Einstein says, “Try not to become a man of success, but rather become a man of value”.

In closing, let me assure you that you are not alone in your university journey. Our dedicated faculty and staff are here to support and guide you. They will witness and celebrate your achievements and milestones, both big and small. Connect with them proactively and seek help when needed.

Please take good care of your health and wellness and try to strike a balance between work and life. Only with a healthy body and mind can you pursue your dreams and passions. I wish you all a very good start of your study journey and a fulfilling academic year ahead!

Thank you.

Simon S.M. Ho
President
The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong