



Press Release – For Immediate Release

To: Assignment Editor/Editor of Education and Local News Sections

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HSUHK signs joint declaration with Asian liberal arts institutions reaffirming commitment to advocate sustainable development

The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) hosted the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU) Annual Presidents’ Forum 2024 on 1 November 2024. Speakers from 10 member institutions from AALAU, including HSUHK itself, discussed the theme of “Sustainability Leadership: The Role of Liberal Arts Education”. Members also signed a joint declaration to reaffirm their collective commitment to advocate sustainable development.

The Annual President’s Forum serves as a platform for representatives from member institutions to identify significant issues and challenges, explore innovative approaches to liberal arts education, and address emerging opportunities and obstacles in the educational landscape. The Forum’s theme this year centred around “Sustainability Leadership” to engage members and other participants in discussions about the diverse challenges educators encounter in developing sustainability leadership, and building resilient institutions capable of withstanding the adverse impacts of economic instability, climate change, geopolitical tensions, social inequality, and humanitarian crises.

In his opening remarks, Professor Simon S M Ho, President of HSUHK, called for unity among members of AALAU in approaching sustainability, “Liberal arts education plays a unique role in addressing pressing global challenges and nurturing the next generation of sustainability leadership that places humanity at the centre. Members of AALAU should affirm our collective commitment to fostering a new paradigm of sustainability.” He also elaborated on how HSUHK’s unique “Liberal + Professional” education model echoed the theme of the Forum and highlighted the value it places on cross-disciplinary liberal arts education, as well as the University’s initiatives to achieve sustainable development that will help transform the future generations.

Professor Hiram E Chodosh, President of Claremont McKenna College, a top liberal arts college in the US, delivered a keynote speech at the Forum. He echoed Professor Ho’s views on the pivotal role of liberal arts education in fostering sustainability leadership. He identified three key challenges educators face today: exclusion, polarisation, and siloing, and explained how liberal



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arts education equips future leaders with the knowledge, skills, and resilience needed to tackle complex sustainability issues. In the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Professor Chodosh emphasised that liberal arts education focuses on human intelligence. While teaching students to use AI effectively is important, fostering independent and critical thinking, as well as cultivate their intellectual abilities, is even more crucial.

Served as the special guest of the Forum, Ms Ada Wong Ying-kay, Supervisor of HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity and an alumna of the renowned US liberal arts institution Pomona College, shared her experience of becoming a social entrepreneur in Hong Kong after graduation. Over the years, she has worked to bridge the gap between youngsters, local communities and authorities, recognising that future problems will be even “wicked”. In response to the government’s latest Policy Address aimed at establishing the city as an international higher education hub, she articulated her vision that Hong Kong could also become a “liberal arts education hub”.

At the Forum, the attending member institutions jointly signed a declaration to reaffirm their collective commitment to a set of principles aimed at fostering more green, just and prosperous global societies. These sustainability principles include advocacy for sustainable development, interdisciplinary collaborations, educational innovations, community engagement, impactful research, global responsibility, and a dedication to continuous improvement. Together, the member institutions aim to inspire future generations to champion a sustainable and equitable world.

Founded in 2017, AALAU aims to allow members with similar characteristics and visions to jointly improve the quality of teaching, learning, and research through mutual reference and exchange. With HSUHK joining in 2024, the Alliance now comprises 31 liberal arts universities across Asia.

Forum details: <https://aalau2024.hsu.edu.hk/>

Please [click here](#) for President Ho’s Opening Remarks.



Photos:



Photo 1: Members sign a joint declaration to reaffirm their collective commitment to advocate sustainable development.



Photo 2: Representatives of AALAU members gather at HSUHK for the Annual Presidents' Forum 2024, collaborating to inspire future generations to champion a sustainable and equitable world.



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Photo 3: President Simon Ho calls for unity among members of AALAU in approaching sustainability.



Photo 4: Professor Hiram E Chodosh identifies three major challenges that educators face nowadays: exclusion, polarisation and siloing.



Photo 5: Ms Ada Wong articulates her vision that Hong Kong could become a “liberal arts education hub”.

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About The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) is a non-profit private liberal-arts oriented university with five Schools (Business, Communication, Decision Sciences, Humanities and Social Science, and Translation and Foreign Languages) and over 6,000 full-time students. Adopting the unique “Liberal + Professional” education model, HSUHK aims to nurture young talent with critical thinking, innovative minds, caring attitudes, moral values and social responsibility.

Aspiring to be a leading private university in the region, HSUHK features a primary focus on undergraduate education, top-quality faculty members, award-winning green campus facilities, innovative degree programmes, a unique residential college system combining living and learning, interactive small-class teaching, very close student-teacher relationship, RGC-funded impactful research, and excellent student development/support services. HSUHK is listed the 7th (overall) in the ASEAN+ region, the 1st in the Greater China region, and the 1st in Employability as per the 2023 AppliedHE ASEAN+ private university assessment by the Singapore-based AppliedHE. It is also listed among the top 200 worldwide on “Quality Education” and “Decent Work and Economic Growth” in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings 2021.