Liberal Arts in the New Economy

A Few Words from Our New President

Professor William K.M. Lee

Professor William K.M. Lee joined Centennial College this May as President of Centennial College and serves concurrently as Director of HKU SPACE.

In our rapidly changing world, many facets of our lives have become digitised as a result of breakneck-speed innovations in today’s world of information and communication technology (ICT), such as computer-aided design, manufacturing and commerce. ICT has also stimulated the globalisation of real and virtual goods, services, capital, information and human resources and dissolved the importance of natural comparative advantages. In fact, many say that we are already moving into the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution with the emergence of 3-D printing, intelligent robots, self-driven cars and enterprises that excel in both scale and scope.

A rethink of our educational approach is therefore imperative for the ICT age, when our human capital has to be multi-skilled and capable of turning information and knowledge into new ventures, insights or wisdom. Increasingly, employers have found the liberal arts education model the most suitable for the needs of our time.

Historically, liberal arts encompassed not just the arts, but also sciences, and were considered “liberal” because they were liberating — they freed one from the ignorance that bound the uneducated and nurtured the whole-person who could draw on their knowledge, curiosity and imagination in different subject areas to solve practical problems.

A liberal arts education is designed to provide individuals with broad knowledge, transferable skills, and a stronger sense of values, ethics and civic engagement. However, a liberal arts education is not defined by discipline or curriculum but by its distinctive teaching and learning ethos and process. Typical liberal arts colleges are small in size, with about 1,000 to 1,500 students and are at least 80% residential, so that faculty and staff can give each student more attention and provide them with more resources. It entails a general education curriculum which provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines in a cross-disciplinary context amidst or in addition to in-depth study in one or more subject areas. The aim is to develop well-rounded global citizens or whole-persons who are highly articulate, knowledgeable, and have the capacity to pursue lifelong learning and become valuable members of their communities.

At Centennial College, we aim to prepare our students for the challenges of the ICT economy today and the economy of the future. Our liberal arts education covers a two-year core curriculum — embracing liberal arts and sciences — and allows students to choose their majors at the end of the second year. Existing majors have been consolidated and reconstructed into B.A. and B.Soc.Sc. programmes with liberal arts-oriented majors. Like the typical liberal arts college, we maintain a small size of 800 to 1,000 students, emphasising intra-curricular out-of-class activities, international exposure, seminar courses, reading and writing, trans-disciplinary studies, interactions with faculty both inside and outside the classroom, and close teacher-student relationships. In addition to the privately-rented off-campus accommodation facilities managed by HKU, we have plans to provide more accommodation for our students. We thus hope to nurture good leaders and citizens who can adapt, create, learn independently and continuously, think critically, solve problems, communicate, cope with change and diversity, excel in a multi-cultural global environment, and who can meet the challenges of the new economy.
HIGH TABLE DINNER

Centennial College held its second High Table Dinner this March and we were greatly honoured by the presence of two esteemed guests, Mr Matthew Cheung, GBS, JP, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, and Mr Jasper Tsang, GBM, GBS, JP, President of the Legislative Council. In their speeches, Mr Cheung spoke about the building blocks for career success and encouraged students to consider job opportunities in emerging industries such as health and elderly care, while Mr Tsang shared his personal thoughts and reflections on the outlook and the challenges confronting Hong Kong. We were also honoured to be joined by experts and mentors from a diversity of professions who sat with our students during dinner to share with them their expertise and experience.
SEMINARY ON FURTHER STUDIES

On 2 April 2016, hundreds of students filled the Rayson Huang Theatre at the University of Hong Kong while hundreds more tuned in through live streaming to meet Mr Roy Tsui, better known by his pen name Lin Ri Xi, one of the most influential figures in Hong Kong popular culture today both online and offline. Mr Lin founded Black Paper, a one-page Chinese-language zine, in 2010, before moving on to create the phenomenally successful lifestyle magazine 100Most and online video platform TVMost. Mr Lin was joined at the forum by three Centennial College professors and a student representative in an engaging and interactive discussion of what liberal education means in contemporary society. He shared his thoughts and reflections on people-oriented management, gender and media culture in Hong Kong, and the critical relevance of sustainable development. It was an inspiring afternoon of lively conversation and personal sharing.

2016 STUDENTS' UNION ELECTION

The College confirmed the election results for the Students’ Union by-election on 1 March 2016. The announcement completed a six-week process that began on 18 January with a fifteen-day nomination period followed by a three-day election from 22-25 February. The new members of the Executive Committee and Popularly Elected Union Councillors commenced their term on the 2016 Students’ Union Council of Centennial College on 2 March 2016. Let’s congratulate all the new members of the Students’ Union and thank them for their service!

**Executive Committee Members**
- **President**
  - Chan Ying Hey, Alvina
- **Internal Vice President**
  - Fan Po Yau, Alka
- **External Vice President**
  - Cheng Sung Hei, Solomon
- **Financial Secretary**
  - Yuan Hong Tai, Nick

**Representatives from Clubs and Societies**
- **Sporting Activities Societies**
  - Chan Chi On, Max
  - Tang Kin Fai, Michael
- **Cultural Activities Societies**
  - Chan Tsz Ching, Chloie
  - Cheung Lok Lun, Curtis
- **Independent Clubs**
  - Tsui Ming Chun

**Popularly Elected Union Councillors**
- Chiu Chin Ting, Nicholas
- Ho Lok Hei, Chloe
- Leung Wai Shan, Sandy
- Lin Chung Ying, Angel
- Pang Lok Hin, Uriel
- Tang Kin Ling
- Yiu Lan hing, Nancy
- Yu Miu Tung, Crystal
- Zhu Ze Hou, Castle
Music Sharing Session

The spring semester ended on a high note with a music sharing session organised by the Office of Student Success on 28 April 2016. Seven of our multi-talented students participated in a fifty-minute show featuring a diverse repertoire from classical to pop on guitar, clarinet, piano and electronic keyboard.

Running Man X Centennial College

By Hong Chao Dong, Li, Michael Keith and Xie Hao

The events titled “Running Man X Centennial College” which happened over a number of days offered us many interesting learning experiences. With the guidance and support of the Office of Student Success staff, we learnt to write a proposal; set a budget; conduct a pilot test and rehearsals; recruit helpers and participants; divide manpower; implement events; evaluate and adjust activities.

The television programme “Running Man” was a useful resource in identifying relevant activities which required teamwork and communication. The choice of activities involved much in-depth discussion and debate and we tried to ensure different objectives were included in the activities.

Overall, we put great effort into promoting the event and recruiting students through different online, physical and personal network channels. Fortunately, we found that the participants actively communicated in the verbal, non-verbal and cultural dimensions in a positive manner and demonstrated strong teamwork.

This event is funded by League which is an event-based platform under the Office of Student Success. The aim is to increase the opportunity and diversity of the platform for students in organising events for Centennial College students or the needy in society.
OUR FIRST EXCHANGE STUDENT
Ari Shirinian reflects on life at Centennial College

Ari Shirinian is the first foreign exchange student to study at Centennial College. Ari comes from Boston, Massachusetts and is an undergraduate at Endicott College, one of our partner institutions in the United States. At the end of the spring semester, we sat down with Ari to ask him about his experience as an exchange student at Centennial and his life in Hong Kong.

How was it adjusting to life in Hong Kong?
I’ve been here since the end of January after arriving from Boston, and right now there’s a week before heading out. Being the first exchange student at Centennial has been an eye-opening experience. It’s the first time that I’ve been away from family for so far and so long. I think that a big thing that I’ve gained through this experience, besides from being immersed in an Asian culture and getting accustomed to life here in Hong Kong, is the idea of independence. I feel that the student experience here is more dynamic because my apartment, classes and the gym are all in different locations across the city, which brings a whole other atmosphere to student life than that on a US college campus. Here at Centennial, I can come to campus in the middle of the day, go to the gym, have lunch with friends on the west side of the island, go into the city, and then come back to class in the afternoon. Being able to do all this in the same period of time is unheard of back home.

Was it easy adjusting to student life at Centennial?
The one thing that I can take back home from Centennial and Hong Kong, in addition to the souvenirs and the photos that I’ve taken, are the friendships that I’ve made at Centennial and outside the College. Once school started, it was very easy to make friends here — classmates were very open to accept me as a friend. This was important because I knew no one before coming here. It was challenging at first, but once school started, I got to make friends, and that’s something that I can take back with me. I know that a few students are going to come to Boston for a summer tour, and I plan to reconnect with them and show them my city because they have done plenty here to show me around.

What sites did you see while in Hong Kong?
I’ve hiked Dragon’s Back and Monkey Mountain. I have really enjoyed hiking here. When I first got to Centennial, a classmate suggested that I really should go hiking because there are many beautiful mountains in Hong Kong. Since then, I’ve hiked on Lantau, Lamma and other islands. Hong Kong has so many islands and it is so green — there really is so much more to Hong Kong than Victoria Harbour and Central. I have, of course, gone to the Peak, the Big Buddha, the former walled city of Kowloon, the Man Mo Temple, Macau, and Happy Valley for the horse races. My first time at the horse races was so fun. It is a great social event — you can go watch the horses and there are tons of people. It really is a good time.

What things surprised you about Hong Kong?
I found that students at Centennial and in Hong Kong were very open and accepting of me. I’ve been able to make really good friends and make immediate connections here in Hong Kong. The quick pace of life here has been eye opening, which is best embodied in Hong Kong’s transportation system – the MTR, buses, minibuses, taxis and trolleys – this city is bustling and on the move nearly twenty-four hours a day. I think that the cha chaan teng also reflects Hong Kong’s hectic urban culture — you order your meal with no conversation, get it immediately, eat at a shared table with others you don’t even know or talk to, and then be on your way after 10 to 20 minutes. Another eye-opener for me was the culture of lines or queues for buses, restaurants and paying for various things – the culture is very strong here and people take lining up seriously. I also was really pleased by the variety and freshness of live seafood that you can find in the local wet markets and restaurants. It’s better than anything that I’ve seen in Boston, which is also on the ocean.
MY ACCOUNTING INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

By Maya Limbu

Centennial College offers a course called Accounting Internship for year 3 students who are studying in the Bachelor of Professional Accounting (BPAcc) Programme. Throughout the course, accounting students have an opportunity to exercise their knowledge in the real world and learn more about their future career. Fortunately, I am an accounting student who was offered and eagerly accepted such an opportunity. I am currently working as an intern in a CPA firm where day by day, I learn more about the accounting world not only from my colleagues and clients but also from my supervisors.

The firm where I am employed has been very supportive and effective in helping me learn. They first introduced their organisational culture to me. Once I adapted to their office culture, I experienced and learned about so many more aspects of accounting in the real world. The office workload may be intense, but at the same time the team finds ways to share stories, show care towards each other and laugh at jokes too.

I have realised from my experiences that I need to build my own strategies in order to do tasks efficiently and effectively so I can perform quality work for my supervisors. As an intern, I have been assigned various tasks and now it feels great to know that the firm trusts me to successfully do the job. Through interacting with my colleagues and clients, I have also learned to present myself in a professional manner. Moreover, I have learned that team spirit is very important in the workplace. The partners of the CPA firm have meetings with the team on a regular basis to empower their employees. As a team member, I believe I have developed practical workplace and communication skills from my experiences. All in all, my accounting internship has been a valuable learning experience.

NEW STUDENT EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIP IN JAPAN

In addition to our three student exchange partnerships in the United States, Centennial now has a student exchange partner in Japan with Miyazaki International College. On 30 March 2016, our College welcomed Professor Benjamin Peters, the Vice-President of Miyazaki International College. During the visit an Academic Cooperation Agreement was signed to initiate a partnership on a student exchange programme between our schools.

Under the partnership arrangement, students can study abroad in Hong Kong or Japan for one or two semesters. It is anticipated that the first group of incoming exchange students from Miyazaki International College will come to Hong Kong in the Fall of 2016, while the first group of outgoing exchange students from Centennial College will begin studies in Japan in the Spring of 2017.
STUDENT CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Karate Society

Cultivating discipline, perseverance and a sense of responsibility – these are just some of the goals of Centennial College’s Karate Society (CCKS), a student-run club that offers its members not just intensive training in the arts of karate but also a sense of belonging. Coached by former champions of the Hong Kong Karate Tournament, Mr Ken Pak and Mr Kenny Wong, members of the society meet up regularly to perfect their skills and learn new techniques.

The CCKS has actively participated in open competitions and won multiple awards. Peggy Ip, chairperson of the society, was first runner-up in the Kumite competition of the Samsung 58th Festival of Sport and second runner-up in the Hong Kong Joint University Tournament. “Winning the tournament is just icing on the cake,” said Peggy. “More importantly, we have developed a bond of trust and friendship among our members.”

IELTS Seminar

Today, the IELTS test (International English Language Testing System) is one of the most popular tools which is used to measure the public’s English language proficiency. It is a fact that IELTS is accepted by over 9,000 organisations in over 145 countries. On Wednesday, 23 March 2016, the Office of Student Success and the English Corner co-organised a seminar provided by Ms. Carolyn Fung, Deputy IELTS Administrator from IDP Hong Kong. Students were introduced to the benefits of taking the IELTS test prior to travelling abroad for studies and applying for graduate studies. Ms. Fung’s presentation highlighted the role IELTS plays in reflecting real-life use of English regardless of whether it is for study, work or play. In addition, since 6 April, 2015 the UK now requires certain applicants to complete the UKVI (UK Visa and Immigration) application at an approved test centre. Further information on IELTS can be found at www.ieltshongkong.hk
SEMESTER-END PARTY

Centennial College held a Semester-end Party on Wednesday, 25 May for students and faculty in the Campus. Our new President Professor William K.M. Lee met with students over refreshments to celebrate the end of the academic school year.

Upcoming Events

Centennial Fun Day
29 July 2016

Walk-in Admission at HKU Town Centre
12-14 July, 8-10 Aug 2016

For details, please visit www.centennialcollege.hku.hk

Editorial Board

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