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dialogue

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- A Different Kind of University ID – Some HKU history you may not have read
- The Ideal of HKU – For the students, by the students, of the students

contents

HKU History ● ● ●

03 - 05 / A Different Kind of University ID –
Some HKU history you may not have
read

Ideal of HKU ● ● ●

06 / The Ideal of HKU – For the students, by the
students, of the students

07 / The Ideal of HKU: An ideal University
through the eyes of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor

08 - 09 /

- Developing your own perspective
- Choosing the ideal life
- Keep your eyes wide open

10 - 11 /

- Make use of communities
- Have the courage of your desire
- Create a view of life

10 HKU People 10 Views ● ● ●

12 - 17 /

- Life as a process of pursuing dreams
- Life of self-exploration
- The need to spread equality from campus
to society
- More than healing hands
- Early look at the world of work
- Nothing so well worth having as friends
- Halls – the start of being good time
planner
- A heart for promoting Africa at HKU
- Yes, we care!
- Planning beyond the academic frame

From Our Campus ● ● ●

18 / Message from the Dean of Student Affairs

19 - 22 / Through thick and thin

Vox Pop ● ● ●

23 / What do you think is the culture of
the University of Hong Kong?



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Dialogue

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A Different Kind of University ID – Some HKU history you may not have read

Cecilia Koo

Comparative Literature, Year 3 ● ● ●

There is no school uniform to wear, but when holding a HKU student ID card in one's hands, it is almost impossible not to sense one's identity of being a member of the University. But apart from this physical form of identification, there is an alternative way to identify with the University: learn its history. The past is a part of the present, just as students – both freshmen and others – are connected to the University's past.

Teaching you some history does not necessarily mean drawing a "time-line", thus to present an alternative history of HKU, CEDARS dug out some less-known stories of the University to tell. So, let's rewind the clock and return to the past!

We are knights with wisdom and virtue — Shield and Coat of Arms



The Coat of Arms with self-made labels to help readers to understand different parts of it



Shield of HKU (Sources: HKU official website)

You know the Shield of HKU: a lively lion above an opened book with the Chinese words "Ming De Ge Wu" (明德格物), and a ribbon with the Latin phrase "Sapientia et Virtus". As mottoes of the University, these phrases carry a similar meaning of "wisdom and virtue". But did you know the design of the Shield is connected to a knight?

Believed to be designed by Western heraldry experts of the College of Arms in consultation with Chinese scholars, the Shield and the Coat of Arms present a clear aspiration of the University: seeking a harmonious balance of Western and Chinese cultures. In the Coat of Arms, the Shield is "supported" by a Chinese dragon and an English lion, both with Chinese jade collars. The application of these animals is a clear reflection of the University's ambition to intermingle the East and the West, in terms of enlightening young minds.

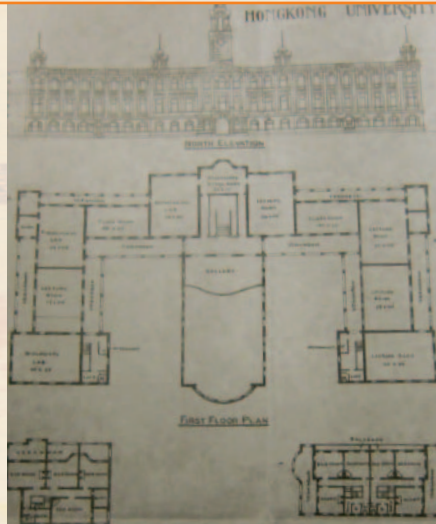
On the upper part of the Shield, the lion on a crimson background is a reference to the College of Arms in England. Below it is the opened book, in the colours of blue and green. This use of the colours is an allusion of the University's location: Hong Kong Island as green land surrounded by blue sea. At the time when the University was built, Pokfulam was on the outskirts of the city, with green surrounds. This allusion is also shown by the green "steep mounts" below the supporters in the Coat of Arms.

Similar to the Shield, the crest in the Coat of Arms is a lion with a Chinese jade collar and the book of “*Ming De Ge Wu*” in its hands, which again shows its Chinese association. The helmet and aesthetic ribbons below the crest are a traditional design in heraldry that connects to knighthood, the battlefield and bravery. In this sense, it is fair to say HKU students are young knights trained with the best from the West and the East.

Rebirth from aftermath — The short story of the Main Building



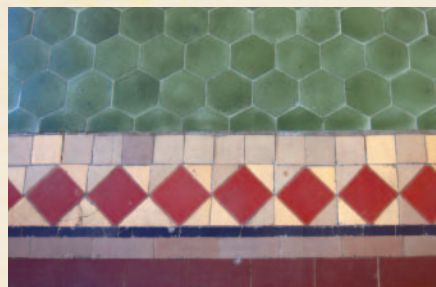
Sir Frederick Lugard, Chancellor 1911-1912, Governor of Hong Kong 1907-1912 (Sources: *An Impossible Dream*)



Part of the floor plan of Main Building, designed by Alfred Bryer of Messrs Leigh and Orange. (Sources: *An Impossible Dream*)



Sir H. N. Mody, one of the biggest contributors of the University's establishment (Sources: *An Impossible Dream*)



Tiles in two different styles, marking the dark days that the University had gone through.



Roof-less Great Hall (Sources: *An Impossible Dream* and *Ruins of Wars*)



Main Building, 1912. The surrounding was very green. (Sources: *An Impossible Dream*)

The Main Building is the University's most representational building. Now, being a member of the University, how much do you know about this lovely building besides the fact that it is the oldest building in the HKU compound?

“The Main Building was one of the most expensive buildings in Hong Kong at the time it was built,” says Dr Peter Cunich from the History Department. It cost \$365,000 to build, which was a princely sum of money in the early 1900s. Surprisingly, the University was not involved directly in the construction. It was Sir Hormusjee Mody who was behind the massive project. Not only did he pay for the construction, he provided his own architect, Alfred Bryer. If Governor Sir Frederick Lugard was the mastermind behind the establishment of the University, Sir Hormusjee Mody was the biggest supporter of the project.

During the Japanese Occupation, according to Dr Cunich, the University was closed and turned into an emergency hospital. The Main Building was seriously looted, and another building was set on fire and became a “disastrous scene”. It took a long time for the University to recover; the reconstruction and extension of the Main Building was not completed until the 1950s. Today some unique marks of this reconstruction remain – the two different kinds of tiles used in the main hallways. The brown-red tiles are those that survived from the war, and those in surf green were laid during the reconstruction.

So why were two different styles of tiles laid? “It was mainly because of the scarcity of building materials,” explains Dr Cunich. The original tiles were specially produced in England by a particular company, and after the war the original materials could no longer be found, thus the different tiles were used.

Times were tough but the University still managed to hold two congregations in January 1942, including a special one to award “wartime degrees” for all graduates. “It was not a formal congregation, it was all done in secret, because the Japanese had already taken over the University compound,” says Dr Cunich. It was a “time of heroes”; both the campus and the students had witnessed some of the darker days in history.

We work, we play, we defend — Student culture in the earlier days



Fancy Dress Ball in the Great Hall, 1929. Fancy social activity. (Sources: *An Impossible Dream*)

The war changed part of the outlook of the University, but most of the campus cultures remain – so at least we can find similarities between the students in the old days and the present.

Diligent students, known as “bookworms”, always existed; they were and are still studious and “exam-oriented”. In the old days, bookworms were good at “taking notes at high speed”, and library loan records tell us their favorite readings were the “exam-relevant” ones. Today “high-speed note-takers” remains in the lecture rooms, but now they are using laptops. Weeks before the assessment periods were the peak times for libraries to be occupied. However, due to language difficulties, during the 1920s and 1930s there was a consistently low pass rate; retakes were the norm. In this sense, bookworms were a minority, whereas today it is comparatively easy to find straight-A students.

When the University was first established, hall residence was compulsory. Students were able to choose the life they desired: either studying in rooms all day long, or engaging in activities and social functions including sports, debates and an annual dance. However, these freedoms led to disciplinary problems. Ragging once blackened the image of the University. The most shocking example of ragging would be the “Lugard Hall Incident” in 1931. A student was “bound up and dumped in the hostel coal box by several masked students”. Besides punishing the offenders, the seriousness of the incident meant the Hall was closed for a term. The incident quelled the ragging problem, but the “hierarchical structure” among students still persists.

Our former seniors might have been mischievous, but they were also nationalistic and had a strong social awareness. A typical indication of student nationalism was their strong reaction against the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Slogans like “Buy no Japanese goods” were painted in the University compound; the Union suspended all activities and volunteer groups such as the Chinese Medical Relief Association were formed. Although large-scale student groups did not last long, they were still vivid evidence of student patriotism. Social concern remains a characteristic of HKU students – we are active in extra-curricular activities, we care about our society and nation, and we are willing to defend them in various ways.

Sources:

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Professor Lap-Chee Tsui,
Vice-Chancellor

The Ideal of HKU – For the students, by the students, of the students

Alvin Lum
BBA(Law), Year 3 ● ● ●

“University is an important and unforgettable stage in the journey of life,” says Professor Lap-Chee Tsui. “It is a place for students to learn, and nowadays this includes both academic pursuits and participation in co-curricular activities. Are grades important? Yes, but there are other aspects of university life that are just as important.”

To Professor Tsui, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, participation and exposure are given equal weight. The means for participation to take place, namely by students taking the lead, is a vital means to achieve the end. “HKU is special. Student-led organisations form an indispensable part of campus life. A good number of these organisations are governed by the Students’ Union, genuinely allowing the students to participate in the running of the school,” says Professor Tsui. He praises these activities for fostering in students the ability and the attitude to deal with “ill-defined problems”.

The emergence of “ill-defined problems” is a new challenge not only to students, but teachers as well. Globalisation and technological advancement have sped up not only human activities, but also social problems and conflicts. The role of the University has now been redefined from teaching-oriented to providing a total learning experience. HKU has in place a variety of learning opportunities – for instance, internships and exchanges – to better equip students for an ever-changing world.

A university also needs to facilitate student learning, for instance by providing learning space and a suitable curriculum, and maintaining an excellent quality of teaching. Professor Tsui says in this HKU is constantly striving for perfection and looking forward to providing students with a better campus and better learning experience. “The new centennial campus is due to be completed in 2012, and will have more open space and new buildings for teaching and learning. New students admitted in 2012 will also study under a new curriculum that allows them more time and flexibility to arrange their own learning portfolios and to participate in co-curricular activities,” he says. “The University has continued to recruit outstanding teaching staff on an international basis to support the latest developments.”

Professor Tsui encourages freshmen to explore their university life to the fullest. “University life is more than a continuation of high school. Our students will feel like they have more independence than before, but it will also be up to them to decide how to make the most of their time at HKU. Of course, the adaptation takes time and effort. Whenever they need help, our teachers and counsellors are ready to help them get through this change in lifestyle.”

For an educational institute about to celebrate its Centenary, the University of Hong Kong has throughout the years been preparing the students of today to be leaders of tomorrow. Professor Tsui attributes the current success of HKU to the students’ active participation. “Not only the current students, but the alumni as well, who have contributed in different forms, such as mentorship programmes,” he says. “Our distinguished alumni share their experience and provide guidance to our students. This allows the proud tradition of HKU to be passed from generation to generation.”

The Ideal of HKU: An ideal University through the eyes of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Cathy Kwong

Dental Surgery, Year 4 ● ● ●

Rebecca Ng

Arts, Year 2 ● ● ●

Let us imagine what a “perfect” university should be. What would that consist of? Interesting lectures? Less homework? Or perhaps more places for exchange studies and internships? Regarding an ideal HKU, our Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President, Professor S P Chow, has something more than that in mind.

Starting with our University motto, Professor Chow systematically illustrates what his ideal HKU includes. “Our motto says it all – ‘Ming De’ is to have moral conduct, and ‘Ge Wu’ is to have knowledge and wisdom. Both are needed in our students.” He further explains: “Wisdom, virtue and beauty are frequently mentioned. Wisdom can be achieved through the pursuit of knowledge (‘Ge Wu’), and virtue cultivated through seeking moral perfection (‘Ming De’). Only with both of these will a person achieve the highest ‘beauty’.”

Professor Chow is also concerned about HKU’s mission. “A university should encourage imagination, so that students may discover their potential and surpass their teachers.” To him, HKU should provide an environment conducive to the student’s own learning, rather than provide the learning itself. HKU should also “go beyond ranking and UGC”. “HKU has already built up a good reputation, and the ranking and funds we get will not fluctuate too greatly. Therefore these are not the only things we go after,” he says. “Knowledge transfer is more important – we aim at both bringing talents into the school and transferring our talents to society.”

Professor Chow’s ideal HKU can also contribute to society on the cultural level. “The meeting of East and West is only the first step,” he explains. “The real question is whether we can generate something new and better after the cultures have met.” He mentions the present ‘clash of civilisations’, where both Eastern and Western cultures are proving problematic in their own ways. In his opinion, HKU is the place where we may take a step closer to solving some of these problems, because it gathers cultural talent. Professor Chow also mentions a loss in humility, commitment and compassion in some world leaders today – only by generating a new culture can these traits be restored, and a liberal arts education is helpful for achieving this. “We cannot only aim to develop Hong Kong as a financial centre,” he says. “My ideal is that HKU will play a cultural role in Hong Kong, in the region and worldwide.”

Professor Chow also has plans as to how HKU should reach out to the public in the near future. “The concept of ‘University Town’ from other countries is worth considering,” he says. “We are doing community projects a lot. Utilising students’ knowledge and expertise, we should aim at incorporating the community around us as part of HKU, while co-ordinating the original development required, thus achieving harmony. It can start from developing local culture in a street nearby.”

On top of his career as a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chow has also been a brilliant doctor. “The communication skills, rapport and empathy I learned as a doctor help my job as a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. There are lots of difficulties to face, sadness to encounter, but these trained me to be optimistic and to maintain a sense of humour. Respecting others’ opinion is also important when doing teamwork.” He has been a leader in various capacities, and he is now hoping to contribute his experience to HKU.



Professor S P Chow,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President



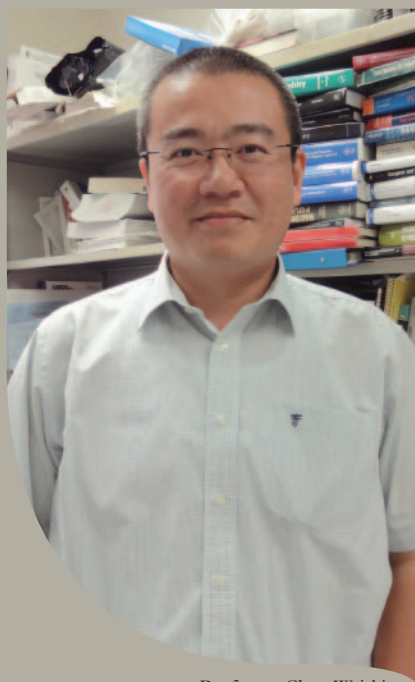
Dr Yoshiko Nakano,
Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Developing your own perspective

Winnie Cheng

History & Geography, Year 3 ● ● ●

One of HKU's goals is to provide its students with the skills required to become global citizens. Dr Yoshiko Nakano, an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Arts with responsibility for outreach and development, believes that an international learning environment is essential to this process. With teachers hailing from more than



Professor Chan Wai-kin,
Associate Dean of the Faculty of Science

Keep your eyes wide open

Courtney Yip

Education, Year 2 ● ● ●

In this increasingly pragmatic and competitive age, students can no longer seclude themselves from the world. Professor Chan Wai-kin, Associate Dean (Student Affairs) of the Faculty of Science, shares his ideal and quotes the academic world of science as an instance.

"People used to mark boundaries between different scientific fields like Astronomy, Biology and Chemistry, and science students in tertiary education were requested to choose a particular field and study only that field for three years," he says. "However, these boundaries are becoming blurred nowadays. There is more and more interdisciplinary collaboration at research level, such as with Biochemistry and Physical Chemistry."

Professor Chan reminds students that extreme specialisation may not correspond with today's society. "In line with the trend, the Faculty has been improving its curricular structure and content. Science students have to take courses from different disciplines and fulfill an experiential learning programme," he says. "All these broaden students' understanding of science and various views, and foster independent learning outside the classroom. After identifying their majors, they can take more in-depth and specialised courses in that subject. Students can also seek some academic-related advice from the Advisor Office to help prepare their life-long career."

More importantly, Professor Chan says students should first adjust their mindsets to the colourful and fruitful new life they are leading. As one of the top-ranking universities in the world, there are vast resources and opportunities. "In the face of thousands of options, students may easily get lost in searching and unreasoning impetuosity," he warns. "It is better for students to identify their interests, evaluate their abilities, use time management and set up goals that are best suitable for modern need."





50 countries and students from almost 80, the HKU campus is a truly an international one. Dr Nakano maintains that this diversity is HKU's strength, since it allows students to both familiarise themselves with various perspectives, and develop their own.

"At secondary school, students may not always have the opportunity to develop their own perspective on certain issues, and tend to concentrate on learning the right answers for their examinations," she says. "My colleagues in the Faculty of Arts encourage students to adopt a different approach to learning; they invite students to determine which aspects of a question they are interested in. Students are also likely to discover that there is often more than one right answer to any question!"

Dr Nakano says the Faculty of Arts is continuously looking to expand its experiential learning opportunities, on and off campus. "For example, there are lots of opportunities for students to study abroad. The Department of Japanese Studies offers one-year exchange programmes with selected universities in Japan. These

programmes allow students to enhance their language skills and deepen their cultural understanding so that they are able to function comfortably in a Japanese environment. In 2009, the Faculty also began to develop exchange programmes specifically targeted at Arts students with universities in the US, UK, Ireland and Germany. These initiatives all contribute to the goal of enabling Arts students to become global citizens."

With all this in mind, Dr Nakano offers some practical tips to new students interested in studying abroad. "First, be alert to opportunities when they present themselves. Second, make sure you are well prepared when you apply. For instance, many exchange partners only accept students who have a GPA of 3.0 or above. A strong GPA result cannot be achieved overnight. It is a good idea to attend the orientation session for the programmes you are interested in during your first year, so that you understand the requirements."

Choosing the ideal life

Jerran Lin
Journalism, Year 4 ● ● ●

Having taught at the University for nearly 30 years and witnessed community changes, Associate Dean of Engineering Professor George Tham observes university life can be about independence and personal development.

"More room should be given to students to develop themselves," Professor Tham says. He describes the environment intended by the changes in the engineering curriculum. "It's up to the students to decide which area to develop." The Engineering professor adds he would like to let the students explore themselves more.

As required by their professional accreditation, engineering students need to complete compulsory courses upon graduation, thus making their timetable often too packed for electives. Students may be too restricted to take additional courses within or outside their faculty. With the curriculum changes, students not only "broaden themselves", Professor Tham says, but they also prepare for life after graduation, which is all about independence too, he explains.

The link between curriculum and independence may be puzzling for some, but this teacher believes a more flexible course structure can help students develop the habit of self-governing. "Students nowadays are more reliant," he says. "For example, they rely on the teacher or official requirements in studies." He recalls an earlier time when as a student he had to record notes and find reference materials by himself.

With more freedom in the curriculum, students now have to learn to decide things for themselves, and "try to manage themselves", Professor Tham says. However, with the environment now created, "it's for the students to decide how much to achieve", he concludes, adding that everyone has a choice in deciding what is "the ideal life". "The ideal is no ideal," he laughs.



Professor George Tham,
Associate Dean of the Faculty of Engineering





Dr Tony Ferguson,
the University Librarian

Make use of communities

Winnie Cheng

History & Geography, Year 3 ● ● ●

When asked about the ideal of HKU, Dr Tony Ferguson, the University Librarian, is pleased to share. As one who spends most of his time at the University for study and work, he believes that the University is a community of teachers and students who come together from all parts of the world. Students should make use of this community, or network, to their benefit, for example with future employment.

"Communities are multi-faceted," Dr Ferguson explains. "They have social life, they have culture, they are places where people



(left) Professor Godfrey Chan Chi-fung,
Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine

Have the courage of your desire

Courtney Yip

Education, Year 2 ● ● ●

Dreams do not always come true, and some people hardly dare to attempt them. We can grow used to making excuses, grumbling, spending time in vain and fearing failure.

Professor Godfrey Chan Chi-fung from the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine always shares his story with students and patients to encourage them to pursue their dreams. One of the dreams of Professor Chan was realised. In May this year he dared to sacrifice his precious hair and turn bald to raise funds for Children's Cancer Foundation, together with Professor Paul Tam Kwong-hang, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University and Chair Professor, Department of Surgery and Professor Tam's wife Ms Amy Chum, renowned actress and Council Member of Children's Cancer Foundation.

Professor Chan describes his path to medicine as rugged. He studied his first degree in dentistry in the Philippines but he knew that his "burning desire" was medicine, so he took a few more years to study a medical degree and finally successfully returned to practice in Hong Kong. Many people would comment on this long path, but he believes it is meaningless to haggle over time or money when it comes to our burning desire. As long as you reach the terminal, walking a longer and rougher road is well worth the effort.

Most importantly, Professor Chan says each person has his own distinct and unique path. When we travel our own life path, we attend various independent lessons that contribute to who we are now. Every roadblock we come across and fall we have provide an invaluable source of inspiration and direction in our future journey of life, and this is especially important for students who are still looking for their way. Professor Chan quotes some lines from a well-known fairy tale, Alice in Wonderland:

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where,' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you walk,' said the Cat.

Sometimes we need to attempt and experience to help define ourselves and our lives.

find friendships, they are places where challenges are encountered, and they are places where the individual can thrive or hurt. To me, starting university life is just like a chance to start over, you can decide who you are going to be."

Freshmen most probably will be snapped up by different halls, associations, clubs and activities, which occupy most of their time. But Dr Ferguson suggests they should make use of the library system to read more. "Most of our fresh students have been required to memorise things for examinations and are tired of reading. Now is the time to decide what to read independently, just for fun, just to become educated in things which are of personal interest."

He shares his own experience on how he would reward himself for working hard as a young student. "When I was a freshman, I would reward myself after studying for an hour the materials I would be

tested on, by reading something fun. After 15 minutes of doing what I wanted, I would return to the study of what others wanted me to learn."

Apart from the community of teachers and students, there is also a huge community in the library – the community of scholars and writers. Dr Ferguson suggests a special activity for students to do in the library, so as to enrich knowledge. "You could start anywhere in the library and do the following: walk up to a bookshelf and scan the titles. Pull an interesting title out and read it for at least 10 minutes. If it is really interesting, finish the book. Otherwise, put the book back, and then the next. Or on a different day, come back to the same shelf but then walks 10 steps to the right and do the same thing again."

Create a view of life

Winnie Cheng

History & Geography, Year 3 ● ● ●

Lee Shau Ki Hall Warden Simon Lo believes that university is a stepping stone to society. University education provides students with knowledge, but also helps students to create a view of life. He recommends students read "The Dance of Leadership" (Peter Cammock), which is about the importance and emphasis of "soul" in helping to solve leadership problems.

"Soul may be difficult to explain here, but you can treat it as a foundation to a goal. Once you have the foundation, you will find passion, you will meet friends with the same goal as you, and find your way. You can also apply it in your career. Let's say if you are going to be a doctor, you are going to be a conscientious one with 'soul'. It is sad that some university students acquire knowledge, but still feel lost and cannot find their way."

Simon believes that hall education helps students to build up their own view of life. "Students will grow up through difficulties. In hall, they will have many experiences in organising hall activities. Sometimes they will face criticism. Through these criticisms and comments, they will build up their own view of life, as well as find their true friends.

So how should students balance their time? Simon believes that hall life is not a separate part of your life, instead it is one part of it. So it is not only a matter of time management, but also the management of life, among family, friendship, study, relationship and career. Then how should we be prepared to adapt to university or hall life? Simon suggests that students keep an open attitude to new things, and learn to appreciate them. "Things happen here that are not the same with secondary school anymore. You should enjoy and appreciate the change instead of keeping everything unchanged. You should not copy your past here, instead you should share it with others."



Simon Lo,
Lee Shau Ki Hall Warden

Life as a process of pursuing dreams

Rebecca Ng
Arts, Year 2 ● ● ●

Hippo Yam Chit-hong gained his Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering in 2001. He has pursued further studies in Aerospace Engineering and is now residing in the Netherlands because of his career as a research fellow for the European Space Agency.

Dialogue: How did you choose your major in HKU?

Hippo: I have always wanted to study Aerospace Engineering. But this is not provided in Hong Kong, so I chose Civil Engineering instead. There are considerable differences between the two, and Civil Engineering is useful to my present career only to a certain extent. Actually, a lot of factual knowledge learned in university may not be directly useful to one's career. Nowadays, many people pursue careers that are very different from their undergraduate majors. Therefore, in university, gaining skills and establishing a network with people you meet are more important than gaining knowledge.

Dialogue: Can you tell us more about your experience in joining the Intensified Learning Opportunities Programme (ILOP) organised by CEDARS? How have you enriched your campus life besides joining ILOP?

Hippo: I joined ILOP towards the end of Year 2. Under ILOP, I went to Qinghua University for a month. Back in Hong Kong, I visited factories and commercial organisations, and participated in an adventure camp which had trained my teammates and I to co-operate as a team. I have built lasting friendships with them through this programme.

Life of self-exploration

Rebecca Ng
Arts, Year 2 ● ● ●

Winnie Chan (Hippo's wife) gained her Bachelors Degree in BBA(Accounting and Finance) in 2001. She later changed her major to Early Childhood Education and Exceptional Needs and completed a teaching Licence Certificate in the US. She is currently a stay-at-home mum, taking care of her baby daughter.

Dialogue: You have pursued a career that is very different from your undergraduate major. Why is that?

Winnie: When I chose my major in HKU, I didn't really know what my real interests were. I only knew that I liked jobs that gave me a chance to meet people. For me, self-exploration didn't start until after graduation. It was when I joined my husband in the US that I had the chance to learn about courses on children's education. After carefully reading about every course there was to offer, I found that this is where my real passion lies. However, I have never regretted studying for the BBA in HKU. I found that even working with children requires skills from a BBA, like managing funding for kindergartens. So, even if what you study does not interest you, don't feel discouraged – there must be something worth learning in your major!

Dialogue: How did you feel when you first joined HKU as a freshman?

Winnie: I found Year 1 quite a transition from secondary school. Before Year 1, things were already planned for me. In university, you are suddenly so free to make your own choices. I could even choose for myself as to whether I wanted to attend lessons! For a short while, I wasn't too sure how to make choices. I needed time to adapt to this new pattern of life. Nevertheless, I found school life enjoyable not long after that.

Dialogue: Do you place studies as a high priority?

Winnie: Yes. Studies are important, and I had quite a high standard for myself. Good results are necessary for graduation. I required myself not to skip lessons for most of the times, and I handed in all homework on time. I've found this manageable even though I had other activities to attend. Of course, students have to remember that university life is not just about studying – your undergraduate years are precious, and do remember to have fun and gain different experiences. Don't waste the time!





Besides ILOP, I have joined some activities organised by student societies, like the stargazing camp, and attended talks by distinguished alumni or professionals. I attended General Education courses, too.

Dialogue: Were you ever overwhelmed by dealing with extra-curricular activities and study?

Hippo: Exams were most stressful to me. I didn't feel too overwhelmed during most other times. There were indeed hectic days, and I skipped a few lessons then – but I have always made sure that I could get back a complete set of notes for the lesson I've missed. The most important thing is to prioritise and know what you really want in your university life!

The need to spread equality from campus to society

Rebecca Ng
Arts, Year 2

Billy Yau gained his Bachelors Degree in Education (English) from HKU in 2008, and has been a secondary school teacher ever since. Being visually impaired, he has lots to say on opportunities for the disabled in the University, and in society.

Dialogue: Being visually impaired, how was university life for you?

Billy: I joined activities that do not necessarily require eyesight. I attended hall gatherings, joined athletics, swimming and the choir. Lecturers were very supportive in helping me fight for a teaching job in mainstream education for my internship. They believed that even the visually impaired can teach well. HKU is the place that made me confident enough to step into society!

Dialogue: When students come across a person with a physical disability in HKU, what should be their attitude in getting along with them?

Billy: We've got to know that everyone is "disabled" in some way – it's just that physical disabilities are more apparent. That's why we shouldn't classify anyone as "ordinary" or "extraordinary". Treat us as you'd treat anyone else! There are only minor issues as to how we communicate – for example, I can't see when you nod your head, and I need you to lead my way.

Dialogue: The media may say that the disabled often face greater difficulty than others if they want to succeed in anything. Is this true?

Billy: Whether it is more difficult for us to achieve our goals depends on whether the goal is related to our disability or not. If it isn't, there's no problem in achieving it. For example, in my teaching career, does the fact that I cannot see students really hinder teaching and learning? Difficulties I encountered in teaching often come from the school's poor arrangements and lack of confidence in me, not from my disability. A sad reality is that we often find it difficult to realise our goals not because of the disabilities themselves, but because society does not give us enough chances. But time is really needed for society to change its perception!



More than healing hands

Cathy Kwong

Dental Surgery, Year 4 ● ● ●

Ada Ng, now working as a surgeon in urology, participated in lots of activities during her life as a HKU student. Apart from being an elite in the swimming team, leading the team, contributing to the Sports Association, joining athletics, playing hockey and joining choir teams in hall, she also helped in many community services, from giving children swimming lessons nearby to overseas voluntary work. She has been to Tsinghua University in Beijing as part of an ILOP programme in Years 2 and 3 to help in the countryside, to Guizhou during Year 4 to plan the construction of a school, and to New Delhi in India during Year 5 to give health education as part of her studies.

Dialogue: When you were a student, you were involved in lots of extra-curricular activities apart from your tight learning schedule. What motivated you to take them up and how did they make your university life more fruitful?

Ada: I love swimming because it brings me a strong sense of team spirit – through training together, we achieve a final goal. The services I took part gave me chances to educate others and give myself to the community. Programmes like ILOP, and teams I took part in with hall and campus, also broadened my horizon a lot.

Dialogue: What experiences throughout your university life affected you the most in your future planning?

Ada: The experiences of serving the community made me understand the needs of under-privileged groups in society and enhanced my sense of commitment. By taking part in project planning on social services, I was trained in terms of organising tasks and leadership, which were all useful to my future.

Dialogue: What is your advice to students to make university life more enjoyable?

Ada: As HKU provides lots of activities for students, it is not simply a place for study. Of course studying should be of utmost importance, but students should also utilise the opportunities to explore new things like sports, to meet new friends from different faculties, to gain international exposure, to learn new skills (e.g. Putonghua), and even to join executive committees and social services.



Early look at the world of work

Winnie Cheng

History & Geography, Year 3 ● ● ●

Some may think that it's not the right time for new students to start career planning on their fresh start at the University, but the internship experience of Lau Hing-lung, a graduate of Economics and Finance now working in Australia as a trainee underwriter, may give us another insight.

Dialogue: How would you describe your university life?

Hing-lung: University life is fun and HKU has many interest groups and clubs to fulfill my demands. Some courses in HKU had projects that were really tough, but all these turned into good memories and strong friendships after my colleagues made the endeavour. The end result might be terrible, but that is what makes it more memorable!

Dialogue: Can you tell us more about your internship experience organised by CEDARS?

Hing-lung: In the summer after Year 2, I joined an entrepreneur programme organised by CEDARS and worked in Scotland for two months. I was working on two environmental-related projects for a Scottish soft drink company and a waste-recycling company. This was a multinational programme and I worked with students from different countries, namely the US, Spain and Russia. At the moment, I find a strong linkage between my current job as an underwriter, since it requires a broad understanding of different industries and an appreciation of globalisation.

Dialogue: Can you give some advice to fresh students about how to plan their university life and their future career?

Hing-lung: Enjoy your university life and do whatever you are truly passionate about. Money should not be a concern when you pick a career at this stage, as this is what comes along later when you get more experience and skills in a career. Preparation is always important, as it is what makes your career when opportunities coincide. In the end, you may end up in something so exciting and meaningful that you never expected!

Honestly, I did not plan my career that early. I did not even know what "i-banking" was until Year 3, when I realised all the career talks in HKU were packed. If I could choose again, I would definitely apply for a freshman internship from CEDARS after the first year, as this would give me an advantage of an earlier real-world work experience, which would enable me to understand what kind of career I really like.



Nothing so well worth having as friends

Courtney Yip
Education, Year 2

Manda Zhu Wenbai, a Year 2 accounting and finance student from Shanghai, looked back on her first year and would like to share with her fellows some good ways to adapt to life in HKU and Hong Kong.

Dialogue: How did you adapt to the life at the University?

Manda: Hong Kong has been notable for its crowded array of buildings and fast pace of living, and the University is no exception. I always have to squeeze into a crowded lift and twist through a maze-like campus. Every person flashes by at high speed. The environment and culture definitely demand a certain period of time to adapt to, and put a great deal of stress on foreign students. I think the best way to adapt is to meet more friends, especially friends from the same origin. It is always easier to share your joy, views and concerns with someone who is empathetic.

Dialogue: What is the most impressive part of your university life?

Manda: I would say the whole experience at the University is impressive, as opportunities are everywhere! To me, I met many people when I did school group projects, visited firms and joined an exchange programme. I have learned a lot, especially with my communication skills, as I have to co-operate with other students and take the initiative in contacting businessmen. Likewise, I had lots of fun and gained a better understanding of other cultures.

Dialogue: What is your advice to Mainland students like yourself?

Manda: Be active. As I mentioned, opportunities are everywhere. Many foreign freshmen first come to the University as strangers and feel helpless and bewildered. It is better for them to find and ask some experienced senior students and teachers. Things will turn out smoothly if you can learn from experience.



Halls – the start of being good time planner

Angie Leung
Arts, Year 3



Brian Liu Ming-tak, an LLB student, has a dynamic life as a member of HKU. Hall life is challenging to many students. As a member of hall, Brian shed some light on how he has been striking a good balance between hall and other parts of his university life.

Dialogue: How would you describe your university life? What is the most impressive part of it? What have you gained most from it?

Brian: I would describe my life at University as fruitful. Studying is not the only part of my university life. I was a member of the debating team in Years 1 and 2, representing HKU and taking part in competitions held in Malaysia and Ireland. In these competitions, I cherished every chance to meet new people. Throughout university, I am amazed to see so many people showing such dedication to extra-curricular activities (ECAs), like the hall hockey team I joined, and student associations. People here are not just passionate about their studies. I cannot deny my hall life is the thing that I treasure most here. I have met many wonderful people with various backgrounds there, and I am really touched by how we all support one another to face each day's challenges.

Dialogue: How do you manage your hall life and academic results? After three years of study, do you feel satisfied with HKU?

Brian: I have lived in hall since I began at HKU, so that's two years. Apart from studying, I am also a hockey player. Last year I was a member of the University debating team and the hall current affairs subcommittee. I also spent some time running the hall photographic dark room and taking photographs for hall sports teams. In order to balance this with my studies, I did have to make some sacrifices. At the end of Year 2, I quit the debating team and focused more on studying. I was from an international school and most of my friends went overseas for university. With my friends all gone, I did not expect to enjoy university life. But I have to admit, I am satisfied with HKU so far. The classes are interesting and I have gained a lot from the ECAs I joined.

Dialogue: Can you give some advice to fresh students on how to plan for their university life, and their career?

Brian: One thing to bear in mind is that university doesn't last for a very long time, and one should cherish every opportunity to take advantage of it. So I think it's important to make the best use of what free time you have – for me, that's in hall life. About career planning, I would say, grab every chance from HKU teachers and students and ask more about career paths. It is important to be proactive and start searching for summer internships several months in advance.

A heart for promoting Africa at HKU

Angie Leung
Arts, Year 3 ● ● ●

Simbisai Mandizvidza (Sambi), a Zimbabwean student who is studying Accounting and Finance, shared with us her experience at HKU as an international student and her advice to fresh students.

Dialogue: How would you describe your university life? What have you gained most from it?

Simbi: I would describe my life at HKU so far as exciting, challenging and above all, really fun! What I love about being an African college kid in Asia is that my world view is constantly being expanded and I'm already bursting with business ideas that I can take back to Zimbabwe. What I've gained most from HKU is greater self-confidence. Between in-class presentations and Global Lounge events my "stage fright" is now quite manageable! I feel blessed to be at HKU. It has far exceeded my expectations. I've learned so much from my professors and classmates. The competitive learning environment has challenged me to be a better student and a stronger person. I haven't seen anything like Global Lounge events in Zimbabwe, so I hope to be involved in them more! I plan to take advantage of the various opportunities available at HKU for the rest of my time here, and of course to enjoy the ride!

Yes, we care!

Alvin Lum
BBA(Law), Year 3 ● ● ●

Martin Kok is a law student currently in his fifth year of study. He was the Vice-President (External) of the Students' Union. Martin has been involved with the Hong Kong Federation of Students (學聯), and has also been supporting Tertiary 2010 to fight for universal suffrage and justice within society.

Dialogue: How does a university environment motivate you to participate in social movements?

Martin: The University programmes and other courses have equipped me with good foundations in this respect, such as some short courses in human rights or international criminal law. More importantly, the University provides a platform to voice out our concerns and to create change in society.

Dialogue: What is the most impressive experience you have had in various social campaigns?

Martin: It must be the Students' Union's June 4 20th anniversary events. I realise that students do voice their support to the pursuit of justice and human rights, especially in critical moments. There are pressures from conservatives or even from the public, but we are united and determined to uphold these universal values. The impact, in terms of both numbers and the attention aroused in and outside of campus, is overwhelming.

Dialogue: Do you agree students nowadays are less proactive in participating in social movements? Do you have any advice to your fellow students in this regard?

Martin: The situation is improving. We do see more post-1980s generation, who are pioneering more and more social campaigns. Let's hope this is sustainable and rational. I believe university students should be more critical and analytical towards social problems – university is more than a vocational training centre.



Dialogue: Have you lived in Hall? How was it? How did you manage your hall life and academic results?

Simbi: I lived in Starr Hall for one year. I liked staying there because I got the opportunity to live with people from all over the world. We helped each other with assignments (Cantonese is quite different from my native language Shona), chatted in the pantry and had fun at high table dinner! There's always something going on in the Hall so I do school work first and try to keep my evenings free for hanging out with friends or participating in hall activities.

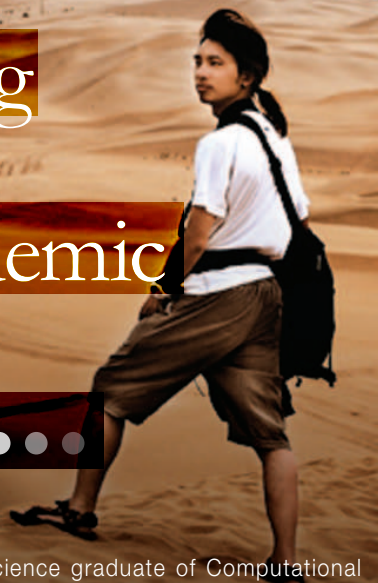
Dialogue: Can you give some advice to fresh students about how to plan for their university life, and their career?

Simbi: I would advise freshmen to do what they're best at and what's fun for them, instead of trying to be "careerists". As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever". I, for example, realised how the media coverage of Africa is usually negative and decided to organise the Africa Business Forum in January and March. I wanted to show that Africa is not a place of poverty, but rather a land of boundless opportunities for those who have vision and passion. I hope to use my time at HKU promoting Africa; its natural beauty, rich culture and amazing people!



Planning beyond the academic frame

Cathy Kwong
Dental Surgery, Year 4



Billy Ko, a Bachelor of Science graduate of Computational Mathematics and Operations Research, has explored his career in a most vibrant and energetic way since he left HKU in 2001.

Billy first worked in an IT company, and has since developed his own businesses including a music company, publishing company, photographic studio and travel media company. He did not run these companies simultaneously, nor did one evolve into another – there are over-lapping times between businesses, because each one is somehow related to the others, according to Billy.

Finally he discovered that he is most interested in travelling, so he decided to focus his career on this. Currently he is involved with a popular travel website called "travellife" (www.travellife.org). Billy is also running a mainland travel agency.

Just describing his busy career development is exhausting! Students can sometimes be concerned as to whether there is a direct

correlation between their studies and future careers. Billy, definitely an ideas man, shares his own thoughts about this with us and reminds that, in the end, you must choose what you feel is right for you.

Dialogue: What do you think about the relationship between the academic knowledge you attained and your career development? How did your university life make you more ready for your future career?

Billy: Not all the academic knowledge we gain in university applies to our future careers, but the most important thing is the critical and logical thinking we are trained in through our studies. I participated in a lot of activities, from Hall to getting into an Ex-co, to programmes like AIESEC (the world's largest student-driven organisation), mentorship initiatives and so on. Through them I knew lots of new people – including senior and junior ones. Knowledge exchange between people has helped me a lot. Therefore, students should keep training their minds, and try as many varieties of activities as possible in their university lives.

Dialogue: How did you benefit from the resources provided by HKU and did they prepare you for challenges in your life after your graduation?

Billy: The extra-curricular activities were invaluable to me. They provided me with the chances to maintain good connections with people I met, even after graduation. The connections made me realise how large (and small) the world is. Also, HKU provided a great deal of flexibility and freedom to me and my fellow students, which meant we had opportunities to get involved in other aspects of a rich university life, apart from the academic studies.

Dialogue: What factors influenced you when you were making your career choice?

Billy: I did not choose my career immediately after graduation. It was important for me to dare to try different jobs and try changes until the suitable one came along. I gained the experiences to develop my own business through these changes. It took time to develop my hobbies and goals, but they were my greatest concern when choosing my career.

Message from the Dean of Student Affairs

Dear Students,

On behalf of HKU, I would like to welcome you to or back to HKU. I hope you had a fruitful and enjoyable summer in which you are fully “recharged” for the busy academic year ahead.

For the new students, may I once again congratulate you for coming to HKU. I commend you for your excellent academic and non-academic achievements that earn you a place here. I am sure you will excel further at HKU.

As some of current students know, HKU has significantly revamped its undergraduate curriculum to prepare itself for the transition from the 3- to 4-year system in 2012. In fact, we are not waiting until 2012. We have incorporated many essential features of the new curriculum into the existing 3-year curriculum and the freshmen this year will go through a brand new curriculum. Aside from professional and academic excellence, the new curriculum aims to develop students' abilities in critical intellectual inquiry, tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems and communication and collaboration.

As our graduates are likely to be operating in a globalised world, the new curriculum contains components that will cultivate a high level of intercultural understanding among them. Perhaps, above all, students will develop global citizenship, leadership and capabilities in advocating for the improvement of the human condition. We believe the new curriculum will better prepare students to make the best use of their outstanding abilities and talents to work together with young people from all over the world to tackle global problems that confront all of humankind.

Other than the new curriculum, many of you will witness a few important historical events of HKU. The University will celebrate its Centenary in 2011-12, in which students will play a significant part. Although we have a framework for the celebration already, we will continue to consult you in the new academic year. In 2012, many of you will be the first users of the Centennial Campus and the new student residences on Lung Wah Street in Kennedy Town. I am sure you will agree with me that it is a very exciting time to be at HKU. We count on your contribution to make these events successful.

To complement the formal curriculum, the Centre of Resources and Development for Students (CEDARS) and many other units of the University have put together a variety of courses, workshops and leadership programmes for your full development. I hope you will take the time to study the relevant brochures or posters when they come out. I will also encourage you to take “Psychometer”, which is an online questionnaire for students to identify their character strengths. Of course, you are welcome to come to CEDARS to chat with our student advisers on various aspects of your study life at HKU.

In addition, HKU also has a number of programmes that put you in close contact with the community. For instance, in the HKU Mentorship Scheme, you will have a chance to get to know a community leader and exchange life experiences with him or her. In the HKU Worldwide Exchange Programme or other overseas study programmes or internships, you will learn about the world and expose yourself to thoughts and cultures that are totally new to you.

Other than joining activities organised by the University, it is also important for you participate and assume leadership positions in student societies. This is a good way for you to start to serve and create opportunities for other people while you are still studying.

Finally, may I wish you a successful year ahead. Please feel free to send me an email at dosa@hku.hk if you have any suggestions, questions or comments that you want to share with me.

Best wishes,

Albert Chau
Dean of Student Affairs



HKU – Resources & Support



Through thick and thin

Nelson Siu
BBA(Law), Year 5

From Our Campus: Where you can always find support

New beginnings are always exciting, but also a little nerve-racking because you are venturing into the unknown. By the same token, going to university is an exciting new adventure but because you will be exposed to an unknown environment, you will inevitably be a little lost. Fear not, my freshman friends, the University offers many resources that will stick with you through thick and thin. Take a look at the following and feel free to make use of any of them!



Academic Advising

Need some academic-related advice and support? Check out the support services and resources available at <http://www.hku.hk/tlearn/advising>.

Academic Matters, Awards and Scholarships

The Student Connect system is kind of like the ring in the trilogy Lord of The Rings – it is where you can monitor and rule over all your personal particulars: course enrollment, examination timetables and all other personal academic matters. (<http://www.hku.hk/connect>)

To all the geniuses and smartypants out there, go find yourself a scholarship, prize or academic award. There are a variety of awards and scholarships available at HKU to honour modern day Newtons and Einsteins. (<http://www.hku.hk/tlearn/advising/fsf>)

Computing and Network Services

Studying without a computer is no longer possible. Hang out at any of the Computer Centres on campus if you need to use a comp, or access the University network. The Computer Centre is the provider of central computing and network services.

The Help Desk is in Room 104, Run Run Shaw Building. The electronic helpdesk address is ccbox@hku.hk. You can also visit <http://www.hku.hk/cc> for technical support.



Exchange Programmes

You do not have to spend all your undergraduate years in HKU. You can go on exchange and study abroad if you meet the exchange requirements. The HKU Worldwide Exchange Programme offers one semester/one year overseas exchange to non-final year undergraduates (<http://www.hku.hk/liaison/oise>).

If you want to tap into the growing opportunities of the Chinese market you can join the HKU World Wide China Programme, which offers exchange and internship opportunities over the summer (<http://www.hku.hk/cao>).

General Education

Intelligence has many forms. At HKU, the General Education programme aims to diversify the learning experience so that students can acquire cultural and artistic intelligence, improve their critical thinking skills, ethical reasoning and personal competencies (<http://gened.hku.hk>).



Health

You cannot reach your potential if you are unhealthy or sick. HKU understands this and that is why medical, dental and physiotherapy services are offered to students. These services can be booked in advance on <http://www.hku.hk/uhs>.

HKUSU & PGSA

CEDARS – Resources & Support

Libraries

This is where you will do most of your research and spend most of your time studying. There are also meeting rooms and an audio-visual centre that you can make use of. There is one Main Library and six Specialist Branch Libraries at HKU. Electronic books can also be accessed via <http://www.lib.hku.hk>.



Student Amenities

Spice up your university routine by making use of the four amenities centres that provide facilities for relaxation, recreation and, of course, revision. You can book facilities online via HKU Portal by accessing "Student Services" under "Services".

HKU Mentorship Programme

As the first of its kind at HKU, the programme enables students as mentees to learn beyond their own discipline and meet mentors who are alumni and friends from different professional and expertise areas. Visit <http://daosys.hku.hk/mentor-web/About.action> for detail.

Students' Union

The Students' Union is an active and independent body that represents all the students at HKU. The Union is the unified voice of the students at HKU and is the liaison between students and the other governing bodies of the University. All full-time undergraduates are members of the HKUSU. Their website is <http://www.hkusu.org>.



Sport and Recreation

For the athletic and sporty bunch, the Institute of Human Performance (IHP) provides many opportunities and facilities for sport and recreation. Every semester, the IHP hosts a variety of instructed sports classes.

For more information, please go to <http://www3.hku.hk/iohp>.

Postgraduate Student Association

For the more senior ladies and gentlemen, your academic needs and social interests are provided for by the Graduate School and the Postgraduate Student Association (PGSA).

Graduate school website: <http://www.hku.hk/gradsch>
PGSA website: <http://www.hku.hk/pgsa>

Accommodation

The best thing about living close to campus is that extra half an hour of shut-eye you get before 9:30am lectures. The personal development you will get from living independently is also a plus! Get hooked up with close-to-campus accommodation by visiting <http://cedars.hku.hk/cedars/accommodation.aspx>.

Student Finance

Even as a business student, I sometimes find finance-related matters complicated and confusing. The good thing is that CEDARS offers plenty of support services that will guide, clarify and take you through any financial enquiries. For more information please reach <http://cedars.hku.hk/cedars/finances.aspx>.



Fundings for Educational Projects

The following are a list of other funds that are available for those who are qualified:

- CEDARS Global Citizenship Educational Programme
- HKU 81 Inclusion Fund and Henry Chan Inclusive Fund
- HKU '82 Alumni Green Fund
- HKU Class of '84 Social Inclusion Fund – Social Inclusion Activities Grant

Visit <http://cedars.hku.hk/edufund> for detail.

Catering

A stranger once told me that three activities sum up the life of human beings: working, sleeping and eating. At HKU, you will not have to worry about the latter because a wide range of cuisine is offered to fulfill different palette preferences.

For detail, visit the Catering section of CEDARS-Campus Life website (<http://cedars.hku.hk/cedars/campuslife.aspx>).

Support for International Students and Study Abroad

Whether you are coming in from a university abroad or going across the seas for exchange, you will have the support of CEDARS. CEDARS will do everything in its power to make the transition smooth for you, locally or globally. Take a look at <http://cedars.hku.hk/cedars/supportintl.aspx>.

Online Adjustment Tips

Counselling and Person Enrichment (CoPE), a section under CEDARS, has set down some tips to help you adjust and make the most of university life. To get yourself prepared for college life, look at the tips at <http://cedars.hku.hk/download/TipsEnjoyingUniversityLife.pdf>.

Overcoming Disabilities

At HKU, we welcome everybody and we are all about equal opportunities. Support services are available for those who are disabled.

Visit the Overcoming Disabilities section of CEDARS-Campus Life website (<http://cedars.hku.hk/cedars/campuslife.aspx>) if you need more information.

Activities by CEDARS, student societies and outside bodies

More than half of the “new” experiences in university happen beyond the lecture halls. Go and explore the enriching opportunities provided by student societies, CEDARS and other outside bodies.

Visit <http://cedars.hku.hk> for such information and the support of CEDARS for student activities.

Psychometer

University life can be stressful at times, especially towards the end of the semester when papers are due and exams are lurking just around the corner. To ensure your psychological well-being, support services are provided to assess and maintain your psychological health. Go to

<http://psyax.cedars.hku.hk> for the psychological tests and practical tips on achieving success at university.



First-in-the-Family Education (FIFE) Fund

This funding programme is designed to assist those who are the first in the family who have difficulties meeting the financial requirements of tertiary education. It provides funding for learning opportunities outside the classroom, too. For more information, please go to <http://www.fife.hku.hk>.



Counselling

Counselling services are also available for those who need somebody to listen to them and somebody to talk to. Some things are too tough to handle alone and a trained counsellor at CEDARS will try to help you resolve your problems. For more information please see <http://w3.cedars.hku.hk/counselling/content/CAC.php>.



Career Planning

One day, you will graduate and spread your wings beyond the University gates. However, if you do not have any career plans, you may well find yourself spiralling straight down, instead of flying. Thankfully, CEDARS offers many career planning support services. For more information, please go to the Career Planning section of CEDARS-Careers and Placement website (<http://cedars.hku.hk/cedars/CareersPlacement.aspx>).

Learning Plus

Student advisors of CEDARS will recommend learning support services that are tailor-made for individual student needs at Learning Plus, which is located at the ground floor of the Main Library.

Learning Plus is open from 12nn - 2pm on weekdays. Freshmen may call 2857 8382 to make an appointment of a 15-minute session.



Intensified Learning Opportunity Programme (ILOP)

For more profound personal development and for developing yourselves to be social advocates for improving human conditions, you can check out the ILOP programme. The name is quite self-explanatory: Intensified Learning Opportunity Programme. Feel free to visit <http://w3.cedars.hku.hk/ilop> for more information.

CEDARS News

CEDARS has an electronic newsletter called "CEDARS News", which is issued on a weekly basis. This newsletter gives you brief updates of all the learning opportunities currently available within and beyond campus. It also contains reports that are relevant to students, and it is just one click away!

(<http://cedars.hku.hk/NewsLetter>)



Finally, we would like to extend a warm welcome and offer our best wishes to the 2010 incoming students to the University of Hong Kong. We hope you will enjoy your time at HKU and remember the support services aforementioned whenever you need help! Check out cedars.hku.hk/induction if you want to know more about CEDARS and the University.



What do you think is the culture of the University of Hong Kong?

Jerran Lin
Journalism, Year 4 ● ● ●

Courtney Yip
Education, Year 2 ● ● ●

What comes to mind on mentioning HKU? Perhaps it is the campus surroundings, student lives, academic atmosphere or activities held that nurture our culture. But this culture is constantly revolving. Whatever it is, it is for individuals to define. Hear the views from senior students and even those who have just started to get a taste of the student life during the summer.



Razi Raza Nasir, Education, Year 2

What I like most about the University is the international outlook and environment. Every year, there are thousands of freshmen and exchange students from all over the world coming to study here. They are treated equally and enjoy the same rights as locals regardless of nationality, race and religion. The University even provides "hardware" like a global lounge and praying rooms to promote friendly contact and cultural exchange among different students. These cultural exchanges certainly help foster a friendly global atmosphere in the University and integrate students into a global culture. The University is diversity in unity.

Dickson Cheng, Science, Year 1

I am attracted to the campus environment as it gives me a sense of familiarity. It's like going back to secondary school, but the scale is a bit bigger. The buildings are clustered together, which is not like the buildings of the Chinese University. They are scattered on the hill. There are a lot of trees around too, like the trees on the slopes behind Starbucks that provide the area with some greenery. The people here are active and friendly. When I went to a touch camp in University Hall, the people were quick to include us into their group, like inviting me to a night snack and eagerly engaging us in conversation.

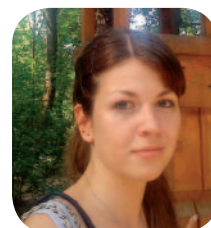


Alex Cheuk, Civil Engineering, Year 3

The culture is very diverse as students have autonomy from the school, they can manage clubs and halls on their own. Some clubs like the Union Choir and Drama Club are very successful. People here put all their efforts into running the clubs. The drama club holds annual large-scale performances, and I know the drama club from Baptist University even uses them as their reference. The halls are full of spirit, too. I'm from Ricci and we always go for the same goal, like in organising the information day activities, orientation camp etc.

Ksenia Rodionova, Education, Year 2

The buzzing dynamism and positive atmosphere of the University never fail to impress foreign students, including me. There are always lots of people hanging around who are supportive and willing to help you. People here just sparkle with vitality and friendliness. However, a language barrier still exists in this international university. The majority of students are so used to speaking Cantonese, even in the classroom. Plenty of activities and classes organised by societies are conducted only in Cantonese. Even some posters are printed in Cantonese only.



Jo Fung, Science, Year 1

I think the University is full of energy, the people are helpful and there are many kinds of activities to join in. I could feel the energy during registration day, when all the hall and club committee members chanted for support. I can see that halls are united and hall mates live in harmony too. When I visited University Hall, I saw photo displays of their sports competition and training, demonstrating team spirit. We were also told that roommates would rather sleep together on the floor than in their own beds.

Darren Chen, Journalism, Year 3

HKU has a throbbing student culture that brings the term "whole-person education" to a whole new level. The degree of liberty in education offered is an eye opener. It does so by encouraging students to participate in an array of cultural, study abroad, leadership and internship programmes. Academic-wise, although most courses taught here have a focus on group work, there's always a healthy dose of competition in the classroom. The downside is you'll get easily lost if you don't have a strong heart for a fast-paced, intellectually challenging education and being surrounded by high-calibre individuals.



John Guo, Actuarial Science, Year 3

As with hall cultures, the good thing is that they share the same dreams and pursuits. Some committed hall mates are ardently engaged in harmonising the relationships among others, but the problem is they emphasise too much on an identical expression of the common hall goal, making those who would like to use their own way to express a sense of unity or friendliness seem remote. For example, they would yell out at night till their throats are sore to express their love for the hall. Since people are from different backgrounds, they might not want to express it in the same way.

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