

## Academic Affairs Newsletter

(Issue No. 1/97 15 January 1997)

[This newsletter is also posted on the Electronic Noticeboard of the University computer network and can be accessed for viewing from the folder: "AA\_News".]

### Message from the Vice-President for Academic Affairs

## High Impact Areas Initiative



Happy New Year! In this first issue of the 1997 AA Newsletter, I would like to share with you the University's initiative to focus on some selected research areas - the High Impact Areas (HIAs).

As you may be aware, there has been discussion in the Government and University Grants Committee (UGC) concerning reduction in tertiary education budgets for the 1998-2001 triennium. One suggestion, which is being considered, is to return part of the reduction to UGC to support Centers of Excellence at higher education institutions (HEIs). To prepare HKUST for this contingency and be in the strongest possible position to compete for a significant portion of any such funding available to HEIs, the issue of initiating the originally called "Centres of Excellence", but now called "High Impact Areas", was discussed by the University Administrative Committee (UAC) as well as in meetings between the VP-RD and the Deans. Since August last year, the President, the VP-RD, and myself have been meeting frequently in shaping the overall vision and direction for this initiative.

The strategy is to pick several areas that Hong Kong society will obviously and directly benefit from, areas which require no explanation and cause no controversy, and use them as a starter. Within each of these areas, further specialties will be picked, which are of very practical interests to the public, and preferably also to the private sector so that the latter can be called upon to match funds.

After several rounds of discussion and consultation, and with inputs and feedback collected from the Deans, seven HIAs have been selected based on the concept that:

- the HIAs chosen would put HKUST at the forefront in terms of added visibility and high impact to Hong Kong's economic development
- they should be areas in which HKUST has a realistic chance to emerge as among top universities in the world
- they should also be areas which can be initiated and achieved with the University only injecting minimal resources as a starter

The seven areas identified are:

#### • China Business and Management

The goal of this HIA initiative is to make the School of Business & Management at HKUST a leader on business and management issues in China. Initial efforts will focus on establishing seminars, training programs and research initiatives to be pursued in the Shui On Center, which was established earlier with a \$25 million grant from Shui On.

#### • Chinese Herbal Medicine Research Center

The goal of this center is to provide a coordinated, cohesive framework for our various initiatives in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Initial focus will be on establishing a sound research base in selected areas of TCM.

#### • Nanostructure Science and Technology

This research thrust involves the fabrication, characterization, enhanced physical properties, modelling, and applications of materials and devices systems on the nanometer scale. Research assistants and visiting scholars are being engaged to expand the research activities already under way.

#### • Transportation Systems

This HIA represents a target of opportunity that HKUST should pursue. Transportation system planning is critically important to Hong Kong and China at this time. This research thrust will put HKUST at the forefront. Initially, two to three

(continued on P.2)

experts will be brought in to assist in giving crisp definition to this initiative.

- **Electronic Packaging and Assembly**

This HIA deals with the packaging and assembly of electronic components and devices in a completed electrical system. This industry is vitally important to Hong Kong in its competition with Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea. Visiting scholars and research assistants will be engaged in an effort to achieve a "critical mass" in the research programs associated with this HIA.

- **Speech Recognition and Machine Translation**

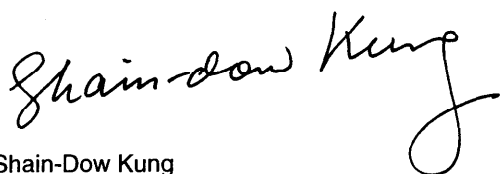
This HIA represents a "niche" in which HKUST has the potential to become a world leader. Visiting scholars and research associates will be engaged to establish a base of research support.

- **Construction and Structural Engineering**

This HIA focuses on the critically important area of the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure in Hong Kong and South China. It will concentrate in the areas of tall buildings, bridges, slope safety, and construction materials.

In addition to the identification of HIAs, a number of opportunities have arisen in recent months where industrial partners are prepared to provide substantial matching funds. It is also vital that the University is able to respond to these targets of opportunity in a timely manner, which have great potential of development into major research impact areas for UST.

With UAC's endorsement in November 1996, additional funding to support the HIAs as well as targets of opportunity from the contingency budget was requested and approved by the Council's Finance Committee. The responsible dean for each of these HIAs will be working with faculty members concerned to map out the program activities and to detail a long range strategic plan for the HIA, together with a one year action plan for the 1997/98 academic year.



Shain-Dow Kung  
Vice-President for Academic Affairs  
January 1997

### University Appointments and Substantiation Committee (UASC)

From 1 November 1996 to 31 December 1996, the UASC had reviewed 4 senior appointments, 4 academic review cases, and 1 substantiation case.

### Administrative Appointments

**Dr. Karl KAO** has been appointed **Acting Head of the Division of Humanities**, concurrent with his appointment as Associate Professor in the Division of Humanities, from 1 January 1997 to 30 May 1997.

**Mr. Tony LAM** has been reappointed **Acting Director of Educational Technology Centre**, concurrent with his appointment as Associate Director and Audio Visual Manager in Educational Technology Centre, from 1 January 1997 to 31 March 1997, or until a regular appointment for the position is made.

**Prof. Madeline WU** has been reappointed **Acting Head of Biology**, concurrent with her appointment as Professor of Biology, from 1 January 1997 until the appointment of the substantive head who is expected to be on board on 1 February 1997.

**Dr. Matthew YUEN** has been appointed **Associate Dean of Engineering**, concurrent with his appointment as Senior Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering, from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 1998.

### Search Committee for the Headship of Division of Humanities

The following faculty members have been appointed by the Dean of Humanities & Social Science, in consultation with VP-AA, to serve on the Search Committee for the Headship of Humanities:

Chairman:	Professor Andrew WALDER, Head and Professor of Social Science
Members:	Dr. Leonard K K CHAN, Senior Lecturer in Division of Humanities
	Professor Din Yu HSIEH, Professor of Mathematics
	Dr. Karl KAO, Senior Lecturer in Division of Humanities
	Dr. Angelina YEE, Senior Lecturer in Division of Humanities

### Academic Appointments

From 1 November 1996 to 31 December 1996, the University had extended 22 academic appointment offers. As of 31 December 1996, 18 appointees accepted and 4 had not replied.

### Faculty Member (1) on board in November and December 1996

#### School of Science (1)

##### Department of Physics

Dr. Bradley Alan FOREMAN  
Assistant Professor, PhD *Cornell Univ*

### Visiting Faculty Members (5) on board in November and December 1996

#### School of Engineering (1)

##### Department of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management

Dr. Ka Ching CHAN  
Vis Assistant Professor, PhD *Univ of New South Wales*

#### School of Business and Management (4)

##### Department of Finance

Dr. Lynn K. PI  
Vis Assistant Professor, PhD *Georgia State Univ*

##### Department of Information and Systems Management

Mr. Xiangdong WANG  
Vis Scholar, MA *Chinese Academy of Social Science*

##### Department of Marketing

Dr. Kamel JEDIDI  
Vis Associate Professor, PhD *Univ of Pennsylvania*

Professor Vithala R. RAO  
Vis Professor, PhD *Univ of Pennsylvania*

*Note: From time to time, short-term visitors are appointed by the University to help keeping the academic community updated on current developments in the academic arena and maintain a constant flow of talents. This small pool of visitors is at about 10% of our faculty strength.*

### Substantiation

Prof. Lung-Fei LEE, Professor of Economics has been granted substantiation and appointment on superannuation terms

### Promotion

Congratulations to Prof. Philip CHAN who has been promoted to Professor in title with effect from 1 January 1997.

### Substantiation Review Spring 1997 Timetable

As announced in my notice to all Assistant Professors in October 1996, review for substantiation will be conducted twice a year - one in fall and one in spring. This review timetable will apply to all faculty members. Those who intend to apply for review in Spring 1997, please note the application deadline: **1 March 1997**, and the review timetable as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
1 March 1997	Deadline for receiving applications for substantiation.
1 June 1997	Completion of review at the Department level.
1 July 1997	Completion of review at the School level.
1 October 1997	Completion of review at the University level.
1 November 1997	Recommendation by VP-AA; and decision by President
Before end of December 1997	Announcement of results

*Faculty members are advised to check their eligibility and have a discussion with their Department/Division Head or the Dean before they file in their application for substantiation. Application, together with the relevant documents, shall be sent to the Department/Division Heads who will initiate the review according to the University guidelines. (Please refer to Chapter 4.4 of the Faculty Handbook 1995 and the relevant school and departmental review guidelines in the Academic Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual.)*

### Reorganization of Office of Laboratory services

The Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) was established in 1990 with the purpose to outfit all laboratories at HKUST in a timely manner, and to maintain them as needed. It has performed an important function during the start-up phase of the University. As we entered into our second five years' operation, with our faculty and student bodies established, it was necessary to conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation in order to determine how best the laboratories could be supported in the steady-state. To this end, an OLS Working Group was appointed, chaired by Prof. Hsi-sheng Ch'i, which did the review and submitted its report and recommendations in December, 1995.

After many discussions and consultations with relevant branches and units, most of the recommendations made by the Working Group have been implemented by 1 January 1997. Specifically:

- The Facilities Group, headed by Wileen Chu, has been moved to EMO for closer coordination with the staff involved in development and maintenance work;
- The Instrumentation Maintenance and Repair Group, headed by Vincent Li, has been moved to the School of Engineering. Its functions will be combined with those of the Mechanical Workshop to form a new central service facility.
- The Chemical & Dangerous Goods Inventory Centre, headed by Painchai Tantivangphaisal, and the Central Warehouse Inventory Centre have been combined to form a new service unit within the AA Branch which will be called: Centre for Laboratory Supplies (CLS).

It is expected that the above arrangement will further enhance efficiency and will continue to provide lab users a high-quality service.

### Transfer of the Information System Unit of CCST to AB Branch

Since the founding of the University we have adopted a computing policy which stresses the importance of the use of computers in our teaching, research, and administrative functions. The CCST was established to coordinate and implement this policy, which led to the sophisticated campus network of computers and computing services. The CCST's functions can be divided into three categories: "core computing services" which include the development and maintenance of the campus network and selected computing platforms; "academic computing services" which include the administration of the computer barns and the support in the selection, procurement, and operation of equipment used in teaching and research activities; and "administrative computing services" which include the development and maintenance of our administrative information systems.

Again, it was appropriate to conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation in order to determine how best our computing environment could be supported for the steady-state. A CCST Working Group, chaired by Mr. Paul Bolton, VP-AB, was appointed to conduct this review. They recommended that:

- The core computing services will continue to be supported centrally;
- The support of academic computing services will be distributed to the user departments when they develop the expertise, for greater efficiency and user accountability; and
- The Information Systems (IS) Unit, which is primarily responsible for administrative computing services, will be moved to the AB Branch which is the main user of the services (the ARR, FO, PO, and EMO).

The move of the IS Unit was effected on 1 January 1997, with virtually no disruption to the user community.