

Academic @ffairs

N E W S L E T T E R

Grass always greener elsewhere?!

For more than half a year, the VP-AA has been hosting weekly gatherings over lunch with faculty from all Departments. Many of you reading this may have attended such a meeting, and the rest will eventually be invited since the intention is to include all members of the faculty. The meetings have no agenda, but are opportunities to express views, exchange opinions, and clarify misunderstandings. Several themes have emerged as common topics of discussion, and I would like to say a few words about one of them here. It might be called the “grass is always greener on the other side of the fence” syndrome, but the issue is clearly deeper than this facetious description would suggest.

In simple terms, many faculty have reported their impressions that colleagues at other institutions are, in some way or another, provided with more generous support than found at UST. It may be a matter of more PG students, more postdocs, or more up-to-date equipment, depending on what the UST faculty member most feels is lacking. From a global perspective, it is hard to understand how this can be so. All of the universities in Hong Kong are funded on essentially the same basis. There are variations, but as one of the three recognized research institutions, our funding levels are at the higher end of the spectrum. So, at least as far as public funding is concerned, it simply cannot be that *all* faculty at the other universities have support that is greater by a factor of two or three times what we provide—and such factors (or even more) are commonly reported by some of our faculty members.

Can it be private support that makes the difference? We know that HKU, with its long history

and established alumni base, has developed a much larger base of private funding than the other universities. But it is not only HKU that seems to be more generous to its faculty, and private funding is unlikely to account for the reported differences. One of our faculty, at one of the lunches, proposed what may be a more realistic explanation: support at the other universities may be concentrated on a relatively smaller core of productive active researchers. At UST, at this stage of our development, we are spreading our resources more evenly, and hence more thinly, as we feel we have a faculty all of whom are supposed to be active in research.

I do not know if this is, in fact, the correct explanation. I am sure that the other institutions would dispute the implication that many of their faculty are not productive researchers. Also, I could pay for one of those weekly lunches if I have a dollar for every time I have been told by someone at another university that HKUST has more of everything than they do. But there does seem to be a case that they prioritize the allocation of their resources in such a way that some of their faculty get more support than we give the corresponding faculty at HKUST. The VP-AA has recently announced a program to support additional postdocs on a matching fund basis, and this is one attempt to respond to an important aspect of this problem. In the long run, however, addressing these issues will require our doing a better job of identifying our own priorities.

Peter N Dobson, Jr

Finding enjoyment of research step-by-step

Wisdom of Prof Dan Tsui, Nobel Laureate



The Hong Konger Nobel Laureate, Prof Dan Tsui (崔琦教授) met with faculty and students in the Department of Physics on 17 December 1999.

In Prof Tsui's view, there is a major difference between research projects and homework assignments: The latter is to repeat other people's work and to redo solved problems. We therefore usually work with more confidence. On the other hand, research is to explore a new arena and to solve existing problems. It is like climbing a huge mountain that no one did before. We may not know where to start and feel at a loss at the beginning. However, if we care to walk nearer and look closer, we will find small paths, we will find little streams, and we will find a route. If we happen to see a cliff, we will have to make a detour, but there is still a way.

Prof Tsui advised, “Try not to calculate anticipated outcomes”. He asked us to always keep ourselves abreast of new knowledge, be inquisitive and work diligently to find the way out, step-by-step – this is where the essence and enjoyment of research work lie.

Academic Program News

Courses for UST & CUHK students

We signed an agreement on academic partnership with CUHK on 28 September 1999 to jointly make greater contributions to tertiary education and scientific research in Hong Kong. Apart from joint research activities, academic conferences and the sharing of academic materials, there will be courses that students in the partner institution can enroll. Next month, we will see the first batch of students from CUHK coming over to our campus and join our students in taking MATH 323 Topology. More courses of the type are being lined up, including: Semiconductor Physics (Summer 2000, at UST), PHYS 370 Information Physics (Fall 2000, at UST) and Relativity (Fall 2000, at CUHK).

Master of Technology Management

The Master of Technology Management (MTM) is a new generic degree that will be introduced from 2000-01. MTM programs are designed to create synergy by bringing technical intelligence and business perspectives together. The technical component will account for 60% of the credits while the other 40% will be business and management core courses.

Ten self-financing part-time MTM programs were approved for offer. The relevant schools will decide which programs to offer in a particular year.

Approved part-time MTM programs

Advanced Manufacturing Technology	Microelectronics
Biotechnology	Polymer Technology
Electronic Packaging Technology	Storage Technology
Global Logistics Management	Transportation Technology & Management
Information Technology	Wireless Communication

Transportation Logistics Management – new Chinese name

The BEng program in Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management (Transportation Logistics Management) will have a new Chinese title “工學士 (工業工程及工程管理學 – 運輸物流管理)” with effect from 2000-01.

Compared to “運輸後勤管理”, the new translation “運輸物流管理” will better reflect the objective of the program and is a more common term used among Chinese societies.

Deadline for converting I grades

The Incomplete (I) grade is used “when work is necessarily delayed through no fault of the student, such as a medical problem or an equipment breakdown”. The Senate has recently amended the “I” grade conversion deadline. The current rule is as follows:

The Incomplete (I) grade must be converted to a regular grade at least one working day before the start of the following semester; otherwise, it is converted to F.

Honors and GGA

Currently, undergraduate students may be considered for honors upgrading at graduation under extraordinary academic circumstances. Guidelines to be followed strictly are given in the reference below.

*Section UG70(5.5), Academic Programs Manual
<http://www.ust.hk/~webaa/APM/ug705.htm>*

However, with effect from 2000-01, the class of honors for a graduating student will be based solely on the GGA and there will be no provision for honors upgrading.

“No-drop” rule on the last add/drop day lifted

Students can now add or drop courses throughout the entire 12-day add/drop period.

Right now, UG course registrations are done through the web-based system. Students on the waiting list can take up course places whenever the places become available. On the other hand, PG course quotas are usually more flexible to meet the needs of students. As such, the “add-only; no-drop” rule on the last day of the add/drop period is no longer needed.

Mid-Spring break

We used to have a mid-semester break around April time but the one for the coming Spring seems missing.

The Spring semester dates are so constructed that there should be about 81-84 teaching days spanning over 14 teaching weeks, and the semester must end latest by the end of May. Constrained by the number and distribution pattern of the public holidays, we cannot afford to provide for a mid-semester break this Spring. Nonetheless, a mid-semester break will be inserted whenever situation permits.

Deadlines for UG Proposals

If departments wish to propose changes to UG programs and courses, and/or changes to admission requirements of UG programs, please watch out for the following deadlines for the changes to be approved in time to take effect from 2000-01 and for new admission requirements to be included in the 2001 JUPAS Guide.

Two rounds: 30 January & 30 March 2000

PG Prospectuses, 2000-02

The new PG Prospectuses were available for distribution to prospective applicants. As the majority of PG program curricula have stabilized in recent years and most of the annual updates for the PG Prospectuses in the past few years have involved only minor changes, the PG Prospectuses will be published in alternate years, beginning from the current issue.

Language & quality education

The demands for language provision have increased year by year. At 8 am on 2nd October 1991, the first UST classes opened: LANG 001, English for Academic Purposes, for 454 students; 23 classes, taught by eight full-time staff of the Language Center.

At 9 am on 1st September 1999, the Language Center began its Fall schedule of 290 classes in English, Chinese and Japanese, for almost five thousand students, with 52 full-time and two part-time staff.

Most students now take at least four English Language/Communication courses over three years; Engineering students take six. Under a new initiative, students taking business courses will have regular feedback on academic course-related written assignments in English. At the same time, the provision of Chinese courses has also grown significantly. The Language Centre now teaches a range of seven courses in spoken Putonghua and written Chinese.

'Language' is not simply a matter of the right 'vocabulary' put together with the right 'grammar'. There is a considerable emphasis in our Language courses on building students' confidence in oral production, on enhancing students' critical thinking skills, and on encouraging students to develop their personal learning strategies and appropriate research techniques. While some courses are fairly general in approach, others are more specialized, concentrating on aspects of language development in spheres identified as useful for vocational purposes e.g. job-seeking skills. Students may also seek individual help from the English Writing Center; and those more willing to learn can make use of facilities in the Self-Access Center.

We do not expect our graduates to be able to use language to perfection. They, however, do leave us with increased confidence in language production, and an awareness of the specific areas of language where they need to make efforts to improve. They will have had practice and feedback in reading, writing, listening and speaking in academic and work-related contexts, and many students will have made considerable progress.

The Language Center is always closely monitoring the language needs of students by gauging the demands of society as well as academic departments in the university, and seeks to respond to them.

The new millennium should see the Language Center play an even more central role in enhancing the quality of education provided at UST. New incentives for the near future include an emphasis on developing students' learning strategies - to help students "learn how to learn", incorporating IT where appropriate and available in the design and delivery of language courses, and the development of Chinese courses which integrate spoken Putonghua and written business communication in Modern Standard Chinese.

Web-based course delivery

The Web-based Course Delivery System (WCDS) is another teaching development project that CELT (Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching) is launching. It supports instructors to make good use of the Web and its resources in teaching and delivering courses online.

Common delivery platform

Three course delivery systems have been set up and made available to all instructors.

■ *WISDOM* (developed by our students under supervision of Dr Jogesh Muppala)

■ *WebCT*

■ *Learning Space*

CELT is organizing workshops on using these systems to deliver online courses.

Assistance in tackling technical barriers

CELT will deploy student helpers to help instructors cope with the technical barriers they may come across in using the Web.

Advice on instructional design

Delivering a course online requires re-conceptualization of the way we teach and how we want our students to learn. Mrs Winnie Jenkins (ctwinnie, 6809) and Mr Tak S Ha (cttsha, 6812) of CELT should be able to offer good advice on pedagogical issues.

Peer sharing and support

CELT will keep organizing experience-sharing seminars, including on-line sharing sessions, for instructors to share their experience.

Evaluation service

CELT will also assist instructors to evaluate the effectiveness of their online courses as a teaching and learning medium.

This is a collaborative project of CELT with associate deans of the 4 Schools and a senior instructor of the Language Center, funded by the Teaching Development Grant. Instructors interested in the project can visit the project web page at

<http://www.ust.hk/celt/OnlineEducation/wbt.htm>.

Input Wanted

For sure there are many more achievements and creative activities worth reporting in this newsletter. Please email aao@ust.hk or call Betty Law at the extension 6132.

Achievement highlights

- According to a recent study published in the October 1999 issue of Economic Inquiry, UST was ranked no.1 among universities in East Asia in terms of research productivity in economics.
- Dr Du Qiang of Mathematics has been appointed by the Ministry of Science and Technology in December 1999 as the chief-scientist for the prestigious national 973 project on "large scale scientific computation research" with first two year budget over 13 million RMB.
- Prof Jay-Chung Chen and Dr Alexis Lau of CCAR will be participating in the national 973 project on weather prediction.
- The UST MEMS group, led by Dr Man Wong (ELEC) and Dr Yitshak Zohar (MECH) will be a participating member in the national 973 project on MEMS.
- Prof Jian-Shu Li of Mathematics was appointed 長江講座教授 and awarded 傑出青年科學基金.
- Prof Wilfried Vanhonacker, Head of Marketing, has been elected a member of the International Academy of Management – the oldest association in the field of management that honors individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the science and art of management.
- Dr Fwu-Shan Sheu of Biochemistry is, among 807 applications, the only one in the field of life sciences and also one of the three young Hong Kong scientists in all the fields to be awarded research funds from the Overseas Young Scholar Collaboration Research Grant 1999 of the National Natural Science Foundation.
- Dr Yun-Dong Wu of Chemistry has been selected for the Croucher Senior Research Fellowship award for 2000-2001. During the fellowship year, a replacement teacher will be appointed to relieve him from teaching to concentrate full-time on research work.
- With the paper "On strongest necessary and weakest sufficient conditions", Dr Fangzhen Lin (COMP) won the KR2000 Best Paper Award in the 7th International Conference on Knowledge Representation and Reasoning, a premier conference to be held in Colorado.
- Dr Cecilia Cheng (SOSC) has won the Early Career Research Award from the International Council of Psychologists.
- Final-year students, Maggie Chan (MARK), Grace Chun (ISMT), Lam Wai Nam (FINA), and Dennis Lai (ECON), took part in the UG Management Consulting Association 1999 International Business Challenge in Austin in October. The team, alongside teams from Wharton, UC Berkeley, and University of Texas, qualified for the final round of competition.

A New (Safety) Era has arrived

The need to properly manage Occupational Health and Safety has become more apparent as we enter the new millennium. Following the Government's promulgation of stringent safety and health regulations, more specific regulatory requirements are expected in the coming years. The safety management roles and legal liabilities of business owners, managers and supervisors have never been so clearly specified before.

In parallel with the regulatory development, several safety related civil lawsuits in our community involving huge damage awards levied against liable parties have raised many eyebrows.

- *industrial accident: a welder awarded \$15M for back injuries*
- *chemical exposure during pesticide application: a musician awarded \$24M for nervous system damage*
- *fall from scaffolding: an electrician awarded \$17M*
- *fire: a toy worker awarded \$18M for damage from inhalation of smoke*
- *drowning accident: a 7-year old boy awarded \$15M*

Some lawyers are specializing in accident related litigation these days; some are apparently offering special service packages to accident victims. More and more safety related lawsuits are expected.

While there have not been too many major accidents in the local tertiary education institutions in the last couple of years, cases of safety malpractice in the academic arena have been reported elsewhere.

- *a reader at the King's College London was charged personally for failure to inform his research student about hazards associated with his experiment which resulted in an explosion*
- *both NIH and MIT had cases involving mismanagement and malicious use of radioisotopes*
- *Edinburgh was prosecuted for various breaches of genetically modified organisms regulations*
- *Cambridge pleaded guilty to criminal charges related to mismanagement of hazardous materials*

Prosecuting government officials commented that, at many academic institutions, there appears to be a common atmosphere of "arrogance and complacency" towards safety.

In the past, we have all worked diligently to put UST at its present spot of excellence. On our way to meeting upcoming challenges and achieving our goals, let's continue to put effort in complying with environmental health and safety requirements and in maintaining our safety culture.

An innovative step to build an environmentally friendlier HK

The Chemical Engineering Department will join hands with the Millennium Environmental Technology Ltd (MET) to commercialise the conversion of municipal and construction wastes into high quality building materials. MET will provide a total of \$7.5M to support the three-year project under the direction of Dr John Barford to apply the technology on a large scale in Hong Kong.

Academic Personnel News

Administrative appointments

effective between 2 July 1999 and 1 January 2000

School of Engineering

Prof Po Lock YUE - reappointed Head of Chemical Engineering, concurrent with his appointment as Professor of Chemical Engineering, from 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2002 or until a new Head is in post, whichever is earlier.

Prof Roland T CHIN - reappointed Head of Computer Science, concurrent with his appointment as Professor of Computer Science, from 1 January 2000 to 30 June 2002.

Prof Mitchell M TSENG - reappointed Head of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management, concurrent with his appointment as Professor of Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management, from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2002 or until a new Head is in post, whichever is earlier.

School of Humanities and Social Science

Prof Alvin SO - reappointed Associate Dean of Humanities and Social Science, concurrent with his appointment as Head and Professor in the Division of Social Science, from 1 January to 31 December 2000.

Prof William TAY - appointed Associate Dean of Humanities and Social Science, concurrent with his appointment as Professor in the Division of Humanities, from 1 January to 31 December 2000.

New Term (1999-2000) of UASC

Membership of the new term of the University Appointments and Substantiation Committee (UASC) starting from 1 November 1999 :

Chairman:

Prof Chi Kwong CHANG, Head and Professor, CHEM

Members:

Prof Ka-keung C CHAN, Head and Professor, FINA

Prof Leonard K CHENG, Head and Professor, ECON

Prof Grafton W H HUI, Professor, MATH
(replacing Prof George Ke-Lun WONG of Physics until 30 April 2000)

Prof Alvin SO, Head and Professor, SOSC

Prof William TAY, Professor, HUMA

Prof Derick WOOD, Professor, COMP

Prof Po Lock YUE, Head and Professor, CENG

Search Committee for Dean of Engineering

Chairman:

Prof Nelson CUE, AVP-AA(PG) and Professor, PHYS

Members:

Prof Yuk-Shee CHAN, Dean, SBM and Professor, FINA

Prof Chi Kwong CHANG, Head and Professor, CHEM

Prof Samuel H N CHEUNG, Head and Professor, HUMA

Prof Tony EASTHAM, AVP-RD and Professor, ELEC & CIVL

Prof Hoi Sing KWOK, Professor, ELEC

Prof Tongxi YU, Associate Dean, ENGG and Professor, MECH

Faculty members on board

between 2 July 1999 and 1 January 2000

School of Science

Dr Zhenguo WU, Assistant Professor, BICH
PhD University of Western Ontario

Dr Jianzhen YU, Assistant Professor, CHEM
PhD University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Dr Weijia WEN, Assistant Professor, PHYS
PhD Chinese Academy of Sciences

School of Engineering

Dr Shueng-Han Gary CHAN, Assistant Professor, COMP
PhD Stanford University

Dr Pengcheng SHI, Assistant Professor, ELEC
PhD Yale University

School of Business and Management

Dr David Daokui LI, Associate Professor, ECON
PhD Harvard University

Dr Timothy K CHUE, Assistant Professor, ECON
PhD Harvard University

Dr Tridip RAY, Assistant Professor, ECON
PhD Cornell University

Dr Kang-Oh YI, Assistant Professor, ECON
PhD University of California, San Diego

Dr Yan YU, Assistant Professor, ECON
PhD Duke University

Dr Se-Joon HONG, Assistant Professor, ISMT
PhD Carnegie Mellon University

Dr Yan XU, Assistant Professor, ISMT
PhD Strathclyde University

Dr Dilip SOMAN, Assistant Professor, MARK
PhD University of Chicago

School of Humanities and Social Science

Dr Min ZHANG, Associate Professor, HUMA
PhD Peking University

Visiting faculty members on board

between 2 July 1999 and 1 January 2000
(Appointments for 2 months or more are listed)

School of Science

Dr Jürgen SCHERKENBECK, Visiting Associate Professor, CHEM
Bayer AG

Prof Brian Kidd RIDLEY, Visiting Professor, PHYS
University of Essex

School of Engineering

Prof George S BIRRELL, Visiting Associate Professor, CIVL
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology

Dr Limin ZHANG, Visiting Assistant Lecturer, CIVL
University of Florida

Dr Satu Synnöve KEKKONEN-MONETA, Visiting Assistant Lecturer,
COMP
Université de Paris-Sud

Dr Zhizhang (David) CHEN, Visiting Associate Professor, ELEC
Dalhousie University

Dr Yingbo HUA, Visiting Associate Professor, ELEC
University of Melbourne

Dr Tommy King-Yin CHEUNG, Visiting Assistant Professor, ELEC
VastSystems Technology Corporation

School of Humanities and Social Science

Prof Richard P SUTTMEIER, Visiting Professor, SOSC
University of Oregon

Adjunct faculty appointed between 2 July 1999 and 1 January 2000

School of Science

Prof Yitao WANG, Adjunct Professor, BICH
China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Dr Chun-Tao CHE, Adjunct Associate Professor, CHEM
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Dr Terence See-Ming WAN, Adjunct Associate Professor, CHEM
The Hong Kong Jockey Club

School of Engineering

Prof Herbert EDELSBRUNNER, Adjunct Professor, COMP
Duke University

Dr Kwok-Yan LAM, Adjunct Associate Professor, COMP
National University of Singapore

Prof Hau L LEE, Adjunct Professor, IEEM
Stanford University

School of Business and Management

Dr W Mary WONG, Adjunct Associate Professor, ACCT
HKUST (concurrently appointed as Visiting Scholar in Accounting)

Dr Laurence C FRANKLIN, Adjunct Associate Professor, FINA
AIA Capital Corporation Limited, Hong Kong

Dr Sigurd DYRTING, Adjunct Assistant Professor, FINA
HKUST (also appointed as half-time Research Associate in Finance)

Substantiations and promotions

Faculty members substantiated and promoted to the indicated ranks with effect from 1 January 2000:

School of Science

Dr Mingjie ZHANG, Associate Professor(B), BICH

Dr Andrew Leitch MILLER, Associate Professor(B), BIOL

Dr Jimmy Chi Hung FUNG, Associate Professor(B), MATH

Dr Xiao P WANG, Associate Professor(B), MATH

School of Engineering

Dr Xiang-Song LI, Associate Professor(B), CIVL

Dr Zongjin LI, Associate Professor(B), CIVL

Dr Charles W W NG, Associate Professor(B), CIVL

Dr Hai YANG, Associate Professor(B), CIVL

Dr Nevin Lianwen ZHANG, Associate Professor(B), COMP

Dr Jack LAU, Associate Professor(B), ELEC

Dr Liming LIU, Associate Professor(B), IEEM

School of Business and Management

Dr Guofu TAN, Associate Professor(A), ECON

Dr Chu ZHANG, Associate Professor(B), FINA

Dr Jiatao LI, Associate Professor(B), MGTO

Promotion

Dr Francis T LUI of Economics has been promoted to the rank of Professor with effect from 1 January 2000.

Substantiations approved between 1 July and 31 December 1999

School of Engineering

Prof Po Lock YUE, Professor, CENG

Prof Roland T CHIN, Professor, COMP

Prof Mitchell M TSENG, Professor, IEEM

School of Humanities and Social Science

Dr Yiu Ming FUNG, Associate Professor(A), HUMA

Dr David ZWEIG, Associate Professor(A), SOSC

College of Fellows – revised structure

Head of College	President
Members	Honorary Fellows (un-named)
	School Fellows (un-named)
	Named Fellows

The **Honorary Fellowship** is established to show appreciation to members of the community who have made significant contributions to the University. It is a purely honorary award and carries no stipend.

Visiting faculty or Visiting Scholars who are qualified academics or very experienced practitioners in the relevant field may be awarded the title of **School Fellow** to teach specific courses or perform research activities. This is also a purely honorary award carrying no stipend.

Only academic staff of the University will be considered for **Named Fellows**. The fellowship is to enhance the terms of appointment of outstanding candidates whom the University wishes to attract. Named fellows will receive a stipend on the basis of academic merit as well as market-driven factors.

Substantiation and promotion review **Spring 2000 timetable**

Date(*)	Event
Jan 2000	Notice to faculty of the Spring review timetable
1 Mar 2000	Deadline for receiving applications
1 Aug 2000	Completion of review at the Department level
1 Oct 2000	Completion of review at the School level
1 Nov 2000	Completion of review at the University level
15 Nov 2000	Recommendation/decision by VP-AA or the President as appropriate
Nov 2000	Submission to the Standing Committee of Council for approval on professorial substantiation cases
Around end of Dec 2000	Inform faculty outcomes of the review
1 Jan 2001	Effective date of substantiation and/or promotion, as appropriate, if approved

* *The above date scheduled above is an indication of the expected time that the corresponding event will complete. Slight variations may occur but the whole process for a Spring review shall be completed around the end of December each year.*

Faculty members are advised to consult their Department Head or Dean to check their eligibility and to consider if they wish to apply for substantiation and/or promotion. Application, together with the relevant documents, shall be sent to the Department Head who will initiate the review according to the University guidelines. Please refer to Chapter 4.4 of the Faculty Handbook for details of the substantiation policy and guidelines.