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## Award-winning Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Student to Speak in International Conferences on New Theory to Boost Network Reliability

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The [Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program \(UROP\)](#) – a signature program at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to give undergraduate students an early taste of research under the guidance of faculty members, has nurtured many young talented researchers since its launch in 2005. Year 2 Physics student Ho-tat Lam, champion of the University Research Award this year, will attend two international conferences this summer to share with scholars worldwide his new research findings.

Admitted to the HKUST at the age of 16, Ho-tat began his first research project in the same year and had since then published two research papers under the guidance of his mentor – Prof Kwok-yip Szeto from the Department of Physics. After his project “Damage Spreading on Network” won 2014 Mr Armin & Mrs Lillian Kitchell Undergraduate Research Award, he went on to study network reliability, and came up with a groundbreaking solution to a decade-old problem that could greatly enhance the reliability of networks such as power grids, internet and social media networking system under limited resources. He will deliver his findings to an audience of scholars at two academic conferences in Poland and Canada this summer.

“Undergraduates can make significant and original contributions to research as well,” HKUST President Prof Tony Chan said. “Young students have fresh minds and may propose new approaches that even senior researchers haven’t considered.”

The scale and impact of UROP have grown over the years. The number of participating students had jumped five times to 353 in the eight years to 2012-13, while the number of faculties who joined the program has more than tripled to 140 during the same period. There are now 294 UROP projects on offer, up from 65 in 2005.

Prof Michelle Yik, Division of Social Science and Director of UROP, said it was encouraging to see so many students benefited from the program. “UROP illustrates beautifully the unique feature of research-embedded teaching. Students are able to take part in faculty-led research in any discipline.”

Six UROP students were awarded in the latest Undergraduate Research Award. The championship went to Physics student Ho-tat Lam, the first runners-up were Hongzi Mao, also a Physics student and Xiao Chen from the Department of Marketing, the second runners-up were Mathematics student Yixin Wang, Economics student Ziyang Chen, and Computer Engineering student Clarissa Cyrilla Prawoto.

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*HKUST President Prof Tony Chan (left), accompanied by Head of Physics Prof Michael Altman, presents the Championship of “2014 Mr Armin & Mrs Lillian Kitchell Undergraduate Research Award” to Year 2 Physics student Ho-tat Lam (middle), who is under the supervision of Prof Kwok-yip Szeto from the Department of Physics.*



*Physics student Ho-tat Lam will present his new theory on network reliability at two international conferences in Poland and Canada.*