Major breakthrough in knowledge of dinosaur appearance
HKU earth scientist reconstructs feathered dinosaurs in the flesh with new technology

February 27, 2017

Until now it has been hard to get an accurate idea of the shape of a dinosaur from its fossilised remains, as only their bones are usually preserved.

Using a new technique, Dr Michael Pittman from the Department of Earth Sciences, the University of Hong Kong and his collaborators reconstructed the first highly detailed body outline of a feathered dinosaur based on high-definition images of its preserved soft tissues. The reconstruction shows the contours of major body parts including the wings and legs, providing new details that illuminate the origin of birds. These new insights provide crucial information for reconstructing how dinosaurs experimented and eventually achieved flight.

This ground breaking work will be published later this week in a leading academic journal.

In the media briefing, Dr Pittman will show the “real” appearance of this feathered dinosaur, as distinguished from previous reconstructions of feathered dinosaurs seen in textbooks, and explain the importance of the research findings. Dr Pittman has prepared a five-minute short film for showing at the briefing to explain his work.

Dr Pittman is one of the few dinosaur experts in the region. He is currently offering a free HKU online course Dinosaur Ecosystems.

Media briefing details:
Date: March 1, 2017 (Wednesday)
Time: 11am
Venue: Faculty of Science Conference Room, G/F, Chong Yuet Ming Physics Building, HKU Main Campus

For media enquiries, please contact Mr Benjamin Miu, HKU Faculty of Science (tel: 3917 4948; email: benmiu@hku.hk), or Ms Melanie Wan, Senior Media Manager, Communications and Public Affairs Office, HKU (tel: 2859 2600, email: melwkwan@hku.hk).

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