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THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Press Release

For Immediate Release

**HKU partners with Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences
to set up Joint Laboratory of Marine Ecology and Environmental Sciences**

30 November, 2020

With the emerging threats of climate change and human impact on the marine environment, marine ecosystems across the globe are changing rapidly, leading to the urgent need for the conservation and restoration of these key systems. To build a sustainable marine environment, The University of Hong Kong (HKU) joins hands with the Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IOCAS) to establish the Joint Laboratory of Marine Ecology and Environmental Sciences (JLMEES), fostering collaboration in the fields of marine and environmental sciences between Hong Kong and Mainland China. The two institutes signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on November 24, 2020.

This initiative aimed at establishing a strategic platform for interdisciplinary collaboration between IOCAS and HKU, through the Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS) under the Faculty of Science, to facilitate innovative scientific research, promote academic exchange and develop personnel training in the marine science arena. The research directions of this joint laboratory involve, but are not limited to, (1) marine biodiversity and global change, (2) marine biogeochemistry and environmental change, (3) marine ecosystems and ecological disasters, and (4) marine resources and ecological restoration.

Professor Fan WANG, Director of IOCAS, is delighted to see the strengthening collaboration between IOCAS and SWIMS. “This marks a substantial step forward in the cooperation between IOCAS and HKU. The cooperation meets the country's urgent need for marine development and represents an opportunity for a new round of development. The two sides will carry out innovative and interdisciplinary cooperative research in marine ecology and environmental sciences to jointly serve Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area,” said Professor Wang.

Dr CHEN Heng, Director of the Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR (LOCPG), envisioned the collaboration would bring mutual benefits to the research developments of both institutes. “These two key marine research academic centres come from the north and the south. Collaboration between the two is a critical event in marine sciences, where we can achieve more together through cooperation and resource sharing. As President Xi Jinping always stresses, we need to show greater care about the ocean, understand more about it and make strategic plans for the use of it. The LOCPG is willing to assist and hope that the two parties can continue to work and succeed in the cooperation,” said Dr Chen.



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Professor Alfonso NGAN, Acting Vice-President and Pro-Chancellor (Research), Kingboard Professor in Materials Engineering and Chair Professor in Materials Science and Engineering at the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the Faculty of Engineering of HKU, believed that the collaboration could

strengthen the leadership position of HKU in this area. “I am very pleased to witness this momentous occasion in establishing closer ties between HKU and CAS to spearhead advanced research in marine ecology and environmental sciences. This collaboration is both well-timed and meaningful. I am confident that this research partnership will drive a new wave of world-class developments in marine sciences and be further advanced with the interdisciplinary research culture in both institutions, raising the research collaboration to new heights,” said Professor Ngan.

Professor Matthew EVANS, Dean of HKU Science, regarded the collaborative initiative as a milestone in the development of SWIMS. He said: “This is a significant moment for marine ecology and environmental science in the Faculty. Only the strongest research areas get approval to launch a joint laboratory with CAS. The Faculty has recognised for some time that the interdisciplinary work conducted by the Swire Institute of Marine Science is one of our research strengths. I am extremely pleased to see this recognised by the collaboration with the Institute of Oceanology in Qingdao. We are particularly proud as it has been ten years since the formation of the last joint laboratory between CAS and HKU.”

About the Swire Institute of Marine Science

The Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS), originally named the Swire Marine Laboratory, was established in 1989 and is located at Cape d’ Aguilar as an off-campus facility of HKU Science. SWIMS facilitates and enhances interdisciplinary research, with its major research focus on coastal marine systems and their biodiversity and ecology, particularly in relation to the themes of habitat destruction and restoration; global change and adaption and overexploitation and sustainability. It currently has around 75 scientists conducting active research and has recently received funding from the Swire Group Charitable Trust, the Faculty, the University, and HKSAR Government to expand its facilities to enhance its vibrant and convivial environment which is conducive to research collaboration.

Website of SWIMS: <https://www.swims.hku.hk>

About Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences

The Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IOCAS), which is located in Qingdao, Shandong Province, was founded in 1950. It is the first ocean research institute in China. The institute has trained around 1,000 senior scientists and technicians. At present, the institute has nearly 500 scientific and technical personnel. The institute is home to five CAS key laboratories in the fields of experimental marine biology; marine ecology and environmental sciences; ocean circulation and wave studies; marine geology and environment; and marine corrosion and protection. It also has an institute-level key laboratory devoted to marine organism taxonomy and phylogeny studies.

Website of IOCAS: <http://english.qdio.cas.cn>



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Images download and captions: <https://www.scifac.hku.hk/press>

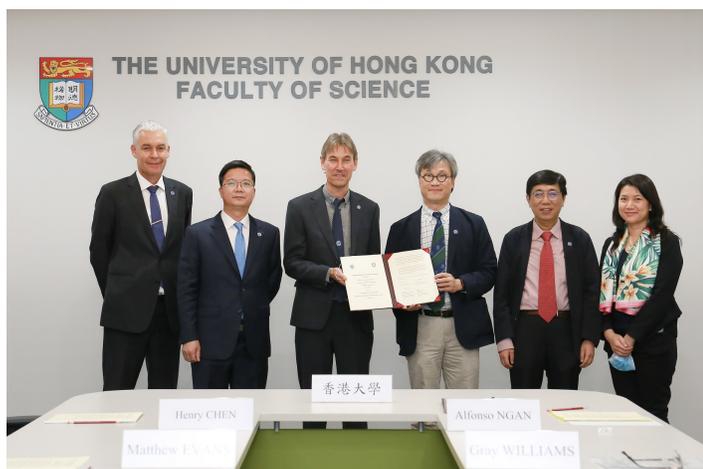


Image 1: Representatives from LOCPG and HKU

From the left - Professor Matthew EVANS, Dean of Faculty of Science, HKU; Dr CHEN Heng, Director of the Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs of the LOCPG; Professor Gray WILLIAMS, Director of SWIMS, HKU; Professor Alfonso NGAN, Acting Vice-President and Pro-Chancellor (Research), HKU; Professor CHE Chi Ming, Chair Professor and Zhou Guangzhao Professorship in Natural Sciences of Research Division for Chemistry, HKU; Ms Winnie LAI, Deputy Director of China Affairs, HKU.



Image 2: Representatives from IOCAS

From the left: Professor Li LI, Key Laboratory of Experimental Marine Biological Laboratory, CAS; Professor Caiwen LI, Deputy Head, Key Laboratory of Marine Ecology & Environmental Sciences, CAS; Professor Chaolun LI, Deputy Director of IOCAS; Professor Fan WANG, Director of IOCAS; Professor Rencheng YU, Assistant Director, Key Laboratory of Marine Ecology & Environmental Sciences, CAS; Dr Yanwei LI, Head of International Cooperation Office, IOCAS.