Press release For immediate release

HKU's Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics Marks First Anniversary with Symposium Uniting Researchers from across Hong Kong

16 November 2026



Figure 1. Researchers and students gather at the Second HKIAA Symposium to share research findings and exchange scientific ideas. (photo courtesy: Haina Huang).

The Hong Kong Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics (HKIAA) at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) marked its first anniversary by hosting its Second HKIAA Symposium on 5–6 November 2026, bringing together more than 100 astronomers and researchers from universities in Hong Kong and beyond to exchange the latest developments in astronomy and astrophysics.

Co-organised with the Department of Physics of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the two-day symposium was held at CUHK and featured 48 scientific talks and 25

poster presentations by both researchers and students, covering research ranging from planetary systems and transient black holes to dark matter and gravitational waves. Session chairs came from universities across the territory.

Two Days of Exchange across the Field

The symposium provided a platform for researchers to share findings across different areas of astronomy. Scientific discussions explored topics such as how gravitational lensing helps to investigate the Universe, how black holes swallow stars, the search for dark matter, and the formation and evolution of planetary systems. Researchers from HKU and other participating universities contributed to these discussions, highlighting the breadth of astronomical research undertaken in Hong Kong.

The event also placed particular emphasis on nurturing the next generation of scientists. Research students and early-career researchers delivered many of the contributed talks and poster presentations, giving them opportunities to present their findings and engage with established scientists.

“Time flies. It is hard to believe how the HKIAA flourishes so quickly with the hard work of our faculty, postdocs, and students,” said Professor Bing ZHANG, Founding Director of HKIAA and Chair Professor of Astrophysics at HKU Department of Physics. “It is great to see so many excellent scientific results presented at this symposium.”

“By mixing topics across sessions, we encouraged researchers from different fields to learn from each other, and we were especially pleased to see so many students and young researchers present their work,” said Professor Yuguang CHEN, Chair of the Scientific Organising Committee, CUHK Department of Physics.

A First Year of Milestones

Established at HKU in November 2025, HKIAA has made steady progress in its first year towards fostering collaborative research and strengthening Hong Kong's presence in astronomy and astrophysics. Its members have published more than 58 refereed research papers carrying HKIAA affiliation, including publications in *Science*, *Nature Astronomy*, *Science Advances* and *Science Bulletin*.

The Institute has also established research partnerships through memoranda of understanding with Astronomy departments and observational facilities in Chinese Mainland, alongside regular academic seminars and colloquia.

"In the past year, we put in place the funding and structures the Institute needs to grow. I warmly invite all our members to help build a strong institute for Hong Kong," said Professor Zhang, reflecting on the Institute's progress during the symposium.

Looking ahead, HKIAA will continue to strengthen research collaboration and academic exchange through seminars, workshops and international partnerships. Its members are also involved in major astronomical facilities and space missions, including the Large High Altitude Air Shower Observatory (LHAASO), the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio

Telescope (FAST) and the Einstein Probe (EP), contributing to wider efforts to advance astronomical research.

About HKIAA

Inaugurated at HKU on 3 November 2025, the Hong Kong Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics brings together researchers from HKU's Department of Physics and Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, alongside affiliated members from other universities in Hong Kong. The Institute aims to advance research excellence in astronomy and astrophysics and foster collaboration across Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area and the international scientific community. Website: https://hkiaa.hku.hk



Figure 2. Professor Bing Zhang, Founding Director of HKIAA, reflected on the Institute's achievements during its first year at the Second HKIAA Symposium.

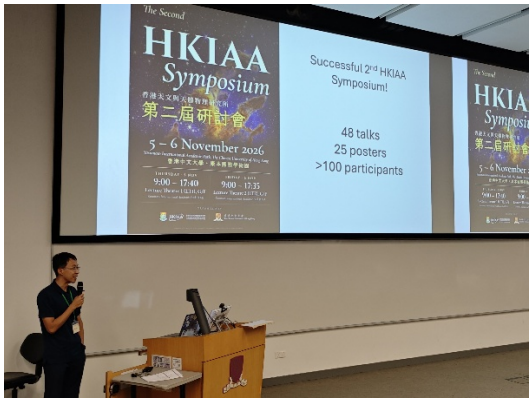


Figure 3. Professor Yuguang Chen, Chair of the Symposium's Scientific Organising Committee, delivered the closing remarks.

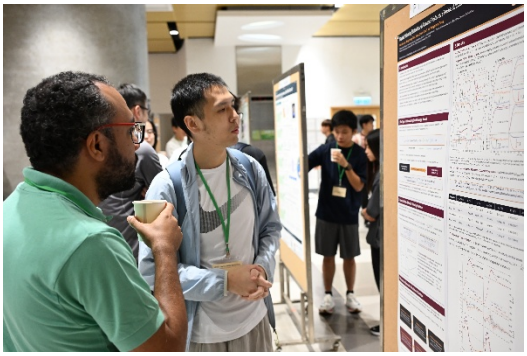


Figure 4. Students and early-career researchers present their work at the poster session.

Media Enquiries:
Faculty of Science, The University of Hong Kong
Tel: +852 3917 4948 / +852 3917 5286
Email: caseyto@hku.hk / cindycst@hku.hk
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