The Faculty of Science in Evolution

The Faculty of Science has undergone significant changes in the last several years. In preparation for the transition to a 4-year curriculum in 2012, we have taken active steps in several directions in curriculum reform. We have introduced the major/minor system to replace the old programme structure, and a common Faculty admission scheme where students are admitted to a common programme, 6901, and have a year before committing to a specific major. These have resulted in greatly increased number of applications to the Faculty, with a corresponding significant improvement in quality of intake. The science programme 6901 was the most popular of all JUPAS programmes in 2007 and 2008, attracting 4049 first-round band-A applicants in 2007 and 3715 in 2008, in comparison to 1500 in 2006. The highly competitive nature of our admission has not deterred potential applicants, and 6901 remains the 2nd most popular programme in 2009 with 2933 band-A applicants.

In terms of intake quality, students admitted to 6901 having a score of 3.0 and 4.0, for 2A and 1AS increased by 62% in 2007. In the 2008 admission, we had a dramatic increase in the number of students with entrance scores between 4.0 and 5.0, representing a 44% increase over 2007 and 68% over 2006. This trend continues in 2009, with the highest average entrance scores in the recent 10 years.

Our Actuarial Science programme remains the programme attracting the top students in Hong Kong, with admitted candidates having an average AL score of 4.19 (out of possible 5.0) in 2007, rising to 4.94 in 2008 and 2009 (the highest in HKU in 2008 and 2nd highest in Hong Kong in 2009).

To support our students in the selection of 15 majors, we have implemented an academic advising system to help students make intelligent choices in their newly found flexibility and freedom. To ensure that our students gain practical and international experience, we have introduced several experiential learning programmes including internships, field trips, summer research, and overseas research fellowships.

At the beginning of the academic year of 2008, we introduced a first trial of the future academic induction programme. Two lectures, one on “What is Science” and the other on “The Relevance of Science Education in an Ever-changing World” were given to the new students. This was expanded to a full day of academic induction for our 2009 incoming students. For 2012, we are planning a set of common Faculty foundation induction for our 2009 incoming students. This was expanded to a full day of academic induction for our 2009 incoming students.
Global Science Education Network

Science and technology have permeated all aspects of modern life and scientific literacy is a core requirement to participate in a personal, professional, social, political and cultural level. For this reason, we believe that all children should experience a rigorous, coherent and engaging science education.

In the forthcoming HKU common core courses, we try to address these elements to incorporate these goals in the development of common core courses from Science, among which is a course on “Human’s Place in the Universe” which discusses how historical developments in physics and astronomy have profoundly altered our view of ourselves and our place in the Universe.

School of Biological Sciences
Dr Leszek KARCZMARSKI, Associate Professor, PhD, University of Porto, Portugal
Dr Karczmarski will teach biology of marine invertebrates and his research interests are ecology, behaviour and conservation of marine mammals, comparative socioecology and population ecology of cetaceans, and socio-behavioral complexity of group living mammals.

Dr David L THOMSON, Associate Professor, PhD, University of Glasgow
Dr Thomson is interested in understanding how populations respond and adapt to environmental change. He is involved in teaching ecology courses as well as MSc courses in environmental management. He previously worked in the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.

Dr Thuy Anh VANG, Assistant Professor, PhD, University of Texas at Austin
Dr Vang explores how bacteria, especially bacterial pathogens, adapt to the rapid and constantly changing environment, such as antibiotic treatment. She teaches courses on microbial physiology and biochemistry and clinical microbiology.

Department of Chemistry
Dr Xiao HU, Assistant Professor, PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Dr Hu’s research focuses are mechanistic simulation of enzyme catalysis, structure, dynamics, and function of proteins, development and application of QM and QM/MM methods, and molecular design. He will be teaching computational chemistry, intermediate and advanced physical chemistry.

Dr Xuewen LI, Assistant Professor, PhD, Harvard University
Dr Li studies disease-related glycolysis and chemical agents for the treatment of glycosylation-related diseases (cancer metastasis and viral infections). He is teaching organic chemistry and chemical biology.

Department of Earth Sciences
Dr Zhenghui LIU, Assistant Professor, PhD, Brown University
Dr Liu teaches undergraduate and MSc courses on climatology and he is interested in the study of Earth’s climatic and environmental changes in geologic and human history using geochemical tools.

Department of Earth Sciences/School of Biological Sciences
Dr Nathalie F. GOODKIN EMAMI, Assistant Professor, PhD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Dr Goodkin is now teaching physical oceanography and environmental science. Her research interests are in the field of coastal geology and on reconstructing storm and climate histories or pollution history within the South China Sea.

Dr Yongping ZHANG, Associate Professor, PhD, University of Durham
Dr Zhang is the coordinator of the new Environmental Science major and teaches courses on environmental science. He studies climate change, natural hazards, and sea-level and coastal changes.

New Teachers in the Faculty
Our warmest welcome to 15 new professoriate staff who have joined us in the past year.

Row 1: Dr Z Li, Dr J Lim, Dr G Yin, Dr Y Zhang
Row 2: Dr M Hu, Dr K CS, Dr G Li
Row 3: Dr W Yao, Dr D J Thomson, Dr N P Goodkin Emami, Dr A Yan
Row 4: Dr D Vengatesen, Dr K Xu, Dr J K, Dr G Tian

New Teachers in the Faculty

From Left to right:
Dr L Karczmarski, Dr G Tian
Dr T Vengatesen, Dr X Li,
Dr W Yao, Dr D J Thomson, Dr N P Goodkin Emami, Dr A Yan
Dr M Hu, Dr K CS, Dr G Li
Dr Z Li, Dr J Lim, Dr G Yin, Dr Y Zhang

Dr Rachel ZHOU, Assistant Professor, PhD, National Taiwan University
Dr Zhou studies the role of hormones on the regulation of the immune system, and her research interests are in the areas of immunology and cell biology.

Dr Guangdong LI, Assistant Professor, PhD, The University of Hong Kong
Dr Li is a teacher of global environmental change and aquatic life.

Dr Tian teaches statistical models and statistics in environmental science. He studies climate change, natural hazards, and sea-level and coastal changes.

Dr Yongqiang ZHOU, Associate Professor, PhD, University of Durham
Dr Zhang is the coordinator of the new Environmental Science major and teaches courses on environmental science. He studies climate change, natural hazards, and sea-level and coastal changes.

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Dr Rita Fan Hsu Lai-tai, one of our outstanding alumni, was invited to deliver a lecture "The Relevance of a Science Degree to Life – A Self Reflection" on June 17, 2009 at HKU to share her success story on how her education in science has shaped her value, personal growth and career advancement.

"The objective, systematic and analytical nature of science studies make me aware that the truth known to us may only be part of the whole truth. Thus, we may not allow ourselves to be too confident. Sometimes personal feeling has to give way to objectivity." Dr Fan said.

The Faculty of Science 70th Anniversary Homecoming Day was held on May 9, 2009 at Rayson Huang Theatre where we saw several generations of science graduates relinking ties and recalling the fondness of old school days. While reminiscing the bygone days with relish, participants also heard the latest development of both the University and the Faculty. They all had an enjoyable and unforgettable afternoon.

The exhibition depicted the achievements and development of different science departments. Alumni were interested to learn about the progress of the Centennial Campus project.

At the homecoming day, science alumni met old friends of the same root.

The 70th Anniversary Alumni Fund is to provide financial support to our undergraduate students, enabling them to participate in exchange programmes and various learning opportunities under the new curriculum, which calls for broader learning experience for students. The target of the fund is HKD 7 million as endowment and the interest generated will be used to support different student learning activities. Donations received from HKU alumni will attract further dollar-to-dollar matching for HKU under the "Stanley Ho Alumni Challenge".

The 70th Anniversary Dinner
Date: November 15, 2009 (Sunday)
Time: 19:00-22:00 (Reception from 18:00)
Venue: Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

You may also wish to visit our anniversary webpage at www.hku.hk/science/70th for more information.
Distinguished Science Alumni

The Faculty of Science always regards its alumni the most important asset. Not only the unstinting support of alumni it treasures, but also their commitment and endeavours in contributing to society. On the occasion of its Platinum Jubilee, the Faculty is proud to honour its outstanding graduates from achievements in their own profession; scientific research and science education; and contributions to the community. While paying tribute to the 43 Distinguished Alumni, the Faculty also hopes its students and future generations will be enlightened and learn from these role models – their devotion to their professions, their strong leadership and the attitude of giving.

Dr CHUNG Wai-ling Margaret

BSc 1980, PhD 1987
Founder and Honorary Chairperson, Regeneration Society
Ten Outstanding Young Woman Volunteers, Hong Kong
Fellow, Hong Kong Educational Research Association (1998)
Fellow, Council of Consultant Fellows, International Institute for Senior Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor, Chair Professor and Former Dean of the Faculty of Education, and Former Pro-Vice-Chancellor of The University of Hong Kong
Professor CHENG Kai-ming

SBS

Educational Planning (1994)

Professor CHAN Kwong-min Daniel, JP

Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Science, The University of Hong Kong
Head of Department of Zoology, The University of Hong Kong
Research Fellow and former Director of the Kadoorie Institute
Dr CHAN LAM Lai-bing Alison

GSc 1985
Council Member of Lingnan University
Chairman of Board of Governors, The Alison Lam Foundation Limited

Dr FAN HSU Lai-tai Rita

BSc General 1967
Member of the Standing Committee of the Former President of the Legislative Council
Steward of The Hong Kong Jockey Club

Mr CHAN Wing-luk

BSc 1973
Chairman, U Six Holdings Limited

Mr CHIEN Chi-ming

GSc General 1976, BSc (Special) 1967
Priy Maa Hogg Chair of Chemistry, Department of Chemistry, The University of Hong Kong
The University of Hong Kong

Professor HO Ting-sum John

BSc 1976
Former Commissioner of the Census and Statistics Department, the Government of HKSAR
Former Professor of Applied Mathematics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor HO Wing-huen Frederick, SBS, CBE

Chairman of the Hong Kong Housing Society
Former Director- General of DAB, Director of China State Construction Limited, China Everbright Bank, Executive Director of Macau Legend Development Limited

Mr CHUNG Shui-ming Timpson, GBS, JP

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Former Managing Director of UFI (The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry)
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Former Secretary for the Treasury, the Government of HKSAR
Distinguished Science Alumni

Professor LAU Ka-ming William

Adjunct Professor of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Recipient of the Prize of Meritorious Service Award by Asian Association of Open Universities (2002)
Recipient of the Prize of Meritorious Service Award by International Council for Open and Distance Education (2001)

Dr LEUNG Wing-tai

Department of Chemistry, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Recipient of the William Nordberg Award in Earth Science
Recipient of the Goddard Exceptional Science Achievement Medal

Dr LAO Sai-lung Sarah, CBS, MBE, JP

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Space Museum
Recipient of the 2017 NASA Special Recognition Award

Dr LUI Tel-yin Anthony

Adjunct Professor of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Professor of Physics, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Mr TAM Cheuk-wai

Chairman of the Executive Committee of the University of Hong Kong Foundation
Recipient of the Prize of Meritorious Service Award by Asian Association of Open Universities (2002)
Recipient of the Prize of Meritorious Service Award by International Council for Open and Distance Education (2001)

Professor TAM Shuen-Wai, CBS, JP

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park Corporation
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Dr WONG Chiu-ling

Adjunct Professor of the University of Hong Kong
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Mr WONG Kai-man

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Former Director of Hannah Research Institute and London (1969)
Adjunct Professor at University of British Columbia and University of Victoria

Professor SUN Samuel Sai-ming

BSc (Special) 1968, MPhil 1970
Recipient of ARCO Distinguished Research Award (1984)
Member of the International Eurasian Academy of Science (2008)
Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park Corporation

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In response to the recent call from the Government of HKSAR to submit research proposals for studies related to the melamine incident, "School of Biological Sciences" (SBIS) together with Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine submitted a proposal entitled "The melamine milk - kidney and developmental toxicity; impact on the fetus and the disease development later in life", and succeeded in bidding for the highly competitive call. The project combines the effort from the SBIS (Dr Ham El-Naggar as Principal Investigator; Professor Steven Chen, Professor Fredrick Leung and Dr Mingfu Wang as Co-Investigators), and the Department of Paediatric and Division of Paediatric Surgery of Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine (Dr Yan Chen as Co-PI; Professor Paul KH Tam, Professor Allan SY Lau and Dr Lawrence Lam as CoIs).