

# Message from the Dean

## Embracing Change and Charting New Horizons

As I reflect on my two-year journey as the Dean, I am truly inspired by the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by our Faculty. Emerging from the challenges of the social unrest and COVID-19 pandemic, we have embraced a new era defined by technological advancements, artificial intelligence and geopolitical conflicts. Aligned with HKU's overarching goals, we have achieved remarkable milestones and stand prepared to continue leading in this rapidly evolving landscape.

## Celebrating Our People and Research Excellence

Our Faculty's strength lies in its people. Acknowledging the vitality that fresh perspectives and innovative ideas bring to us, we continually recruit new professoriate staff into our ranks. In

the past year alone, we welcomed ten outstanding scholars from diverse fields into our academic community, with more will join soon. Their expertise and innovative thinking enrich our collective endeavours and propel us toward new frontiers of discovery.

Our unwavering commitment to research excellence is evident in the numerous awards and honours our staff members have received, alongside the improved global QS ranking of all the subjects represented in the Faculty. These accomplishments underscore our dedication to making a positive, enduring global impact through excellent research and teaching.

## Pushing Scientific Boundaries

Our success in securing competitive research funding further highlights the Faculty's robust research capabilities and unyielding resolve to push the boundaries of discovery. Building on this success, we are enhancing our research ecosystem through major initiatives supported by multi-million-dollar grants from the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC)'s Research, Academic and Industry Sectors One-plus Scheme (RAISE+), as well as funding from other government and private entities.

Moreover, we are poised to reinforce our research capabilities through the State Key Laboratory of Synthetic Chemistry and the newly established State Key Laboratory of Optical Quantum Materials. These cutting-edge facilities illustrate our commitment to advancing research and innovation.

Last year marked the beginning of a highly productive period of cross-faculty collaborations. The establishment of the School of Computing and Data Science (SCDS), together with the Faculty of Engineering, has launched new research and educational programmes in AI, Data Science, and Statistics. Our contributions to founding the School of Innovation and

the School of Biomedical Engineering further strengthen interdisciplinary research and education at HKU.

## Shaping Future Leaders in Science Education

We take pride in the delivery and reputation of our various programmes. For instance, our Young Scientist Scheme (YSS) provides early research opportunities for outstanding students, while our BSc&MRes and BSc&LLB programmes continue to attract top talent. Our commitment to providing a global perspective is evident through our extensive experiential learning activities, ensuring our students are well-prepared to tackle future challenges and seize emerging opportunities.

Our Taught Postgraduate Programmes have also experienced a significant growth. We introduced the Master of Science in the field of Chemical Technologies for Health and Materials, designed to prepare students for the demanding job market and emerging career opportunities. Another new programme, the Master of Science in Integrative Marine Ecology and Conservation, is also in place to train future environmental practitioners in ocean science and policy.

Student well-being remains at the heart of our mission. We are launching more campaigns to raise awareness about mental health and collaborating with the University to ensure immediate support for students in need.

## Enhancing Scientific Literacy and Global Outreach

Beyond educating our students, a pivotal aspect of our mission is to elevate scientific literacy among the general public. In 2024, we made significant strides in this area, fostering a broader interest in diverse science disciplines. A highlight of our efforts is the inauguration of the new Swire Coastal Outreach Hub

at The Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS), a vivid demonstration of our dedication to marine conservation and science education through interactive exhibits and public engagement.

We also introduced the Science Communication YouTuber Challenge, which garnered an overwhelming response and offered a platform for empowering science communicators of tomorrow. Our aspiration for global educational expansion was further demonstrated by a delegation visit to Vietnam, which aimed to promote the Faculty and explore new educational partnerships with local institutions, broadening our international reach and reinforcing global academic connections.

## Leading the Way Forward

As we navigate challenges such as budget constraints and limited space, our focus remains on innovation and strategic planning. The upcoming Tech Landmark Development Project will bolster our research capabilities, while preparations for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2026 will guide our continued growth.

In response to global challenges, HKU Science is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for scholars worldwide. We warmly invite those seeking new opportunities to establish their research programmes within our Faculty, and we strive to ensure a stable and nurturing environment for their academic pursuits.

Together, we will continue to tackle challenges, push boundaries, and shape a future where science and innovation lead the way.

## Qiang ZHOU

Dean of Science

Chair Professor of

School of Biological Sciences

## Key Milestones and Achievements of the Faculty of Science



**New Talents:** Welcomed 10 new professoriate staff across diverse fields, including Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Mathematics, and Physics.



**Global Recognition:** The 2025 QS World University Rankings by Subjects see increased ranking of all subjects represented in the Faculty; 8 scholars named top 100 scientists by Research.com; 9 included in Clarivate Analytics' 2024 Highly Cited Researchers.



**Prestigious Awards:** Professor Yi YANG from Physics (Xplorer Prize, Croucher Tak Wah Mak Innovation Award); Professor Xiaoming YUAN from Mathematics (Croucher Senior Research Fellowship 2025).



**Research Funding:** HK\$60 million secured across 61 UGC projects; multi-million-dollar ITC RAISE+ funding.



**New Collaborations:** Inauguration of the School of Computing and Data Science and launch of new undergraduate programmes in various fields, such as Data Science, and Statistics; founding of the School of Innovation and the School of Biomedical Engineering.



**New Taught Postgraduate Programmes:** New programmes in Chemical Technologies for Health and Materials, and Integrative Marine Ecology and Conservation.



**Undergraduate Admissions Intake:** Our BSc&MRes and BSc&LLB programmes continued to attract top talent – the BSc&MRes admitted 39 students with average best 5 HKDSE scores ranking in the top 5 among all HKU programmes; the BSc&LLB admitted 26 students in its third year, with JUPAS intakes achieving an impressive highest score of 42.5 in their best five subjects.



**Student Success:** 130 undergraduate students participated in international exchange programmes.



**Postgraduate Student Populations:** Increased UGC-funded research postgraduate places by over 23% from 2022/23 to 2024/25, supporting our mission to nurture future researchers.



**Outreach:** Inauguration of the Swire Coastal Outreach Hub at The Swire Institute of Marine Science; successful Science Communication YouTuber Challenge.

