Entrepreneurship in the Science Family

Applications of Scientific Research

Perspectives and Achievements of Alumni in Entrepreneurship
Dear readers,

This newsletter is dedicated to the theme “Entrepreneurship in the Science Family”.

We all know that Hong Kong lags behind our competitors such as Mainland China, South Korea, Israel and Singapore, and recently, there is major shift in the government’s mindset in innovation and entrepreneurship. To steer The University of Hong Kong in a similar direction, the Senior Management Team has become increasingly proactive in providing support for establishing an ecosystem needed for the start-ups for both students and staff. The iDendron at the University, home to 40 start-ups, provides co-working space and functions as a collaborative community for students, alumni and staff to enable entrepreneur partnership. The Faculty of Science is launching a Minor in Science Entrepreneurship in the coming year; we hope that this Minor will add to the ecosystem so that future entrepreneurs of the society are seeded and incubated here in our Faculty.

A question arises – How to build a vibrant ecosystem for start-ups? My view is that we need to provide an environment for active recruitment and development of funding seed projects and patents by our students and staff. Incubators in the ecosystem should be able to help our entrepreneurs to build their companies by linking with investors, to grow by exploring market opportunities, and to devise financial strategies. There must also be ample opportunities for learning, such as start-up forums, workshops, talks, clubs, tech meet-ups and seminars, for diffusion of innovation culture. Finally, there should be a sense of globalisation, for business expansion of the start-ups to explore the global market, particularly when Hong Kong’s market is small. I believe although we are heading the right direction, there is still a long way to go. In this newsletter, we have invited 3 entrepreneurs from our Faculty to share their valuable experience, hopefully will provide insight to our students and staff for starting up their companies.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Billy K C Chow
Chief Editor
Associate Dean (Development and External Relations)
Professor, Chair of Endocrinology

Message from the Associate Dean (Student Affairs)

Dr Francis C C Ling
Associate Dean (Student Affairs)

Enrich Students’ Learning Experience through Academic Advising & Participation in Diverse Activities

Being the Associate Dean (Student Affairs), I work together with the Faculty Office and university staff members to manage science undergraduate related issues; these include but not limited to the induction programme for freshmen, student counselling and academic advising, student exchange activities, course enrolment and credit transfer, student discipline and complaints, and examinations and academic ment.

For the flexible common admission (6901 Bachelor of Science (BSc) programme, academic advising is of particular crucial for shaping freshman’s university learning throughout their 4-year studies. Freshmen may face many new demands and challenges once admitted to the university. They may hesitate what major or minor they should take and what career they should pursue after graduation. Seeing academic advising as crucial, our teachers will help them understand the aims of university education, the culture and ethos of learning and exploration of academic and personal goals. Most importantly, students will be guided to have self-reflection in which they can get a better understanding of themselves.

Through academic advising, students will be inspired and they may wish to explore more in their university life. Therefore, our Faculty strives to provide students with different types of experiential learning activities ranging from the Research Fellowship (SRF) Scheme, internships, field trips, overseas exchange/visiting programmes and learning experience and broaden their horizon. Our students will also be provided with hands-on learning experience outside classroom.

We value our students’ personal growth and development. We truly hope that our students can enjoy their university life and gain fruitful learning experience during their undergraduate studies.

About Dr Francis C C Ling

Dr Francis C C Ling obtained his BSc(Hons) and MPhil at HKU. He worked in the Hong Kong Observatory for a short period of time and then started pursuing the PhD study at HKU. After graduation, Dr Ling joined the Department of Physics, HKU as a Lecturer and he is currently an Associate Professor in the Department. Dr Ling’s research interests focus on materials physics and materials sciences of semiconductors associated with the applications in optoelectronic, power electronic, spintronic, and Li battery, etc.
Entrepreneurship in the Science Family

By connecting academic knowledge to the real world, entrepreneurship plays an important role in science nowadays. At HKU Science, our teachers involve in a variety of contract research and nearly a hundred patents were issued for inventions from 2012 to 2017. Many of our alumni develop their ventures after graduation; they keep moving forward although the journey of being entrepreneurs is full of challenges. Let’s hear what our alumni, Mr. Stanley Yu Lun Chu, Dr. Shuting Hu and Dr. Kenneth King Yin Lai say.

Keys to Success – Strategic Mindset, Timing & Diversity

Mr. Stanley Yu Lun Chu, Founder and Chairman of the Adsale Group

The Adsale Group grew from a micro-enterprise in 1978, with just a few members of staff, into a company with more than 300 employees, offices spreading through Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Singapore, and an agency network covering nearly 30 countries and regions. In a recent interview, Mr. Stanley Yu Lun Chu, Founder and Chairman of the Adsale Group, remarked “no company is entitled to success forever”.

“What’s always on my mind is not how much money the company can make, but how it can survive for more decades to become a century-old company,” Mr Chu said.

According to Mr. Chu, to survive, apart from embracing changes, a firm needs to have good judgement, vision and react to new situations by taking the right actions at the right time. All these will require a strategic mindset.

“The company cannot rely on me only. My role is a cheerleader and to help everyone be competitive by enhancing their strategic mindset. That is to observe changes and the elements behind the changes,” Mr Chu said. “Everyone can see there are changes, but when it comes to action, one word is very important – timing. It’s not a matter of ‘whether’, but a matter of ‘when’. Do the right thing at the right time. You might be too early or too late. Just like 10 years ago, Airbnb and Uber might not have worked.”

Mr. Chu also stressed that “diversity” is vital in corporation development, so each individual department and staff member should identify their uniqueness and unleash their potential. Diversity should be valued and nurtured. That is how new talent emerges.

Mr. Chu is determined that the Adsale Group will continue to transform and reinvent itself when required in order to keep its head above water in the choppy sea of changes. “My mission is to guide the company to the centre of the whirlwind and see it fly.” he said.

Overview of HKU Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Creating impact through Innovation, Internationalisation and Interdisciplinary is the key strategy of HKU. The Innovation is to provide new solution to the problem and is accomplished with the new product or service to society. We have a good example of HKU Innovation: HKU’s DNA hybridisation technology was materialised by Guangdong Hybribio, and its HPV diagnostic kits are being used for more than 16 million tests by 1,200 hospitals across 20 countries. As the product or service is established by a company, to engage the company is critical to create Innovation from the university’s technology. If there is a company who is willing to license the university’s technology to develop new product, normally the industry engagement would lead to licensing before or after the collaboration. However, some disruptive technologies are hard to be digested by an existing company; creating new spin-off company would be a better option to create the Innovation. It is estimated that more than 100 start-ups are run by HKU students, alumni and staff members. The University is supporting the spin-off companies by providing education and training of Entrepreneurship, funding, co-working space, technology transfer and mentorship. Entrepreneurship is a mindset to realise the idea in spite of high level of uncertainty in product development and industry dynamics, which gains more importance as growing number of cases that new start-up companies are reshaping the world with Innovation.

For further reading, please visit https://bit.ly/2OL5Hjv

Message from Dr Shin Cheul Kim

Director of Technology Transfer Office, HKU,
Director of iDendron, HKU Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub,
and Managing Director of Versitech Limited

My mission is to guide the company to the centre of the whirlwind and see it fly.

About Mr Stanley Yu Lun Chu

Major Achievements

- Founder and Chairman of the Adsale Group
- Honorary Life President of the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Industry Association
- Member of the Steering Committee on Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions of HKSAR
- Member of Tourism Strategy Group of HKSAR
- Founding Senior Member of the HKU Foundation
- Founding President of the HKU Science Alumni Association Ltd
- Ex-Co Member and Vice Chairman of the Hong Kong University Graduates Association Education Foundation
- Honorary Fellow of HKU 2011
**Message from Dr Mingfu Wang**

Associate Professor of School of Biological Sciences, HKU & Chief Advisor of SkinData Limited

“I am very pleased that Shuting keeps fighting for her dream and she is now a successful entrepreneur in her interested field. No matter what difficulties you come across, don’t give up. Be brave and you’ll gain a lot in the process.”

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**Dr Kenneth King Yin Lai**

Executive Director and Founder of Novus Life Sciences Limited

2005 BSc Graduate

1 of the world’s hottest start-ups of 2014

**Dr Shuting Hu**

2014 PhD Graduate

Executive Director and Founder of SkinData Limited

2005 BSc Graduate

**Dr Shuting Hu** attended the ceremony of 2013 Henry Maso Award for Young Cosmetic Scientists in Paris, IFSCC Conference 2014.

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**Dr Shuting Hu**

About Dr Shuting Hu

• Director and Co-Founder of SkinData Limited
• Obtained her PhD degree at the School of Biological Sciences, HKU in 2014
• Awarded the prestigious 2013 Henry Maso Award for Young Cosmetic Scientists by the International Federation of Societies of Cosmetic Chemists (IFSCC), a worldwide federation dedicated to international cooperation in cosmetic science. Dr Hu is the first scientist in Great China Region to receive such an award from IFSCC since 1956.

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**Minor in Science Entrepreneurship**

To broaden the horizon of our undergraduate students with respect to entrepreneurship, to offer more competitive edge to our students via connecting their academic knowledge with the real world, and to bring students huge insights via critical analysis of the operation of existing enterprises, a new Minor in Science Entrepreneurship will be offered starting from the academic year of 2019-20.

Some highlights of the Minor in Science Entrepreneurship

• Co-taught by other Faculties such as Faculty of Business and Economics
• Strong emphasis on practical experience:
  - Entrepreneurship internship
  - Capstone project (e.g. entrepreneurship-related competitions or business analysis of enterprises)
• Mentoring offered by our alumni and others who are entrepreneurs or hold senior positions in industry/business
• Taking new courses tailor-made for this Minor such as organisational behaviours, leadership, principles of technology entrepreneurship, science-based innovation development, strategic marketing and user analysis, as well as related courses currently offered by other Faculties

We hope that our science students will be trained to have fruitful career opportunities through this new Minor.

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**About Dr Kenneth King Yin Lai**

• Executive Director and Founder of Novus Life Sciences Limited
• Obtained his BSc and PhD degrees at HKU
• Led the paternity testing department in GenePro Diagnostics Technology Limited in 2010
• Holds a patent in HKU as one of the co-inventors

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**Dr Kenneth King Yin Lai**

2005 BSc Graduate

Executive Director and Founder of Novus Life Sciences Limited

**Your attitude determines your altitude. Dare to Dream!**

“Your attitude determines your altitude. Dare to Dream!” said Dr Lai.
**Microbeads: from Personal Care Product to Hong Kong Waters**

by Dr Christelle A Not, Department of Earth Sciences

Microbeads are plastic spheres usually smaller than 1mm found in cosmetics and personal care products as scrubbing agent. Our research found that most of surface sample water collected in Hong Kong contains microbeads. Paradoxically, microbeads are well retained by waste water treatment plan, but still a huge number reaches the Ocean. We also noticed that microbeads represent approximately 5% of all small plastic pieces found at the surface of the ocean of Hong Kong, suggesting that any changes in our personal habit can help to reduce plastic pollution.

**A Sustainable Future for the Luxury Live Reef Fish Trade in Hong Kong**

by Professor Yvonne J Sadovy, School of Biological Sciences & SWIMS

Most of us love wild-caught seafood, but where does it come from and will there be enough safe and healthy fish for us in future? Professor Yvonne J Sadovy’s research uses biology, socio-economics, policy, detective work, education and fisheries science to ensure a sustainable future for the luxury live reef fish trade, centred in Hong Kong. These fish, groupers and Napoleon fish, come from countries seriously challenged to manage their fisheries and much of this trade is now illegal and unregulated, with declining fish populations. We have the science, now we need political will and consumer action to make Hong Kong a legal and sustainable seafood capital.

**Introduction of a New Food App – FoodSwitch Hong Kong**

by Dr Jimmy C Y Louie, School of Biological Sciences

Have you ever encountered difficulties interpreting nutrition labels and making healthy food choices? “FoodSwitchHK” contains nutrition information of around 20,000 pre-packaged foods sold in major supermarket chains, in which it displays in easy-to-understand interpretive formats. Compiled in 2017 in conjunction with The George Institute for Global Health in Australia, our baseline data shows that there are wide intra-category variations in sodium levels in most food categories, and a serving of high salt products can provide more than 50% of the recommended maximum daily sodium intake. Yearly update of the “FoodSwitchHK” database will allow tracking of the healthiness of the local food supply over time.

**Discovery of a Novel Solution to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**

by Professor Hongzhe Sun, Department of Chemistry

Metallo-β-lactamase (MBLs)-producing bacteria (e.g. NDM-1 superbugs) significantly reduces the therapeutic efficacy of most β-lactam antibiotics, including the “last resort” carbapenems. No effective therapy is available for the treatment of MBL-associated infections. Professor Hongzhe Sun’s team identified an anti-ulcer drug, colloidal bismuth subcitrate (CBS) and related bismuth compounds as a novel class of broad-spectrum MBL inhibitors. CBS irreversibly abolishes MBL activity via “killing two birds with one stone” strategy with one Bi(III) displacing two Zn(II) cofactors. The susceptibility of MBL superbugs to carbapenem was recovered by CBS both in vitro and in animal models. Co-therapy of CBS as a resistance breaker with existing antibiotics, provides an effective solution to antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
We are pleased to announce several key developments of its science curricula – introducing 4 accredited intensive majors, 3 articulation pathways, 2 interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts and Sciences Programmes, and the launch of a new Minor in Science Entrepreneurship, equipping outstanding undergraduate students with skills for versatile developments according to their aspirations, ability and interests.

Seeing the changing spectrum of scientific advancements, HKU Science as the forerunner of science education, addresses the need to enhance its curricula to keep abreast of times. Dean of HKU Science Professor Matthew Evans welcomes the ambitious moves. “These enhancements align with HKU’s vision of achieving interdisciplinary studies across disparate subject boundaries. While emphasising the importance of solid training in science, we do not neglect the mission of nurturing future global leaders to make changes in our interconnected world. The enhancements see the bridging of our BSc programme to diverse learning and job opportunities, both locally and overseas. We are also very pleased to create opportunities for our students to gain professional qualification through articulation pathways and accreditations,” said Professor Evans.

Accreditations

Articulation Pathways

Intensive Majors

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### Strive to Make a Better Life

Apart from having lectures at the HKU campus, our students always strive to make good use of their science knowledge and innovative mind to help create a better world for people. Harrison and Yvonne have been contributing a lot in it. Let’s hear what they say.

“...my lifelong mission is to help the 250 million patients worldwide to reverse eczema. For example, I established CureEczemaSlowly.com in 2013 and published The Eczema Manual in 2017. This required thorough time management and self-discipline. Efforts combined have since reached over 0.8 million people across 216+ countries. The impact of knowing you are changing lives is indeed a powerful motivation to me.”

In Hong Kong, we are always not fully aware of the carbon emissions hidden from our daily lives. Therefore, I would like to highlight the correlation between our diet and climate change. My research results showed that meat and dairy consumption in Hong Kong were higher than the city’s total greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the meat and dairy products are imported which contribute to significant carbon emissions. If we reduce our meat consumption, Hong Kong will be able to achieve the Paris Agreement, which aims to strengthen the countries’ ability to deal with the impacts of climate change, in 2030. Adopting a healthier diet and consuming less meat are beneficial to our health and climate. Under the supervision of Dr Christelle A Not and Dr Benoît Thibodeau, my research results were published in Environmental Research Letters at https://i.bstj/07ph0C.”

### Students’ Achievements

**Miss Archana Anand** (right), PhD candidate at the School of Biological Sciences & SWIMS, and **Miss Astrid L A Andersson** (left), PhD candidate at the School of Biological Sciences, were awarded 2018 National Geographic Young Explorer. Being supported by the award, Archana will visit India to study the impact of global change on coral reefs in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Astrid will contribute to conservation of Critically Endangered Yellow-crested Cockato (Cacatua sulphurea).

A team of 3 BSc students from Chemistry Major, **Mr Gerald J Chik** (second from the left), **Miss Melanie Halim** (second from the right) and **Mr George Y P Wong** (right), were awarded the 25th place in the 2018 Hong Kong Chemistry Olympiad for Tertiary Institutions which is an annual event jointly organised by the Hong Kong Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry to promote students’ interest in chemistry by finding the best solution to given chemistry problems.

**Mr Harrison K C Li** BSc (major in Food and Nutritional Science), Founder of CureEczemaSlowly.com; Author of The Eczema Manual (2017)

**Professor Kenneth M Y Leung**, School of Biological Sciences, was appointed as a Justice of the Peace by the HKSAR Government with effect from July 1, 2018. He was also selected as one of the 2018 Top 100 Asian Scientists by the Asian Scientist Magazine this year for his excellent achievements and contributions in fields ranging from space exploration to structural biology—and everything in between.

**Mr Harrison K C Li** BSc (major in Food and Nutritional Science), Founder of CureEczemaSlowly.com; Author of The Eczema Manual (2017)

**Professor Jeff J F Yao**, Department of Statistics and Actuarial Sciences, was conferred as a Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) which currently has 3,500 active members throughout the world for his influential contribution to the inferential aspects of random matrix theory in the analysis of high-dimensional data.

**Mr John M Doherty**, PhD candidate at the Department of Earth Sciences, was awarded the Best Presentation in the 10th University Consortium on Aquatic Sciences (UCAS) Postgraduate Symposium for his outstanding performance.

**Dr Lily Shiru Tao** (second from the right), Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Biological Sciences, won the Outstanding Poster Presentation Award at the 2018 Summer School on Marine Environment and Fishery Resources under Global Change which was held at National Taiwan Ocean University (NTOU), Keelung, Taiwan during July 5 – 14, 2018. This summer school was jointly organised by NTOU, Xiamen University, City University of Hong Kong and Peking University for young scientists from Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan.

**Professor Dr Mingfu Wang**, School of Biological Sciences, received 2018 AGFO Fellow Award by the Division of Agricultural and Food Chemistry of the American Chemical Society. This award recognises outstanding scientific contributions to the field of agricultural and food chemistry.

“Sustainability is a way of life in Sweden. My exchange study in Sweden inspired me to estimate the carbon emissions of meat products as part of my undergraduate research project. In Hong Kong, we are always not fully aware of the carbon emissions hidden from our daily lives. Therefore, I would like to highlight the correlation between our diet and climate change. My research results showed that meat and dairy consumption in Hong Kong were higher than the city’s total greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the meat and dairy products are imported which contribute to significant carbon emissions. If we reduce our meat consumption, Hong Kong will be able to achieve the Paris Agreement, which aims to strengthen the countries’ ability to deal with the impacts of climate change, in 2030. Adopting a healthier diet and consuming less meat are beneficial to our health and climate. Under the supervision of Dr Christelle A Not and Dr Benoît Thibodeau, my research results were published in Environmental Research Letters at https://i.bstj/07ph0C.”

**Mr Harrison K C Li** BSc (major in Food and Nutritional Science), Founder of CureEczemaSlowly.com; Author of The Eczema Manual (2017)
Dr Juan Diego Gaitán-Espitia  
Assistant Professor, School of Biological Sciences  
Research interests: Eco-Evolutionary dynamics, phenotypic plasticity and adaptive evolution, functional and comparative genomics, eco-physiology

“I am a marine biologist and an evolutionary ecologist from Colombia. In my research, technically, I focus on the interaction of functional ecology, quantitative genetic (phenotypic level), and molecular (transcriptomics, genomics) approaches to address organismal questions (from tiny bacteria to big whales).”

Dr Zhonghua Liu  
Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science  
Research interests: Statistical inference for massive data, big data analytics, statistical genomics

“I did my postdoctoral studies at Havard University, and was a visiting scholar at Columbia University. My goal at HKU is to do interdisciplinary research in developing novel statistical techniques to solve scientific questions in biomedical studies and build international collaborations with leading research institutions in the world.”

Dr Kenneth K H Ng  
Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry  
Research interests: Chemical biology, chemical synthesis

“After my PhD graduation at the University of Cambridge, I decided to return to my hometown, switch gear and dive into the field of Chemical Biology, a highly interdisciplinary subject that devotes itself to the interrogation and manipulation of biological systems through various chemical and physical techniques. I hope to see you on campus!”

Dr Chen Wan  
Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science  
Research interests: Time series analysis, high dimensional data analysis

“It is my pleasure to join HKU. Modern computing technology makes it possible to collect big data. However, in this big data era, many traditional statistical methods no longer work in high dimensional environment. Hence, it is an opportunity as well as a challenge to deal with high dimensional data, which greatly fascinates me.”

Dr Yuanliang Zhai  
Assistant Professor, School of Biological Sciences  
Research interests: eukaryotic DNA replication, cryo electron microscopy in structure determination

“Aberrant DNA replication is the cause of many cancers and developmental disorders. High-resolution structures can help us to understand the mechanistic functions of DNA replication machines and therefore the roots of diseases due to suboptimal functions of these machines. More importantly, structural information can also help us identify better targets for cancer therapy such that synthetic chemicals can be custom made to fit the target.”

HKU Science Oak Anniversary Celebrations in 2019

HKU Science is turning 80 in 2019! Two important and meaningful events will be held to celebrate the anniversary. Please mark your diary!

The details of the events will be announced in due course. Stay tuned!

Opening Ceremony cum Homecoming Day

We are looking forward to welcoming you to your alma mater in the coming spring at our Oak Anniversary Opening Ceremony cum Homecoming Day to kick off the year-long anniversary celebrations. The Homecoming is an excellent opportunity for us to gather the Science family on campus, revaluing fond memories, reviewing our milestones and envisaging our future, details of this event are as follows:

- Date: March 9, 2019 (Saturday)
- Time: 3 pm – 6:30 pm (Cocktail reception at 2:30 pm)
- Venue: Loke Yew Hall, Main Campus, HKU

Programme highlights:
- Connecting with HKU Science family: Mingle with our retired teachers, professorate staff, students and generations of alumni
- Memento for HKUers – Re-experiencing Your University Life: Get your student passport and join us relive the moments at HKU again!
- Strolling in the campus: Join our Campus Tours and explore the new faces of HKU

HKUSAA co-organised with the Faculty a visit to Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG) on May 26, 2018 and a HKU campus tour together with a preview of anniversary celebrations on July 21, 2018. The participating alumni and their families enjoyed the visit and campus tour very much, and look forward to upcoming anniversary events to be held in 2019.

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Activities Co-organised by the Hong Kong University Science Alumni Association (HKUSAA) & the Faculty of Science

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Gala Dinner

This is a climax of our Oak Anniversary, which allows us to connect and meet our old and new friends in such a warm and joyful occasion. Schedule of this event is as follows:

- Date: November 17, 2019 (Sunday)
- Time: 7 pm – 9:30 pm (Refreshment from around 6 pm)
- Venue: Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai

Please mark your diary for the Gala Dinner of Anniversary Celebrations in 2019.

Stay tuned!
A public lecture entitled “Saving the So Mei (Napoleon wrasse), One Fish at a Time” was held on April 17, 2018, at which Professor Yvonne J Sadovy of the School of Biological Sciences & SWIMS shared with us a serious challenge, not only with Napoleon (So Mei in Cantonese) but also with a growing number of fish and other charismatic species being threatened by international trade, and possible solutions to this challenge.

A cheque presentation ceremony was held on May 11, 2018 to mark the establishment of Norman and Cecilia Yip Professorship in Bioinorganic Chemistry, which supports Professor Hongzhe Sun of the Department of Chemistry to continue his groundbreaking research in biological chemistry. The Endowed Professorship (EP) also serves as important resource for HKU Science to excel in research, which creates a ripple effect on our daily lives as mentioned by Professor Paul Tam, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of HKU.

“The Endowed Professorship just comes at an opportune time to symbolise a paramount start of our anniversary fund,” said Professor Matthew Evans, Dean of Science. Professor Evans also expressed his vision of HKU Science's testament in research leadership, scaling new heights and being visible on the world map.