

When Humanities Meets Science to Inspire Green Action – Students’ Sharing on Interdisciplinary Collaboration

In 2014, Ka Yan HO, an MPhil candidate in the School of Humanities (Philosophy), joined hands with PhD students Kwan Ki MA (The Kadoorie Institute) and Pui Sze LI (School of Biological Sciences) to found the “Take Action! Youth Biodiversity Conservation Leadership Training Scheme”, which encourages participants to understand Hong Kong biodiversity and the threats it is facing, and how they can make a difference through an array of activities including field trips, games and debates. The Scheme won the Knowledge Exchange Award of the Faculty of Arts in 2015.

We are very grateful to have this opportunity to share our experience in the interdisciplinary collaboration behind “Take Action! Youth Biodiversity Conservation Leadership Training Scheme”.

It was by chance that the three of us were brought together, with the purpose of creating something between us. We had all been in the midst of our PhD and MPhil theses, and in hindsight, the project and our degrees combined drained from us every last ounce of energy we had to offer. Yet despite already being neck deep in reading, writing, re-writing, field work and research, the opportunity to be creative came as a breath of fresh air.

We are very fortunate to have found teammates, mentors and supervisors who shared a common vision for the outcome of the project, which was to bring on-field environmental education to where it was found lacking. The resulting scheme ended up encompassing not only faculties, but also brought together professors, postgraduates, undergraduates, secondary school students, local secondary school teachers, alumni and NGOs. The synergy coming from participants and supporters with such diverse personalities and backgrounds gave us educators, scientists, artists, game makers, and graphic designers the capacity to produce something far bigger than we could have imagined at the start.



In this collaborative effort of over nine months, we learned a few things:

1. Achieving a common vision comes before everything. Everyone’s expectations must align, even if individual opinions don’t. With a clear, decided goal that can be referred to, disagreements can be quickly resolved.
2. Self-discipline can be challenging at times, so make it easier for each other. Setting out clear (and agreed!) schedules, deadlines and distribution of work has made all the difference for us in keeping track of our progress, and when we might need to pull ourselves together.
3. Always keep an open mind to new ideas.

We’d also like to take this chance to thank everyone who has supported us throughout the entire project, especially Dr Alexandra Cook of the School of Humanities (Philosophy), our supervisor and the first person who approached us with the opportunity. Thank you also to Professor David Dudgeon, Professor Richard Saunders and Dr Billy Hau of the School of Biological Sciences, and Professor Peter Hills and Dr Winnie Law of the Kadoorie Institute for their advice and encouragement.

Ho Ka Yan Kathleen

(MPhil Graduate, School of Humanities (Philosophy))

Li Pui Sze *(PhD Graduate, School of Biological Sciences)*

Ma Kwan Ki *(PhD Candidate, The Kadoorie Institute)*



Trans-disciplinary Workshops and Challenge Award Competition 2016



The Graduate School offered a series of six-hour trans-disciplinary research workshops in 2015-16. The first one was on Big Data Applications presented by Dr Reynold Cheng of the Department of Computer Science and the second was on Complex Social Networks by Professor Liaquat Hossain of the Division of Information and Technology Studies in the Faculty of Education. The offering of the trans-disciplinary workshops is a continued effort to encourage RPg students at HKU to think beyond their disciplines both in terms of scope and methodology.

"I worked and exchanged ideas with colleagues from totally different disciplines whom I never thought I could work with before joining the workshop. It's a stimulating journey that I am able to practice my research skills and increase my awareness of inter-disciplinary research. Also, I made some very good friends after the workshop."

Zhihang Jiang

"The workshop on Big Data Applications intends to engage students in the critical issues that they could encounter in the Age of Big Data, which

"It is very interesting to work with students from other disciplines. When different views came together, a new idea came up. We shouldn't confine our thoughts to our own research. We should broaden our horizon and be creative. I really appreciate this workshop that gave me a chance to come up with something new and interesting."

Xinyi Xu

is revolutionising science and technology, governments, and the economy," Dr Cheng said. "We examine how Big Data is affecting our society and daily lives. We perform an in-depth and extensive study on Big Data applications in different domains. We demonstrate software tools that enable scalable Big Data analytics. We also study the associated social, legal, security and privacy problems." Dr Cheng believes that this important topic of Big Data has aroused the interest of the students, and the workshop has given them a chance to develop new research ideas.

On completion of the workshops, participating students summarised their research ideas in posters. The Graduate School selected from these posters the best five for display and to enter the competition for the Trans-disciplinary Challenge Award on April 27, 2016. In the competition, each group was given five minutes to present their research proposal, followed by a question and answer session with the judging panel.

The panel members were Professor Mai-Har Sham, Associate Vice-President (Research), Professor John Bacon-Shone, Associate Director, Knowledge Exchange Office and Professor Ben Young, Associate Dean, Graduate School.

The winning project was 'Social Network and Disease Prevention: Type 2 Diabetes'. The judges commended its well-defined goal, and the very clearly presented methods model and analysis. The Award went to Zhihang Jiang (MPhil Candidate, Department of Law), Xinyi Xu (MPhil Candidate, School of Nursing) and Biyun Huang (PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education). This was a brand new learning experience for them.

"The Trans-disciplinary Workshop provided us an awesome chance to take a glance at the beauty of different disciplines. It also encouraged us to walk out of our discipline-specific research, and challenge something that's beyond our scope of knowledge and competence."

Biyun Huang



Poster Presentation Workshop @ HKU Libraries

Have you ever presented a poster at a conference before? With so many posters, visitors typically have only a few minutes for each presentation. So, a succinct overview of your key ideas and research findings is essential.

The Poster Presentation Workshop organised on April 15, 2016 specifically addressed this. The workshop was offered by the HKU Libraries in collaboration with Dr Ai Lin Chun, Senior Editor at *Nature Nanotechnology*.

Eight research postgraduates – five PhD and three MPhil students – took part in the workshop, which was kept small to ensure students had an interactive learning experience. Five students were from Medicine and Nursing, two from Science and one from Engineering. Recruitment was done by Nancy Chan, Science and Engineering Faculties Librarian, through the Graduate School and the Faculty of Science.

At the workshop, Dr Chun inspired participants to consider the following questions:

- Why is it important to participate in a poster session at a conference?
- How should we introduce ourselves?
- What makes a presentation interesting?
- How should we structure the 2-3 min talk?

After a brief dialogue, participants engaged in a variety of activities and exercises. The activities started from the most basic skills and culminated with the presentation of their own posters. In one exercise, participants were asked to introduce themselves after having savoured a

piece of chocolate. This prompted participants to reflect on the importance of personal hygiene when presenting themselves to an audience. In another exercise, Dr Chun demonstrated reading an entertaining advertisement script and taught students how to energise their presentation by coaching and challenging them to unleash their hidden energy. Participants were then asked to present the same script in an energetic and lively manner. Applying the tips of poster presentation they had just learnt, the young researchers presented their own posters that they had brought along. For each presentation, Dr Chun coached them and offered constructive feedback. The workshop lasted 2.5 hours.

Participants found the workshop fruitful and enjoyable, as evidenced by the favourable student feedback. In the anonymous survey, one student wrote, "Activities gave hands-on experience and have shaken me to the core in a short time! Very impressive and fun." Majority of the respondents agreed that the workshop was well organised and clearly presented, and that they gained confidence after the workshop. A big thank you to Dr Chun for inspiring the young researchers to become engaging presenters.



All energised and enlightened by the coaching of Dr Ai Lin Chun (middle of the back row)!

PhD Candidate and Supervisor Named Rising Stars in Liver Transplantation Research



Mr Li Changxian (left) and Professor Man Kwan (right)

Mr Li Changxian, a fourth year PhD candidate from the Department of Surgery, together with his supervisor Professor Man Kwan received the Rising Star Award, as mentee and mentor respectively, at the International Liver Transplantation Society (ILTS) 22nd Annual International Congress, May 4-7, 2016, Seoul, South Korea. The goal of the Rising Star Symposium is to attract the brightest and best combinations of youth and wisdom working in the clinical and basic science of liver transplantation research. Mr Li's research topic is about the mechanisms of liver graft injury and Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) tumour recurrence after liver transplantation. So far he has published 15 original articles in international journals such as the *Journal of Hepatology*, *Annals of Surgery*, *Oncotarget*, *BMC Cancer* and so on. He has also obtained six other international awards including the 'Rising Star Award' (2011) and 'Young Investigator Award' (2010) in the annual congress of ILTS, and the 'Mentee-Mentor Award' (2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015) in The Transplantation Society (TTS) meetings over the past six years.

HKU Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition 2016

On March 8, 2016, a total of 32 research postgraduate (RPg) students challenged themselves to present a compelling spoken presentation on their research topic and its significance in just three minutes to a non-specialist audience in the Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition 2016, which was jointly organised by the Graduate School and the Knowledge Exchange Office. The 3MT competition was originally introduced by the University of Queensland, Australia in 2008 to celebrate the discoveries made by RPg students and encourage them to develop the skills to communicate the importance of their research to the broader community.

The final of HKU's 2016 competition was officiated by Professor Peter Mathieson, President and Vice-Chancellor. The adjudicating panel included Ms Belinda Hung, Co-founder of Hung Hing Ying and Leung Hau Ling Charitable Foundation and HKU Court member, and Dr Allan Wong, Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of VTech Holdings Limited and Chairman of the Board of Management of Versitech Limited of HKU, as external members. The internal members of the adjudicating panel were Professor John Bacon-Shone, Associate Director of the Knowledge Exchange Office (Chair of the adjudicating panel), Professor Ying Chan, Director of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre, Professor Ying Shing Chan of the School of Biomedical Sciences, Professor Lena Wong of the Faculty of Education, and Professor Ben Young, Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Congratulations to all the winners of the HKU 3MT Competition 2016:



Champion People's Choice Award

(selected by audience ballot)

Name: Ms Xiaoxin DU
(PhD candidate, Faculty of Education)
Presentation Title: Torn Apart: Role Split Phenomenon in Chinese Higher Education
Primary Supervisor: Professor Wing Wah LAW



1st Runner-up

Name: Mr Ricky Van Yip TSO
(PhD Candidate, Faculty of Social Sciences)
Presentation Title: Without Writing – Can We Learn to Read Chinese?
Primary Supervisor: Dr Janet Hui Wen HSIAO



2nd Runner-up

Name: Ms Yuen Yung LAU
(PhD candidate, Faculty of Science)
Presentation Title: Lured and Trapped: How Plants Can Imprison Beetle Pollinators for Reproduction?
Primary Supervisor: Professor Richard M.K. SAUNDERS



Online People's Choice Award

(the finalist who has the most 'Likes' on YouTube)

Name: Ms Akanksha GANDHI
(PhD candidate, Faculty of Science)
Presentation Title: To Cheese or Not to Cheese...?
Primary Supervisor: Professor Nagendra SHAH

Videos of the presentations of the awardees and finalists are available at <http://www.ke.hku.hk/hku3mt/index.php/competition/2016/2016-videos-of-finalists-and-awardees>.

Congratulations again to all the winners!

Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) Holds Dialogue with Research Postgraduates



Research postgraduate (RPg) students were invited to a dialogue with Professor Andy Hor, Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), held on May 24, 2016 at the Wang Gungwu Lecture Hall.

Professor Hor began the conversation with the [3+1] Is of HKU, which are internationalisation, innovation and interdisciplinarity, all converging on impact. He explained that plans for RPg development are underpinned by the [3+1] Is.

Professor Hor also talked about the research support provided to students, his expectations of research students, international experience, opportunities for knowledge exchange and internships, and career options and challenges.

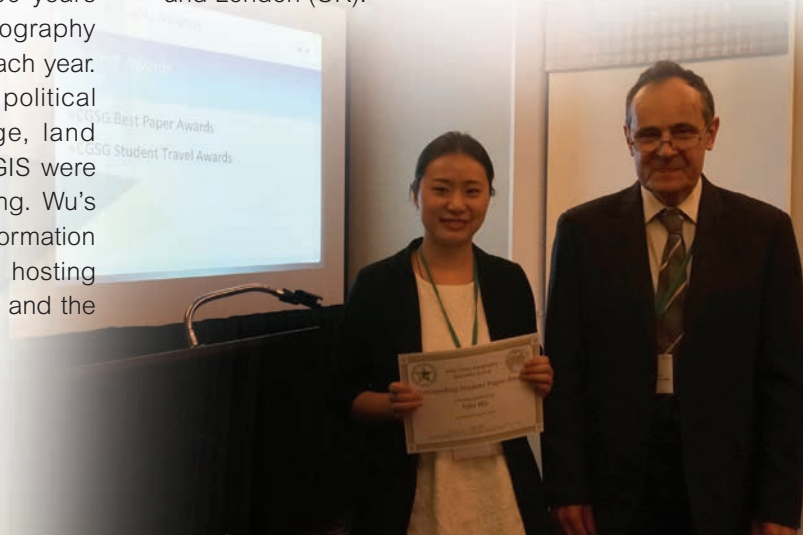
Subjects that were discussed with students in the meeting included funding support for conference attendance, the internationalisation strategy, support for part-time students and course provision.

Professor M.L. Chye and Professor Ben Young, the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, as well as colleagues from Faculties and the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) were also present in the meeting to hear and respond to students' questions.

PhD Candidate Receives CGSG 2016 Student Paper Award

Miss WU Yifei, a PhD candidate of the Department of Geography, was awarded the Student Best Paper Award by the China Geography Specialty Group (CGSG) in the 2016 Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting for her paper on 'Reproducing urban space with over-drafted capital: mega-events, local debts, and spectacular urbanism in China'. The AAG Annual Meeting has a history of over 100 years and is the most famous forum among the geography community, attracting thousands of attendees each year. About 4000 papers on topics as diverse as political ecology, physical geography, climate change, land use, population dynamics, place making and GIS were presented during the 2016 AAG Annual Meeting. Wu's winning paper examines the growth and transformation of Chinese cities in relation to the practice of hosting mega-events as a means of capital mobilisation and the

expansion of local debts. The paper provides a detailed look at how one Chinese city used a mega-event to influence the built environment in ways that will affect urbanisation in this area for many years. The explanation of this local policy process is also relevant to or has parallels with other cities that have hosted mega-events in recent years, such as Atlanta (USA), Athens (Greece), and London (UK).



HKSTP Internship and Career Expo

The Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) and the Graduate School, Graduate House and the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS) of HKU joined hands to launch the HKSTP Internship and Career Expo on April 22, 2016. The event provided hundreds of internship and career opportunities for students aspiring to develop a career in the innovation and technology industry and also network opportunities with professionals in the field.



Representatives from 23 companies in the Hong Kong Science Park were present to meet with students regarding full-time employment and internship opportunities. In addition to onsite interviews, the Expo also hosted free career talk and sharing sessions by human resources experts and HKU alumni, providing the latest industry news and useful tips on interview techniques, workplace etiquette and more.



History Department Spring Symposium (May 2016) and Northwestern University Exchange

The School of Humanities (History) held its 8th annual symposium for research postgraduate students on May 5, 2016. This year's symposium was particularly successful, attracting students from the greater China Area, Europe and the United States. The conference's theme was focused on the history of Asia, broadly defined, and included papers dealing with the political, economic and cultural history of China, Japan, Hong Kong and South East Asia from the 19th Century until contemporary times. Given the success of this year's symposium, the School of Humanities (History) aims at transforming it into a key international academic event for the study of Asian History in the coming years.

Financially, this year's symposium has been generously supported by the History Endowment Fund. The School

of Humanities (History) aims at raising additional funding for future years to finance postgraduate students' trips and accommodation expenses and to bring a leading scholar to HKU to deliver a keynote speech. Possible sources of future additional funding include the Hong Kong Research Grants Council.

Finally, the School of Humanities (History) is proud of having set up a new exchange scheme with Northwestern University (NWU). The scheme, which started in 2015, named the Stanley Ho Travel Grants, has enabled four HKU postgraduate students to travel to Chicago in late March/early April to attend a postgraduate academic conference. It has also enabled an NWU delegation to travel to Hong Kong to attend the History symposium in 2015 and 2016.



When Work Is a Consuming Passion – Alumni Interview with Dr Huen Shing Yan Michael

The burning question for Dr Huen Shing Yan Michael is, “how do cells safeguard their genetic material (DNA)”? His continuing search for the answer means that there is no such thing as a working day for the HKU alumnus, now Associate Professor in the School of Biomedical Sciences. “For me it’s not really work as I spend all my time doing what I love to do!” he says.

Research is Dr Huen’s consuming passion, something that he discovered while completing his final year project before graduating with a BSc from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). He completed his MPhil at HKUST and PhD at HKU before heading for postdoctoral research in the field of Radiation Oncology at Mayo Clinic, Minnesota (USA). He then spent three years as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Therapeutic Radiology, Yale University, Connecticut, before returning to his alma mater as Assistant Professor in the Department of Anatomy in 2009. He was promoted to Associate Professor last year.

“By identifying and understanding the DNA repair toolkits in our cells, geneticists can help predict the future risk of individuals in developing cancer (and many other genetic diseases); gene therapists can replace faulty DNA repair machineries; and chemists can design drugs to target and modulate disease-causing activities,” Dr Huen says. “Knowing how our cells protect their DNA places us in much better positions to combat devastating diseases.”

In March this year Dr Huen was named an Outstanding Young Researcher by HKU’s University Research Committee in recognition of his team’s accomplishments. He says he is grateful for the recognition and the motivation it gives, encouraging him to move forward.

The research team does not evolve by chance: Dr Huen is always on the lookout for people who share his mind set. But often he has to advise students that this is not the right path for them unless they are truly passionate about what they do. “The reward for research work is rarely high and the time is outrageous. The work consumes you.”

His two young sons, aged eight and four, help Dr Huen to unwind. He plays ice hockey with the elder boy, a sport to which he was introduced in Canada where he grew up watching and playing hockey. “It’s a very rigorous sport. The Hong Kong ice hockey community is growing, but ice time is really expensive. As it is we get up at 6 am on weekends to reach the rink by 7 am.”

It is a special memory to Dr Huen that he and his wife had to bring their elder son (born in the US) to the lab.



Dr Huen is grateful to his wife, who is also a scientist, for being very supportive and having pretty much sacrificed her career so that he could devote his time to research.



Dr Huen (centre) with his students

Compared with US universities, Hong Kong offers more stability and job security for academics, but less time for research, says Dr Huen. “Time management is essential to be able to fulfil the duties of your job and continue pursuing your passion. And you must always plan ahead. For instance if you order reagents in the US you will receive them the next day, but Hong Kong delivery can take 3-4 weeks.”

With hindsight, Dr Huen says he wishes he had got to know more people before he took up his academic position. “In US universities there is more interaction. Connections are very important, as are management and presentation skills. It’s important for a scientist to be able to interact and communicate.”

Deanship and Associate Deanships of the Graduate School

The Graduate School is pleased to announce the recent changes in the management team. Professor Mee Len Chye, who has been serving as an Associate Dean of the Graduate School since March 2010, has been appointed as the Dean of the Graduate School to succeed Professor Nirmala Rao, with effect from May 1, 2016. We would also like to introduce to all of you our new Associate Deans, Professor Dong-Yan Jin and Professor Sam Po Law, who joined our existing Associate Dean, Professor Ben Young, in August 2016.

DEAN



Professor Mee Len Chye

Professor Chye is the Wilson and Amelia Wong Professor in Plant Biotechnology in the School of Biological Sciences. She completed her PhD on a Commonwealth Scholarship at the University of Melbourne and received postdoctoral training in plant molecular biology at the Rockefeller University (New York) and the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (Singapore). Since joining HKU in 1993 and being promoted to Professor in 2005, Professor Chye has been awarded an Edward Clarence Dyason *Universitas 21* Fellowship (2004/05), an Outstanding University Researcher Award (2006/07), a Croucher Senior Research Fellowship (2007/08) and an Eileen Mary Harris Scholarship (2013). Her research interests include stress-tolerant crops, plant lipids and isoprenoids, and plant biotechnology.

ASSOCIATE DEANS



Professor Dong-Yan Jin (Internationalisation and Partnership)

Professor Jin from the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine is the Clara and Lawrence Fok Professor in Precision Medicine. His primary research interest is in the molecular basis of viral diseases and cancer. Two key issues that his team is addressing concern cancer-causing viruses and host-virus interaction. He received a Scholar Award from the US-based Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and a National Natural Science Award of China in 2001, an Outstanding Research Award in 2008, a Croucher Senior Research Fellowship in 2014 and an Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award in 2015. He is Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Cell and Bioscience*, the official journal of the Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America. He is also an editorial board member of international journals including *Retrovirology*, *Nucleic Acid Therapeutics*, *Emerging Microbes and Infections*, and *PLoS ONE*.



Professor Sam Po Law (Courses and Professional Development)

Professor Law is Professor in the Faculty of Education. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Boston College, and her Master's degree in Developmental Psychology and PhD degree in Applied Linguistics from Boston University. She was then awarded a McDonnell-Pew Post-doctoral Fellowship at the Johns Hopkins University, and subsequently an Assistant Research

Fellowship at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan, before returning to Hong Kong and joining HKU in 1998. Professor Law's research interests include aphasia, acquired dyslexia and dysgraphia in Chinese, language rehabilitation, and written language processing in L1 and L2 Chinese learners using behavioural and neuroimaging methods. She was awarded an Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholarship of the Joint European Masters Programme in Clinical Linguistics in 2007. She is a member of the Academy of Aphasia and Fellow of the Psychonomic Society. Before becoming a member of the Graduate School, she was the Head of the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences in the Faculty of Education from 2013-16.



Professor Ben Young (Innovation and Internship)

Professor Young is currently an Associate Dean of the Graduate School and also the Master of the Graduate House. He is a Professor of structural engineering in the Department of Civil Engineering. Professor Young received BSc, BEng and PhD degrees from the University of Sydney, Australia. He is the Vice-President of the Hong Kong Institute of Steel Construction. His research interests include cold-formed steel structures, stainless steel structures, aluminium structures, fire resistance of metal structures and engineering education. Professor Young is currently an Editor of the *Journal of Constructional Steel Research*, Elsevier. He is also serving as a member of editorial boards for ten other journals. Professor Young received the Outstanding Young Researcher Award in 2006, Outstanding Teaching Award in 2008, and Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award in 2015. He also received the Best Research Paper Award given by the *Journal of Structures*, Elsevier in 2016.

Our warmest welcome is extended to Professor Jin and Professor Law. We would also like to express our heartfelt thanks to Professor Rao for her dedication to the work of the Graduate School in the past years.

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