

HKU's First Batch of Joint PhD Graduates

In 2014, the first batch of research students graduated from HKU's Joint PhD programmes with Imperial College London (ICL) and King's College London (KCL). These programmes offer students opportunities to benefit from shared research excellence between HKU and its prestigious partners, as well as enriching international experience in learning and research.

The University has collaborated with ICL to offer Joint PhD programmes since 2010. Dr Su Meini and Dr Huang Xin in the Department of Civil Engineering and Dr Zhao Fung in the Department of Pathology, who all enrolled in the HKU-ICL joint PhD programmes in 2011, were the first three HKU-ICL joint PhD graduates. Dr Su and Dr Zhao are now post-doctoral fellows in HKU, while Dr Huang has taken up the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Geotechnical Engineering, Tongji University.

Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School at ICL, visited HKU to celebrate the graduation of the first batch of HKU-ICL joint PhD students. She attended the Congregation of the Faculty of Engineering on November 29, 2014 at the Grand Hall in HKU, was welcomed by the Associate Deans of the Graduate School, and also visited the Faculties of Engineering and Medicine to meet with joint PhD students and their supervisors.



Professor Norman Tien, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering (4th from left), joint PhD students and their supervisors met with Professor Gibson (4th from right)

In addition, Dr Sarah Downes from the School of English graduated in 2014 from the joint PhD programme offered by HKU and KCL. "The joint PhD was an immensely rewarding experience; I'd recommend it to any prospective student," said Dr Downes, the first graduate of the HKU-KCL joint PhD programme. "My research was energised and invigorated by the contrasting academic practices of the two institutions, and personally I benefitted immensely from researching in a new environment when I moved to Hong Kong. My three years as a joint PhD scholar were incredible - I only wish it could have lasted longer!"



(From left) Professor Gibson, Dr Su Meini, Dr Huang Xin and Professor Ben Young (Dr Su's supervisor and Associate Dean, Graduate School, HKU) attended the Congregation Session 2014 of the Faculty of Engineering



The Graduate School representatives welcomed Professor Gibson (2nd from left). (Professor Becky Loo (right) and Professor Ben Young (left), Associate Deans; and Mrs Betty Tsui, Senior Assistant Registrar (2nd from right))



Professor Gibson's visit to the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine

Graduate School Award Presentation Ceremony 2014



Mr George Ho (centre) and 2 UPF awardees

The Graduate School held its annual Award Presentation Ceremony on December 9, 2014 to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our research postgraduate students.

Prizes and awards were presented by our Guests of Honour: Mr George J. Ho, Trustee of the Jessie & George Ho Charitable Foundation, and Professor Roland T. Chin, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Mr Ho presented the University Postgraduate Fellowships (UPFs) to 40 elite PhD students. The UPFs are generously supported by The University of Hong Kong Foundation for Educational Development and Research, the Jessie & George Ho Charitable Foundation, Dr Lee Shau Kee and the Philip K H Wong Foundation to give due recognition to PhD students with excellent academic records.

Besides the UPF presentations, the 10 students who have submitted theses of exceptional quality and demonstrated outstanding performance in other academic aspects received the Awards for Outstanding Research Postgraduate Student from Professor Nirmala Rao, Dean of the Graduate School. The Li Ka Shing prizes, awarded to two MPhil and four PhD graduates from two faculty groups (the Humanities and the Science faculty groups) who have submitted the best theses, were also bestowed by Professor Rao.

Lastly, Professor Chin acknowledged the achievements of 55 students who have won external prizes, including the Doris Zimmern HKU-Cambridge Hughes Hall Scholarships, Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Research Scholar Award Programme and Hong Kong PhD Fellowships, together with the winners of the HKU Three Minute Thesis Competition 2014.

Please visit <http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/f/page/554/2398/2014.pdf> for the complete list of award recipients. We would like to send our heartfelt congratulations to all of the award winners.



From left: Professor Mee Len Chye, Mr George Ho, Professor Nirmala Rao, Professor Roland Chin and Mr Henry Wai

List of prize winners:

LI KA SHING PRIZES (2012-13)

Best theses in the Faculties of Architecture, Arts, Business & Economics, Education, Law and Social Sciences

Miss WONG Kwan Lam (*MPhil*)

Department of Geography

Thesis Title:

The Mitigating Effect of Substrate Depth on Green Roof Stormwater Discharge

Supervisor:

Professor C.Y. Jim, *Department of Geography*

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Dr DE WIT Mattheus Maria (*PhD*)

Institute of Human Performance

Thesis Title:

Information over Function: A Reappraisal of the Perception-Action Model

Supervisors:

Professor R.S.W. Masters, *Institute of Human Performance*

Dr J. van der Kamp, *Institute of Human Performance*

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Dr LI Jie (*PhD*)

Department of Social Work and Social Administration

Thesis Title:

Bereavement Guilt in Chinese Adult Children: The Conceptualization, Measurement, Risk Factors and Association with Grief Outcomes

Supervisors:

Dr A.Y.M. Chow, *Department of Social Work and Social Administration*

Professor C.L.W. Chan, *Department of Social Work and Social Administration*



Best theses in the Faculties of Dentistry, Engineering, Medicine and Science

Mr WONG Hoi Kin (*MPhil*)

Department of Medicine

Thesis Title:

New Factors that Affect Adrenomedullin Expression

Supervisor:

Professor B.M.Y. Cheung, *Department of Medicine*

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Dr LEUNG Yu Lut (*PhD*)

Department of Chemistry

Thesis Title:

Design, Synthesis and Functionalization of Luminescent Alkynylplatinum (II) Complexes of Tridentate N-Donor Ligands as Building Blocks for Metallofoldamers, Supramolecular Assemblies and Nanostructures

Supervisor:

Professor V.W.W. Yam, *Department of Chemistry*

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Dr PENG Yu (*PhD*)

Department of Computer Science

Thesis Title:

Iterative de Bruijn Graph Assemblers for Second-generation Sequencing Reads

Supervisor:

Professor F.Y.L. Chin, *Department of Computer Science*

AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE STUDENT (2012-13)

Miss CHAN Jane (*MPhil*, *Department of Microbiology*)

Dr CHEN Yongxi (*PhD*, *Department of Law*)

Dr CHENG Chuan (*PhD*, *Department of Mechanical Engineering*)

Dr CHUNG Chi Kei (*PhD*, *School of Modern Languages and Cultures (European Studies)*)

Dr LI Kwai Hei (*PhD*, *Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering*)

Dr LIU Ming (*PhD*, *Department of Clinical Oncology*)

Mr MAN Hiu Yeung (*MPhil*, *School of Chinese*)

Dr PO Charlotte (*PhD*, *Department of Chemistry*)

Dr ZHANG Li (*PhD*, *Faculty of Education*)

Dr ZHOU Jingying (*PhD*, *Department of Microbiology*)

Bringing Real Excitement to Research – Alumni Interview with Dr Kelvin Wong Siu Kei



When Dr Kelvin Wong started his BSc (Surv) studies at HKU, the Hong Kong real estate market was at an all-time high. Like most fresh graduates he was eager to enter the ‘real’ world of work, never considering a life in academia. Soon, however, he realised that he missed the problem-solving and the opportunities to consider things on a philosophical level, so he applied for a research grant to fund a PhD. His couple of years working in the industry were not wasted however as they have helped him understand the practicalities of the market, he says.

By the time Dr Wong completed his PhD, the market was in a deep trough. Today as Associate Professor, Department of Real Estate & Construction and Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning) in the Faculty of Architecture he comments that

these dramatic changes probably sparked his abiding interest in real estate economics, particularly housing.

Since completion of his PhD at HKU, Dr Wong has spent time at the universities of Connecticut, Cambridge (as a senior Fulbright scholar) and Melbourne. “It’s difficult to compare any of these universities with HKU as the latter is currently in transition from a more British system to a more American system,” he says.

In HKU’s British style research environment the only compulsory course for postgraduate students was on thesis writing. There was no ethics course or anything similar. The environment at Cambridge was similar. “It was all up to me to decide what and how I wanted to learn. Today’s HKU students have much more formal training in their first year of postgraduate studies, comparable to what happens in the US.”

“HKU undergraduates are very much industry oriented. Our undergraduate courses are accredited by professional organisations. But very few students are interested in going beyond a master’s degree to a PhD. I’m trying to bring a real excitement to research here. These days HKU is very much a research and teaching university. I am happy to be back as a faculty member. The university is my second home, it’s where I grew up. There is no better way to repay HKU than by devoting myself to its development.”

Dr Wong found that Connecticut has a very strong research culture. “The first question when meeting anyone was always about your research, and there would be good give and take of opinions and comments.

When I speak with new PhD students, I look back at my own student experience. I spent a lot of time thinking about what is academic research compared with market research, for instance. I attended lots of classes in other departments – business, philosophy, even medicine.”

The gift of a copy of Karl Popper’s book entitled *Conjectures and Refutations* changed Dr Wong’s perspectives and helped him understand what research is all about. These days he insists that all his students should read it. “They don’t have to agree with everything in it, but it enables them to understand how scientists approach research.”

One of the biggest changes since Dr Wong’s undergraduate days at HKU is the introduction of the GPA (Grade Point Average). The three-year system had only one semester per year and only one exam. “In my day, provided you could pass the final year exam, no one cared what you did. Class attendance was not compulsory except for tutorials. If you were self-disciplined and motivated it worked, otherwise it could be a disaster.”

“Now things have changed. Common core courses give students a broader knowledge outside their particular discipline. But it keeps them very busy compared with the situation in my day. When I started my PhD I had lots of personal time to look around. Nothing was structured or mandated by the graduate school. In the past when we wanted to compare ideas with our peers in a similar field we would get together over lunch or tea. Now everyone has new apps and they debate online, but I don’t see much face-to-face communication.”

Physical transformation of the university campus has been dramatic in recent years, observes Dr Wong. The greatest single change is the library, which provides a totally new environment. “It is still the major research environment, but now everything is online. Data availability is very high and we have easy access to academic articles and even citations of them.”

Another major change is the general availability of computers. “As an undergraduate, I did not have my own computer until my final year. Even printing posed a challenge – finding paper and then a printer. That has all changed very fast.”

Opportunities for international exposure have improved, although still not far enough, says Dr Wong. “In my day postgraduate students had only one chance to attend a conference. Now they can have two such opportunities. It’s good to have more international exposure and I am very happy at the change. But I’d like to see more exchange opportunities for PhD students. I’d like them to be able to spend at least a few months or even one semester interacting with other scholars elsewhere in their field.”



Alumnus Honoured Amongst China's Most Influential Researchers

Professor Li Xia, a PhD graduate of the Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management (the former Department of Urban Planning and Design) in 1996, was named one of the most cited Chinese researchers in Mainland China in 2014 in the field of Social Science.

The 2014 List of the Most Cited Chinese Researchers was developed using the selection criteria established by ShanghaiRanking Consultancy (SRC), in collaboration with Elsevier, who provided the citation data indicators from the Scopus research database, powered by metrics from SciVal analytics.

Professor Li is at present Yat-sen Chair Professor and Director of the Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographical Information Sciences, School of Geography and Planning, Sun Yat-sen University. He was the recipient of the 2013 The World Academy of Sciences for the Advancement of Science in Developing Countries (TWAS) Prize in Earth Sciences.

Swire Scholarships for Research Students in Residence at Robert Black College

To provide young members of HKU's academic community with a learning opportunity by residing in the Robert Black College, and thereby mixing with international scholars, the Swire Scholarships were established with the generous donation by the Swire Company.

All full-time research students who are registered for an MPhil or a PhD degree at the University are eligible to apply for the Swire Scholarships, which provide free accommodation with breakfast at the College. Recipients are expected to actively interact with the visiting academics residing in the College, so as to enrich their learning experiences, and to offer the visiting academics good company.

Applications will normally be called for annually in September via bulk mail, the HKU intranet, and the Research Services website. The selection process for the 2014–15 Swire Scholarships concluded in December 2014, and Scholarships have been awarded to the following students:

Ms CHOW Ka Wai

PhD student,

Department of Psychology

Mr RESTREPO CADAVID Juan Manuel

PhD student,

Department of Politics and Public Administration

Mr SHANG Zheng

MPhil student,

Department of Politics and Public Administration

Mr STIEGLER Thomas

PhD Student,

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Congratulations to the four recipients on their achievements!

Produced by:
The Graduate School,
P403, Graduate House,
The University of Hong Kong,
Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.



EDITORIAL TEAM

Professor Nirmala Rao (*Dean, Graduate School*)
Mrs Betty Tsui (*Graduate School*)
Ms Vicki Geall (*Technical Writer, Research Services*)

Tel: 2857-3470 Fax: 2857-3543

E-mail: gradsch@hku.hk Url: <http://www.hku.hk/gradsch/>