Message from the Chairman

Dear Fellow Convocation Members,

I hope this letter finds you well and in good health and the weather is fine wherever you may be.

I was elected Chairman towards the end of July 2015, an office that I would hold for three years. I hope to do as much as I can during my term to bring the Convocation closer to the membership and to the people of Hong Kong as a whole. As a start, I have been running a Chairman's Column on the Convocation website on which I put letters or articles I wrote from time to time on issues related to the University. I hope to share some of my thoughts with you and more importantly to have your feedback.

One of the frequently asked questions of me and my colleagues on the Standing Committee is what the Convocation is and how it relates to alumni and alumni bodies. Let me try to answer the question as simply as I can. Convocation is a statutory body which provides automatic membership to all graduates and teachers of the University and which enables its members to speak on matters related to the University thereby helping to bring the University and the community of Hong Kong closer together. Thus, while Convocation comprises numerous alumni, it is not an alumni body as such, in the sense that an alumni body typically admits members on application and has its own constitution and rules.

It follows that Convocation has no institutional relationship with individual alumni bodies, but would respond to all alumni and discharge its functions in accordance with the law based on which Convocation was set up. For as long as one can remember, Convocation has not been a focus of public attention or of the average member, possibly because other alumni bodies have been actively and effectively taking up the issues of their respective members such that there has been no major call for Convocation to take up their causes.

Recent changes in the political scene of Hong Kong have spread to the campuses. HKU has become a political battleground, whether we like it or not. Politicians and political parties have been able to use the constitutional framework of Convocation to advance political agenda; and it is doubtful whether such proceedings would be useful or beneficial to the University or would be in the long term interest of the University. I refer specifically to the two Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs) held within three months since 1 September 2015 at which various motions were discussed and passed and the polling results of which were recorded for posterity.

Lest I may be misunderstood and taken out of context, let me quickly say for the record that I have no problems with any members requisitioning Convocation to hold EGMs for any lawful purposes. This is what Convocation was set up for, and we would continue to be a platform for any members who wish to voice their opinions on any matters related to the University.

I would urge you however to consider in context the logistics of holding EGMs; and I would be brief. The primary purpose of holding an EGM is to enable issues related to the University to be discussed in the open. The current Convocation rules provide that an EGM is to be convened at the requisition of 20 members. Now, a typical corporation or professional body would require 5% of its membership to make such a requisition, while another local university has set the threshold at 100 members. Our membership now standing at 162,000 and still growing, 20 does seem an unrealistically low figure.
Still on EGMs, while I have no problems with members asking for EGMs to be held, I would caution on how the outcomes are interpreted. Here, I rely on the wisdom and good judgement of the membership, which is why I am going out of my way to share with you my thoughts on the University and how I see our alma mater is going.

Our University is doing well. A lot of good things are happening every day at the University. The best students are fighting to get into our University and we are getting them. Academic freedom is alive and well and does not require a handful of alumni waving banners and shouting slogans purporting to uphold what is already flying high. There will always be people who choose to think otherwise for the wrong reasons. These are probably the same people who would not hesitate to abuse freedom and who might not want to see a stable and prosperous Hong Kong even as the Heritage Foundation has for 22 years in running ranked Hong Kong as the freest economy in the world.

I believe most of our alumni would want to see their University going from strength to strength, which is why we should all be spreading the good news whenever and wherever we can. The University has published The Review 2015 which is an annual overview of the developments taking place at the University. Students, staff and the University as a whole have been working towards enhancing our existing strengths and pursuing new ventures. At the same time, the University has also published its Vision 2016-2025 which has already been approved by the Court and the Council. Our University is now committed to being Asia's Global University through teaching and learning, research and knowledge exchange. In his speech to the Court in December 2015 presenting the strategy document, the President and Vice-Chancellor urged everyone to help him and the rest of the Senior Management Team to achieve the vision to make our University, which is already great, one of the greatest. The President also dismissed a widespread belief in Hong Kong that our students are difficult, rebellious, subversive trouble-makers. He stressed that the vast majority of Hong Kong students are hard-working, conscientious and respectful of authority. He concluded that our University “is a place where complex and sometimes controversial issues can be debated, where differences of opinion can be respected, where diversity is celebrated, and intellectual, personal, professional and political advances can be achieved.”

On 7 May 2016, the President and his full Senior Management Team spoke at the Convocation Forum during which they had a full and frank exchange of views with Convocation members on this important framework document and on how best to make our University Asia's Global University. On this optimistic note, I wish all of you out there a wonderful and prosperous year ahead and I hope to talk to you again soon.

Yours sincerely,
John

all graduates and teaching staff of the University.
Standing Committee

Chairman
John Wan 溫頌安 (BSc 1970; MBuddhStud 2007)
Deputy Chairman
Dr Patrick Poon 潘燊昌 (BSc 1970)
Clerk
Mona Tam 譚張翠芬 (MBA 2004)

Members
Chan Ka-chin 陳嘉展 (BEng(Mech) 1992)
Terence Cheung 張廣達 (BSocSc 1990)
Chik Sing-wing 戚盛榮 (BSc(Eng) 1977; MBA 1997)
Ian Chu 朱位能 (BSc 1976)
Andrew Fung 馮可強 (BA 1969; DipEd 1972)
Alex Hung 洪文正 (BSc(CompSc) 1994)
Andrew Kuet 閻伯明 (FDipM 1994; MBA 1997)
Peter Kwan 關伯明 (FDipM 1994; MBA 1997)
Alex Lai 賴振鴻 (BScEng 1985)
Dr Lee George Lam 林家禮 (PhD 2004; MPA 2013)
Dr David Lee 李家仁 (MBBS 1976)
Elaine Liu 廖玉玲 (LLB 1987; PCLL 1988)
Dr Evelyn Man 文綺芬 (BA 1971)
Dr Data Ng 吳卓光 (BSc 2009; PhD 2015)
Dr Victor Ng 吳瀚 (BEng(EIE) 1999)
Kenny Ng 吳健暉 (BBA(Acc&Fin) 2003)
Tai Keen-man 戴健文 (BSc 1977; MPhil 1982)
Jeffrey Tse 謝海成 (BBA(Acc&Fin) 2003; MCon 2004)
Thomas Tso 曹萬泰 (BSocSc 1975; MSocSc 1984)
Ernest Wong 黃耀傑 (BBA 1991)
George Yuen 袁金浩 (BA 1966)

Six Sub-Committees appointed under the Standing Committee (SC)
- Administration Sub-Committee
- Communications Sub-Committee
- Finance Sub-Committee
- House Sub-Committee
- Member Relations Sub-Committee
- University Affairs Sub-Committee

Extraordinary General Meetings
September 1 and November 29, 2015

Details: www.convocation.hku.hk
Notice of Ordinary General Meeting 2016

Notice is hereby given that the Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of Convocation will be held on Thursday, June 23, 2016, at 6:30 pm at Senior Common Room, 14/F K. K. Leung Building, The University of Hong Kong.

Members are invited to attend the OGM. A member who cannot attend the OGM in person may appoint a proxy to vote on businesses other than on election of candidates to the Standing Committee under item 5 on the Order of Business (Rule 24). The instrument for appointing a proxy must be in writing, signed by the member appointing the proxy and deposited with the Clerk of Convocation before 6:00 pm on Tuesday, June 14, 2016.

Order of Business
1. To receive and confirm the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on November 29, 2015.
2. To receive a report from the Chairman.
3. To discuss questions (if any) from members notices of which have been received by the Clerk of Convocation before 6:00 pm on Monday, June 20, 2016.
4. To elect eight members of the Standing Committee from the candidates listed in the Schedule.*
5. Any other business which the Chairman considers urgent and directs to be transacted without notice thereof having been given.

Mona Tam
Clerk of Convocation
May 23, 2016

*Schedule, voting arrangements and OGM Registration are available on Convocation website: www.convocation.hku.hk/2016OGM/

Convocation Forum:
Asia’s Global University – Our Vision for 2016-2025
Supporting organisations: HKU Alumni Association and HKU Graduates Association

The Senior Management Team comprising President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Mathieson, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Tam, Executive Vice-President Dr Steven Cannon, Vice-President & Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Staffing & Resources) Professor Terry Au, Vice-President & Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) Professor John Kao, Vice-President & Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Advancement) Douglas So, Vice-President & Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Andy Hor, Vice-President & Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) Professor Ian Holliday, Registrar Henry Wai and Director of Finance Sara Lo discussed with participants on the strategies to make HKU Asia’s Global University through Teaching and Learning, Research and Knowledge Exchange.

May 7, 2016