Tradition and Heritage

Mrs Mary Gray Rodrigues (DSoSc; BA 1967), a loyal graduate, has dedicated her unfailing voluntary efforts to the promotion of a beneficial relationship between HKU graduates and their alma mater.

She has, for a quarter of a century, played a pivotal role in re-defining not only how the graduates could help their alma mater in meeting the said challenges, but also in her solid work in rallying the force of the graduates in the community to the cause of their alma mater. She first joined the Standing Committee of Convocation in January 1979, was elected as the Clerk of Convocation in 1986, and eventually elected as its Chairman in 1993. She held this post until 2001, and after retiring as Convocation Chairman, continued to serve on the University Council.

Under her leadership from the mid-1980s to the 1990s, Convocation started to embark upon a pro-active approach in re-organising its membership. Mary also pioneered a more systematic approach to graduates’ contribution to the University. This included, for example, an affinity credit card – and HKU was the first university in Hong Kong to launch this. Since its inception in 1993, the card has brought in some HK$52 million of funds to the HKU Foundation.

She has also helped strengthen bonds between town and gown. She had made good use of her professional and personal network to encourage graduates to offer their expertise and connections to the benefit of the University. She has herself exemplified such contributions in her memberships on various university committees.

As a long-standing leader in Convocation, Mary Rodrigues represented and reflected the views and aspirations of the body of 90,000 graduates, thus provided an invaluable input in the important process of the selection of the new Vice-Chancellor. This contributed to the continuation of a tradition and the preservation of the heritage of the University.

WTO Training Centre at HKU

HKU has been designated as the official World Trade Organisation (WTO) training centre for the Asia-Pacific Region which would offer the Regional Trade Policy Courses (RTPC) to government officials in the entire Asia-Pacific region in partnership with the WTO.

The designation is the result of a very keen competition between HKU and the National University of Singapore – the other institution on the final shortlist. The Deputy Director-General of the WTO, Dr Kipkorir Aly Azad RANA, in announcing WTO’s decision, commends that both universities “had made excellent offers and are clearly in a position to provide an appropriate framework, both academic and logistical, to ensure the success of such a course”, and that “it was a very close decision to take”.

The final decision to choose HKU as its regional training centre is a recognition of the academic excellence of HKU as a leading tertiary education institution in Asia. This is also the result of the effort of the University to convince the WTO that Hong Kong is the best location for its Asia-Pacific regional training centre, in view of its being a leading international financial centre whose economy is built on the ethos of free and fair trade.

Mr John C. Tsang, Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology, HKSAR, said, “I am most pleased to note that the University of Hong Kong has been designated as the official World Trade Organisation (WTO) training centre for the Asia-Pacific Region. It is a clear recognition of our status as a separate and active member of the WTO and a staunch supporter of the multilateral trading system.”

The bidding proposal was prepared by the Faculty of Law. The programme is multi-disciplinary in nature, and, involves expertise and support from the University’s Institute of China and Global Development, Faculty of Business and Economics, Centre of Asian Studies, Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management, and Faculty of Education, in addition to the Faculty of Law itself.