Filling a Hole in the Market

Wilson Wong 黃棨麟 (BEng 2006; MPhil 2009; PhD 2013)
Kenneth Lai 賴景然 (BSc 2005; MMedSc 2006; MPhil 2010; PhD 2015)
Nicholas Wong 黃仲廉 (PhD 2013)

One might expect biomedical PhD graduates to continue their academic research journey rather than chase money, but for the PhD trio: Wilson, Kenneth and Nicholas, it was a matter of combining the two by establishing the biotech startup Novus Life Sciences, with the hope of accelerating the commercialisation process and bringing cutting-edge technologies to the market for the benefit of orthopaedic patients.

Novus, founded in 2014, focuses on the development of orthobiologics and aims to fill a market gap by providing a highly injectable biomaterial needed for minimally invasive surgical procedures, particularly targeting patients suffering from osteoarthritis.

“Our future product involves a huge amount of investment, and needs to go through clinical trials and be approved by the FDA.”

“The market at the moment only has painkillers and anti-inflammatory medication for osteoarthritis patients. But those options cannot fix broken cartilage, the root of the problem. The only other choice is joint replacement surgery. Yet, who wants to undergo such a risky and painful surgery when 70 years old? What we are doing is making a filler biomaterial with low viscosity so that it can be injected but at the same time, has high density so once it is in the bone it can fill the holes. The cartilage is then no longer under pressure and pain is eased,” said Wilson, CEO of Novus.

The dream is big; the challenges are also big. As a bio-entrepreneur, Wilson found a lack of pharmaceutical business expertise in Hong Kong. “Our future product involves a huge amount of investment, and needs to go through clinical trials and be approved by the FDA (US Food and Drug Administration). It’s also like a racing game, we never know if someone out there is working on the same concept or technology. We have to work fast!” What they can do is to keep reaching out to investors worldwide to get knowledge, a network and venture capital.

But even networking is not easy for a company that is “nobody”. Novus tried hard to get publicity and recognised as much as possible, first by being selected as an incubatee of the Incu-Tech Programme organised by the Hong Kong Science & Technology Park Corporation in 2014, and then by being named as one of the 50 finalists of Global Entrepreneurship
Week (GEW 50) and one of CNBC’s 20 world’s hottest startups, even though their products are not realised yet.

Still, the trio is finding the entrepreneurial ride to be an undulating one. “We feel like surfing – waves there are waiting for us to overcome, if we still survive. We have to be prepared for changes too. Our business plan always changes as we go along and see new opportunities,” said Wilson.

While the clinical trial of their filler biomaterial for osteoarthritis patients is expected to be conducted by early 2017, they had an alternative idea inspired by a venture capital investor – to see whether the filler would work in racehorses, a plan that would be easier and quicker to proceed with, and demand is high.

www.novusls.com

Stories from the Cloud

Callum Porter-Harris (Exchange student, Business and Economics 2012-2013)

If you had US$1 million how would you change the world? Callum and other four Master’s teammates from the Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance may just have the chance to find out if they win the money in seed funding and can realise their social enterprise teleStory.

Callum’s team, representing the Asia-Pacific region, is the first team from the Mainland university to successfully gain a place in the final competition of the HULT Prize, the world’s largest student competition for social causes which was launched in 2009 and partnered by Hult International Business School and the Clinton Global Initiative. Their teleStory aims to solve the problem of illiteracy among parents in poor regions who are unable to read a bedtime story to their children.

“We can get audio storybooks to children aged 0 to 6 of urban slum dwellers.”

With the reusable audio storybook system and a monthly subscription of around US$1.7 charged to each user, the finance graduate believes that the model could be economically sustainable and be able to reach 10 million young children in urban slums by 2020.

www.telestory.in
Approximately 90 personal items are lost on the HKU campus every day. How can those who lost their belongings be connected with the people who found them? This was the problem that the Parrotfish team at Startup Weekend HKU set out to solve.

During a 54-hour period, students and alumni from different local universities came together at HKU to develop ideas that could work as a business. While this particular idea of “Lost and Found” did not win the competition, Aloysius, a research postgraduate in Endocrinology, and Logan, an undergraduate studying Actuarial Science, shared their thoughts on the Startup Weekend HKU.

“Don’t just think we’re going to learn, we need to do something.”

“When we are small, we have dreams. Some of my friends told me during our days at university: ‘I want to cure cancer’, ‘I want to cure AIDS’. As time goes by we understand the complicated scenario of the given problem. Some of us even give up. But that is not the point, right?” said Aloysius.

“The most important thing I learnt at Startup Weekend HKU is that we always have to try. Don’t just have the attitude ‘yeah, I’m just going to go there to learn, I can learn from other people because I’m young’. Young people can do great things. Don’t just think we’re going to learn, we just need to do something, we need to take that step, and with that belief and a can-do spirit, we will do something!” explained Logan.

For the first time, Startup Weekend and AngelHack were held at HKU, bringing together over 300 designers, developers, entrepreneurs and aspiring them to turn their ideas of innovation to reality. During the 54-hour Startup Weekend@HKU (March 13-15), participants began with pitching their startup ideas to validating the market, designing, coding and creating business model. The 24-hour AngelHack@HKU (June 20-21) focused on coding and software development as they see creating rapid prototypes together means turning ideas into reality and making change together.
Passber (Passport for Membership) is a startup founded by Andy and Ivan, who met at HKU while they were studying with the MSc in E-Commerce and Internet Computing programme.

Passber is a specialised platform that focuses on communities’ growth by connecting people and enhancing online-to-offline (O2O) collaboration. Their original idea was to create a system that streamlined the membership management of HKU’s alumni associations and enhanced community engagement. Passber enables higher accessibility to club information and services, and better collaboration with external partners.

“A lot of clubs are managed on a voluntary basis. Our software can provide them with greater efficiencies and effectiveness,” said Ivan.

Andy and Ivan faced many challenges during the early stages of starting the business. One that affected them deeply was an unsuccessful partnership, which caused the project to be delayed.

“We faced the problem of cash flow. Our ex-partner wanted us to shift our priority and focus on developing products for others, rather than our target of HKU alumni. We said no. We believed in our idea and the only thing to do was to go ahead and make our plan work,” said Andy.

“We learnt a hard lesson. We really need to pay close attention to who we work with and avoid losing credit for the work we’ve done,” expressed Ivan.

“We received a lot of support from the alumni and professors of our ‘MEICOM’ community during our most difficult times. We understand the true value of a community is people,” said Andy. “A company is a community that needs people who have the same goals, values and vision in order to grow together. No matter how technologies evolve, people still need to live in a community and the community needs people to build it. That is why we believe in Passber.”

passber.com
Start it up

Bernard, a medical-turned-business graduate, started his flamenco music journey during his time at HKU, although he was questioned many times as to why he should bother with what some people might regard as a less popular music genre. “You have to truly believe in what you love, then just do it. Don’t be too concerned with what others want from you,” said Bernard.

Struggling to juggle his time between being a part-time guitar teacher and a full-time sales and marketing employee, he finally threw caution to the wind and started the Bernard Music Workshop in Causeway Bay in 2012 to provide music lessons. “I came across Steve Jobs’ speech, which was highly publicised after his death, and it struck a chord in my heart. It was so true; don’t waste time on something you don’t love. As I prefer guitar playing to office politics, I followed my heart knowing it will drive me to my destination.”

He first promoted his business by word of mouth, and then via Facebook. “My previous work experience is important to my music startup. It helps me to understand how crucial it is to have a strong market sense and promotional skills. Social media also provides a fairer and easier ground for entrepreneurs – especially someone like me, a one-man band.”

Apart from teaching music, Bernard followed his heart again for his next move. “I’m now a member of the band Opium and have begun performing at various events. I have picked up my old interest and made it income generating!”

www.facebook.com/bernardmusicworkshop

Truly a “One-man Band”

Bernard Yim 嚴信邦 (BEcon&Fin 2003)

“My previous work experience is important to my music startup. It helps me to understand how crucial it is to have a strong market sense and promotional skills.”

Bernard met his wife May Lam 林薇 (MBBS 2003) at a flamenco school party.
《號外》是香港一本傳奇雜誌，在三十多年前由港大校友陳冠中 (BSocSc 1974) 及丘世文 (BA 1974) 等創辦，跟香港大學頗有淵源。黃源順甫畢業，即加入其時由周肅磐Charles Chau (BA 1986)、簡國慧兩位哲學系畢業生主事的《號外》。

黃源順一直堅持在出版業工作至今，他說：「雜誌養育了我並賦予了我人生意義，除外之外，我亦不擅長別的工作。」

黃的願望是一直做雜誌到終老，兩年前覺悟不想過度受商業控制，想到創造一個在自主理想下創作，又能夠存活的雜誌平台。二零一四年三月《MAGAZINE P》創刊，黃說：「五十歲創業，可能順應了古語所云的五十而知天命。我的天命就是雜誌。」

朋友知道黃源順創業，是又喜又驚。喜是香港終於有一本由有識見有態度的文人辦的，不太商業化的生活雜誌，驚是前路太艱難。黃源順溫柔敦厚，得道多助，很多朋友如馮禮慈、張錦滿、簡國慧等願意花心血，為他供稿。

簡國慧跟黃源順共事多年，近年工作空閒，可以重拾筆桿，寫下讀書所思所感，於《MAGAZINE P》做了一個長篇的陳冠中訪問，亦定期爲《信報》的《優雅生活》撰寫專欄。簡說：「很高興黃源順能找到自己的理想，我的理想是在寫作上將近年涉獵的科學及人文宗哲思想結合，嘗試找出其中共通之處。」

黃源順和簡國慧都深信，印刷媒體永遠有生存的空間，有內涵又印刷精美的雜誌所能賦予讀者，那種緩慢深刻而高雅的閱讀體驗，肯定是無可替代的。

簡國慧
Everybody can be a Singer

Stephen Lai 黎子謙 (BEcon&Fin Year 4)
Abby Chan 陳潔瑩 (BEcon 2014)

Almost everybody has experienced karaoke, but fresh graduates Stephen and Abby took it a step further when they created VoiceUp, a mobile sing-along app that allows song lovers to easily produce and publish their own records. This inventive app led to success at the Pitching Contest of iStartup@HK, an initiative of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, which they won.

“We see that more and more teenagers love to share their music and records on the Internet. However, the music producing and uploading processes are clumsy and take forever.” Believing “everybody can be a singer”, Stephen said they used cloud technology and crowdfunding to help those who want to publish their own records. In the long term, they want to acquire singers, songwriters and composers, and establish VoiceUp’s own cloud music studio.

To make it profitable, they established an entertainment online-to-offline (O2O) platform on the Mainland China and in Hong Kong. By connecting the online music scene to offline karaoke lounges, VoiceUp expects to generate cash flow from karaoke establishments by providing in-app room bookings, food and beverage ordering in karaoke rooms, and directory advertising sales.

“The most difficult part is to look for talent to join us... not to mention we have to work 24/7.”

Although things seem to be going smoothly now, Stephen said the startup experience was much harder than he thought. “The most difficult part is to look for talent to join us, especially a technical web developer, not to mention we have to work 24/7,” he explained.

Still, the former Simon K Y Lee Hall debating team member is enjoying his entrepreneurial journey: “The communication skills I learnt as a debater provided me with solid ground for selling my business. Most of all, I feel passionate in what I am doing!”

www.voiceupmusic.com
三嫂和你有個約會
University Hall Reunion of the 80s

“Though iron may rust, stones turn to dust, our bond stays the same...”

During the 80s, most of the U Hall residents were medical students. On April 12, we bet that U Hall was the place that one could find the largest number of “senior doctors” in Hong Kong, perhaps even more than any hospital in town. The brotherhood was best described by what is said in the hall song: “Though some day we'll leave the castle in search of our destiny, and the good times spent together shall become just memories. But while we're here let's keep the fire burning, and kindle it with care, for we all belong to our castle and the same old family!”
Big score at Human Rights Press Awards

Journalism & Media Studies Centre alumni and students won seven awards at the 19th Annual Human Rights Press Awards. Topics covered include the Umbrella Movement, China’s factory girls and housewives, homosexuals, church demolitions in Zhejiang, Voices from Tiananmen, and a documentary about Edward Snowden.

The Annual Human Rights Press Awards are organised by the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents’ Club, Amnesty International Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Journalists Association to recognise outstanding reporting in the area of human rights.

www.jmsc.hku.hk/category/jmscnews/

Joyce Xu 許樂怡 (BJ 2014)

Unparalleled experience at the United Nations

“My one-year internship at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in China can be summarised as a once-in-a-lifetime fruitful experience filled with an abundance of memories. From poverty reduction to climate change mitigation to south-south and global co-operation, working with the UNDP communications team undoubtedly broadened my knowledge on an array of global development issues and the complexities within the UN system.

I successfully used my journalistic background to engage in various tasks, learning how to create compelling content and prompt social activism through different kinds of social media platforms and advocacy campaigns. Most importantly, I built close-knit friendships with my wonderful and devoted colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Their commitment to making the world a better place truly brought a lot of inspiration to my life and motivated me to perceive things from different perspectives.”
Laurence Hou 侯勵存 (MBBS 1956)

Senior Morrisonian Dr Hou, nicknamed King Monkey, celebrated his 85th birthday with members of the HKU Morrison Hall Alumni Association, family and friends in March. An HKU mentor since 1998, he received warm wishes from mentees, Morrisonians, HKU Foundation Chairman Professor Rosie Young 楊紫芝, former Vice-Chancellors Professor Y C Cheng 鄭耀宗 (Morrisonian) and Professor Lap-Chee Tsui 徐立之, President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Mathieson and his wife Dr Christina Mathieson, and members of HKU at the King Monkey birthday party.

Miriam Lau 劉亮之 (BA 2005; MPhil 2010)

2004年李韶社會經濟考察計劃參與者於李府相聚, 閒話今天, 回味當年。
On March 8, 2015, Dr Tan was honoured by the Guangdong Provincial Government as one of the 100 outstanding Women of the Year, which is a provincial-level award that carries the special title “March 8 Red Flag Bearer 廣東省「三八紅旗手」榮譽”. She was also selected as one of the Ten Outstanding Youth Persons in Jiangmen City in 2008.

Currently an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Architecture at Wuyi University, Jiangmen City, Dr Tan is an expert in architectural conservation, particularly in Kaiping Diaolou 開平碉樓. She was also the Director of the Kaiping Diaolou Research Department of Kaiping City, Guangdong, and played a significant part in Diaolou’s application to the World Heritage list.

Jacqueline Leung 梁婉揚 (BA Year 3)

Jacqueline was awarded the Best Fellow of the “Cultural Journalism Campus (CJC) Fellowship” – initiated by a cultural journalist in collaboration with Goethe-Institut Hong Kong.

“There are not many opportunities to cover stories on art and culture in Hong Kong, so I am very happy to join the CJC as a fellow. With press access to multiple art events in March, I was able to meet distinguished artists, film directors and curators in person, and cover their experiences or their works as a journalist.

Although Art Basel Hong Kong was the largest event to cover during the CJC, the best part of the programme lies in the close mentorship it offers for fellows and organisers, particularly with founding director Vivienne Chow 周敏芝 (MA 2012). Fellows are given a lot of freedom as to what stories they would like to cover and the perspective from which they choose to approach different issues, so the emphasis is on the fellows’ development more than anything else.

I had the pleasure of receiving sponsorship from the programme to attend either the Berlin Art Week or the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art 2016. I am just bubbling with excitement to experience Berlin, an international art hub, and to see how it differs from Hong Kong, which is still growing to accommodate its artistic potential.”

Barrie Ho 何周禮 (BA(ArchStud) 1993; MArch 1996)

The architecture firm founded and managed by Barrie won six Awards at the Hong Kong Institute of Architects Cross-Straits Architectural Design Awards 2015: five Nominated Awards – Architecture for Social Innovation; and one Nominated Award – Unbuilt Projects, Architectural Design Scheme Category. Barrie’s winning projects include the transformation of a car park in Shek Pai Wan into a Creative Media Centre for Youth for the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups Jockey Club M21, and adapting the space under the flyover at Moreton Terrace, Causeway Bay, into the new home of the Wan Chai Sports Federation.
Jackie Chu 朱晋德 (BSc 2010)

In 2014, Jackie established ProjecTerrae, a Hong Kong-based non-profit organization that aims to promote the preservation and sustainability of natural resources.

As an exploration geologist, he found that there was inadequate information about the local mining industry and the origin of materials in Hong Kong. In the eyes of most people, Hong Kong is a metropolis without any natural resources. This motivated him to start compiling data about local mining and to publish the book “Hong Kong Mining History” to reveal how this now-diminished industry once thrived in Hong Kong.

“This city is consuming vast amount of resources every day and it is everyone’s duty to care about the origins of every resource. Seminars, tours and exhibitions had been held around Hong Kong to spread the importance of the sustainability of earth resources. I found a great sense of mission and hope in bringing a more sustainable living practice to our society,” said Jackie.

www.facebook.com/erc.com.hk

Bo-erik Abrahamsson
(Exchange student, Business and Economics 2010-2011)

“I was lucky enough to spend a full academic year at HKU on a scholarship from King’s College London. During that year, I learned more than I did in any other year of my life. Apart from learning Chinese at HSK Level 4, my year at HKU gave me lifelong friends and contacts in the Hong Kong business environment. I went on outreach tours with the Business and Economics Association to Beijing, as well as trips to Cambodia, Thailand and other countries in South East Asia. Altogether, the time I spent at HKU laid the foundation for my career and inspired me to start Chinofy, a translation and publishing startup.

In my current job at Procter & Gamble and as a Global Shaper (an initiative of the World Economic Forum), I often meet and interact with other HKU alumni who share the same memories and experiences. I am eternally grateful for being part of this community.”

Jessica Lau 劉凱晴 (BSocSc 2012)

“Is there something that you have always wanted to do, or thought that you should do but you just never do it?” It was this question that prompted Jessica to start the community project “DODAY” for those who want to “do it today”. A wristband will be given with a donation of HK$10 to remind the doer to do the thing within a month that they have been putting off doing. All money received from the sales in 2015, after deducting costs, will be donated to Playright Children’s Play Association. “Life is too short to wait – Today is the Doday!”

www.facebook.com/dodayhk

Tony and his friends Curry Tse 謝正勤 (BA(ArchStud) 1996; MArch 1999; MSc(Conservation) 2006), Law Chung-ho 羅仲豪 (BA 2006), Siu Chung-kong 蕭仲剛 (BSc 2006) and Aya Kwan 關詩敏 (BSc Year 3) worked together on a book《2042西區啟示錄》.

Tony (4th left) and his Riccian friends at the same spot of Ricci Hall after 10 years

“My time at HKU was the craziest time of my life, particularly the three years in Ricci Hall. We chased our dreams together on the sports ground and did a lot of outrageously silly but fun things. Things we would never do again after graduation. I believed this would resonate with many HKU graduates and that’s why I included our university lives into the futuristic science fiction《2042西區啟示錄》. This fiction aims to document the local culture of Western District, a place filled with my footprints. The district has been changing abruptly however, especially with the opening of the MTR West Island Line. I hope this book can offer some traces of our university days and how Western District was once a community where local stores, traditional eateries and a sense of neighbourhood were abundant.”

Jacqueline Cheung 張映儀 (BA 2005)

“I am presently a Marketing Consultant based in Dublin, Ireland, and also a blogger writing about interesting Irish things. Ireland is a very dynamic country well known for its music, pubs, seafood and weather. It is always rainy and cloudy, yet the people around are all very friendly. The best time to visit Ireland is from June to September.

I just formed an alumni network in Ireland, and hope to connect the HKU family here. Just drop me a line if you are currently residing in Ireland or just passing through. If you plan to visit Ireland, I can definitely give you some travel tips!”

Instagram / Twitter: @hkuirelandalumn
**Class of 2015**  **We are graduating!**

- **Carol Chan**  
  Sunny Ma 馬鴻輝  
  (BEng 2003; MSc(Eng) 2011)  
  and their son Lucas

- **Kelly Tam** 譚嘉麗  
  (BNurs 2007; MPH 2012)  
  Alex Chan  陳健豪  
  (BA 2005; MA 2013)  
  and their son Raphael

- **Janice Chong** 莊詠怡  
  (MStat 2007)  
  John Sze 施會豐  
  (BEng 2004; MPhil 2006; MStat 2009)  
  and their new family member Jadie and elder daughter Jacey

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**Welcome! New family members...**

**Carol Chan**  
Sunny Ma 馬鴻輝  
(BEng 2003; MSc(Eng) 2011)  
and their son Lucas

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(BEng 2004; MPhil 2006; MStat 2009)  
and their new family member Jadie and elder daughter Jacey
A New Page in Life

Grace Yew 姚穎恩 (BEcon&Fin 2007; MSW 2010)
Derek Cheung 張懿德 (BSocSc 2005; MPhil 2008)

Zoe Hon 韓雪 (BNurs 2008; MNurs 2013)
Patrick Leung 梁兆琮 (MBBS 2008)

Wong Ho-yin 黃浩然 (BSc 2001)
Silvia Theresa Tong 唐麗雅 (BNurs 2003; MSocSc 2007)

Peggy Pang
Timothy Hassan 許嘉俊 (BSc 2008)

Vivian Wong 黃子恩 (BBA(Acc&Fin) 2008)
Victor Wu 胡卓恆 (BBA(Acc&Fin) 2008)