



# THE PEARL TO GOLD QUARTERLY

Newsletter of HKUAA-Northern California Chapter

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## Third Issue 2021

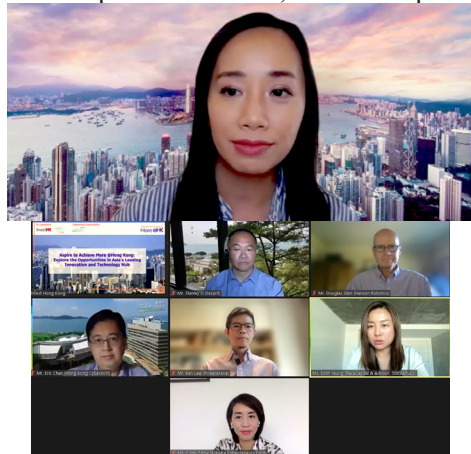
### World Ranking of HKU



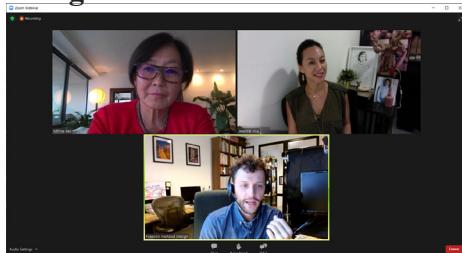
According to the latest ranking of the world universities by QS, the University of Hong Kong remains the best in Hong Kong and #22 in the world. The top three world universities are MIT, Stanford and Harvard. The leading institutions in Asia are Singapore #11, Nanyang Technical #12 and Tsinghua #17.

### HK Technology Webinar

In September, our alumni were invited by HKETO to join a webinar on Hong Kong Innovation and Technology business opportunities. The webinar would introduce start-ups and talent who are looking for expansion in Hong Kong get a feel about what Hong Kong has to offer. It showed opportunities, funding, founders, markets & growth potentials in the Greater Bay Area of China. Speakers included Jacko Tsang, Director, HKETO (SF), Stephen Phillips, Director-General of Invest Hong Kong and Eric Chan, Chief Public Mission Officer, H. K. Cyberport. The moderator was Edith Yeung, General Partner, RaceCapital & Advisor, 500 Startups.



### Designers at the Forefront



In October, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco hosted a webinar featuring two Hong Kong-based designers who are at the forefront of Hong Kong's sustainable design movement. Our alumni were also invited to participate. The designers were Jeanine Hsu and Francois Hurtaud. They discussed how they integrated earth-first practices into all aspects of their design-manufacturing business and how other designers can minimize their impact on the environment without compromising their style. The audience had a glimpse of their inspiring and beautiful creations, from various jewelry lines to eco-friendly toothbrush. They also shared their take on the advantages of setting up in Hong Kong.

### Pillar of Shame at HKU



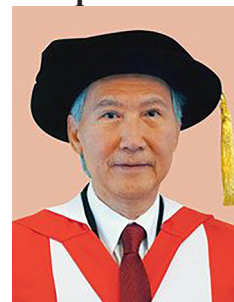
The eight-meter-high Pillar of Shame by Jens Galschiøt was first erected at the University of Hong Kong in 1997. According to the sculptor, it was on permanent loan to the group that organized the annual candlelight vigil commemorating the pro-democracy activists killed by the military in Beijing on June 4, 1989. There was debate about whether such monument should be removed but so far no plan has been announced.

### Summer Board Meeting



Due to the pandemic, our board was not able to hold a face-to-face meeting in summer. In August, a Zoom meeting was held. Several items were discussed including an outdoor gathering in autumn and an in-person banquet in Winter if the pandemic is under control by that time. Two guest speakers for the banquet were suggested. The first one was Professor Chenming Hu who is the TSMC Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the electronic engineering and computer science department of the University of California, Berkeley. The second speaker suggested was Lily Mei, the current mayor of the City of Fremont which is the fourth largest city in the Bay Area. She is the first female Chinese American mayor in Fremont and will run for state senator in 2022.

### Winter Banquet



Our Winter Banquet will be a hybrid event. We will meet at the Pacific Lighthouse Restaurant in Alameda for a banquet styled dinner on December 11, 2021. After the banquet, we will hold a fireside chat with our honored guest, Professor Chenming Hu, Professor Emeritus in electronic engineering and computer science at University of California in Berkeley. He recently received an honorary D. Sc. from the University of Hong Kong. Mrs. Margaret Hu is a HKU alumna.

## Success story of alumna C. Wong



Below is the success story of one of our alumni, Charissa Wong Man Yee, written by Charissa herself as a well trained journalist:

“My path isn’t conventional. I romanticize it as being very Renaissance; but in real terms, it’s a chaotic adventure. I have my career dots all over the place, from writing, painting, photography, architecture, journalism, medicine, public health, to biotechnology. The motivation to jump from one dot to another is often out of the thirst for knowledge, curiosity, or practical needs.

My passion for water-colored painting and photography opened the door to my first bachelor’s degree at the University of Hong Kong: Architecture. My love for writing and my yearn for European architectural simplicity, elegance, and functionality brought me to the world of writing, from reporting about architecture for a design magazine “Hinge” to various beats at the Associated Press (AP).

While I was a student studying for a two-year part-time Master of Journalism program at the University of Hong Kong, I started working for AP as a full-time reporter. I wrote about the daily Asian stock market, Macau’s Formula 3 Grand Prix, and all kinds of traditional festivals and wildlife in Hong Kong and nearby countries. I interviewed Bill Clinton, Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir Mohamad, Steve Wynn, Li Ka-shing, Tom Cruise, John Travolta, Ricky Martin, Luciano Pavarotti, Serena Williams, Hong Kong actor and singer Andy Lau, Chinese novelist Jin Yong, and Taiwanese sculptor Ju Ming. I thought I could write anything under the sun, until one day I was stopped by the term “mutation.”

The scientists and medical doctors at the University of Hong Kong’s Microbiology Department were suspecting a mutation in a coronavirus called SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV), which caused a respiratory illness, Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), in 2003-2004.

My news editor asked me to translate “mutation” into layman’s terms. With only high-school knowledge of biology, I hesitated. I felt inadequate. I then transformed myself from an AP reporter into a medical doctor,

through the study of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) at the University of Hong Kong and Master of Public Health in Epidemiology at Harvard University, as well as my post-MBBS training in pathology, microbiology, oncology, orthopaedics, general surgery, internal and family medicine. I hope to turn inadequacy into fluency, bridging the gap between the professionals and the general public.

Then I got the U.S. green card by lottery (Diversity Visa Program) in 2011, the year when my daughter was born.

Conventionally, I sat and passed all three steps of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), ready for medical residency training.

Unconventionally, I chose to venture into biotechnology and became a technical writer for GRAIL, which develops Galleri, a multi-cancer early detection test that can detect more than 50 types of cancer through a simple blood draw.

During my job interview at GRAIL four years ago, an engineering director asked me, “Do you really like writing?” My answer: Of course, I do! I love writing!! (since I was a child). Then a technical operations director asked me, “What’s a batch record?” My answer: Sorry, I don’t know. Then the interviewer kindly explained the definition of a batch record during the interview. Next, I learned all the tips and tricks of technical writing from scratch from my supervisor, one of the two best bosses I have ever worked for in my meandering career path.

Over the past 4 years, I have been working side-by-side with team members from R&D, analytical validation, project and product management, manufacturing, process engineering, equipment, clinical lab, bioinformatics, clinical development, quality, and regulatory to get the protocols, SOPs, reports, and various FDA and EU submission documents done before deadlines. I have also added the Project Management Professional (PMP) and Regulatory Affairs Certification (RAC) badges to my toolbox.

10/29/21 was my last day at GRAIL. I am grateful for what I have learned and feel proud of what I have contributed at GRAIL. I see GRAIL as my alma mater and all the colleagues that I have worked with as my friends and mentors.

I am also grateful for all the great job opportunities that I have been offered in recent months, from regulatory affairs, clinical trial development, medical affairs, medical writing, to clinical applications. Through the numerous rounds of interviews, I have

learned a lot from all the interviewers.

I have picked the one that I love most, as a Staff Scientist in Clinical Applications and Marketing Support within the Genetic Sciences Division of Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. The new role, which requires bridging the gap between the knowns and the unknowns, connects the dots that I have come across so far, from journalism, medicine, public health, to biotechnology research and technical writing.

As Steve Jobs put it beautifully in the 2005 Stanford Commencement Address, “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.”

Amid the chaos of my career adventure, trust is my guiding light. It’s not just the trust from within, more importantly, it’s the trust my parents, teachers, mentors, work supervisors, my family, and my friends have had on me throughout the years. Thank you for trusting me! Thank you for giving me all the great opportunities! Thank you for teaching me! Without being surrounded by all the great people, I wouldn’t have had the ability to connect the dots, or in scientific terms, “become mutated”.”

## Alumnus Thomas Fung



Many of us had met Dr. Thomas Fung in our organization’s as well as Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office’s events in the past. He was an alumnus of both the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He was a past president of the CUHK Alumni Association and one of the founders of the Chinese American Physicians’ Society. We learned from his wife alumna Stephanie Fung that he had left us for a better world recently. May his soul Rest in Peace!

**Happy and Safe Holidays!**

