Focus

Professor Chang maps out plans for the Year of the Dog
—Focusing on development and consolidation

Professor H K Chang, President, returned in early January to CityU after a trip to Cairo, where he had been doing research on a new general education course, and began mapping out and pushing forward plans for the University’s upcoming challenges. Professor Chang talks to Linkage about the main thrust of his work for next year and takes this opportunity to wish all staff, students and alumni a happy, healthy and prosperous Year of the Dog.

Linkage: In the next 12 to 16 months, what will be your main areas of focus?

President: I hope to focus on two main areas: academic planning and campus development to cater for the conversion from a three- to four-year undergraduate academic structure, and consolidation of our achievements.

In order to prepare for the four-year structure, CityU needs to plan for campus and curriculum development. We also need to communicate to the University Grants Committee (UGC) the innovative approaches of the University. The implementation of a four-year curriculum does not mean simply adding a year on top of the three-year structure. It is, indeed, an opportunity for us to explore innovatively how we should design our curriculum, teaching methods and evaluation of learning outcomes to better align academic outcomes with the needs of the community, as well as to integrate professional and general knowledge in a globalized world and a knowledge-based economy. This is an important task because we have been given a time frame by the UGC. It is not because I am going to retire that I need to prioritize the tasks. Whoever stands in my place will also take this to heart.

My second priority is consolidating our achievements. We assumed university status in 1995 and have secured marvelous achievements and experienced significant growth. However, we have to admit that nothing is perfect. In the process of rapid development and growth, there are always areas that we overlooked and areas where inadequate coordination and integration occurred. In the coming 12 to 16 months, I will continue to do my best to consolidate our achievements and identify the best ways to fill the gaps. This will help my successor focus wholeheartedly on leading CityU to scale new heights.

Linkage: So, what are the gaps that you think we need to fill?

President: I’ll colligate the views of the Management Board and, if necessary, I may consult colleagues who are often better placed than me for suggestion of areas that need to be consolidated.

In fact, last November I met with groups of staff from different offices to discuss the key tasks for, and issues of, the University. I then appointed six task groups in December to look into specific areas of work of the University over the next five years, including the four-year undergraduate degree structure, self-financing programmes, space use and planning, research enhancement, staff recruitment and retention, and student performance and conduct. The task groups will submit their reports on the 31 March after which the University will formulate and decide on the appropriate policies or strategies.

Linkage: What about further plans for internationalization and mainland activities?

President: Well, when it comes to internationalization and mainland activities, it takes time to see the results. It will certainly take more than a year, and even ten years or so to do the job right; and it may not be enough to yield good results.

Internationalization and mainland activities are important to CityU and to Hong Kong. Whether Hong Kong can maintain its position in China and the world, its value and prosperity depends on the success in internationalization and mainland expansion.

We are fortunate that the current and previous University Councils recognize the importance of international exchanges for CityU and Hong Kong. The Council supported my application for brief periods of special sabbatical leave to conduct international exchanges on behalf of CityU and Hong Kong. In recent months,
Professor Y S Wong’s unflagging interest

Professor Y S Wong, Vice-President (Administration), has been invited by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) to take up the appointment of Vice-President for Administration and Business. Many CityU colleagues are saddened to hear that Professor Wong, a hardworking member of the University’s senior management for many years, will be leaving.

“My life has been closely bound to CityU for eight years,” Professor Wong says. “During these eight years, CityU has made great leaps, contributing to the entire society. I was fortunate enough to join this voyage of exploration and I have been privileged to leave the society and understanding of my CityU colleagues throughout my time here.”

Professor Wong joined CityU in February 1998 as Vice-President (Institutional Advancement), charged with promoting the image of the University.

“The public perception at that time was that CityU was still a polytechnic,” he says. “In particular, our connections with international academic institutions were few and far between, so the main thrust of my work was to connect the outside world with CityU and help others see our real strengths.”

CityU senior management restructured five years later. Professor Wong became Vice-President (Administration), responsible for the entire administration network. He admits he was not experienced in this area, but he tried his best and learnt a great deal from his colleagues. Under his leadership, the University’s administration has been smooth. He is most pleased to see that, thanks to the concerted efforts of all staff members, CityU has

overcome the tremendous challenges created by the UGC budget cut two years ago and that now the University enjoys a sound financial situation. The lesson Professor Wong has learnt is that of the significance of the role administration plays in a large university organization.

“No university can achieve excellence simply through outstanding administration, but a university needs excellent administrative support to become distinguished. As the Chinese proverb goes, “Despite all its beauty, the peony needs the green of its leaves to set off.”” Professor Wong says.

He says that during his eight years of office he has come to realize that people are the University’s most valuable assets. The question is how to motivate people to do the work well, a job that requires leaders to pay close attention to colleagues around campus.

“Communication at all levels is of the utmost importance. If an institution maintains strong levels of communication throughout its structure, problems and friction can be reduced and colleagues can cooperate closely and work together better, just as a person who takes regular exercise is more likely to reduce his or her chances of getting sick,” he says.

It is comforting to look back at CityU’s remarkable successes since it was founded, but Professor Wong says CityU must prepare fully for the formidable challenges that lie ahead. He says this transition from a three-year to a four-year degree system will be a tremendous challenge to CityU. It can also be an enormous opportunity.

“We must do our utmost to design the best and most suitable programmes for Hong Kong and for CityU’s areas of expertise. We will then be in a stronger position to receive a larger government-funded student quota from the University Grants Committee. An increase in student numbers means an increase in available resources, and with more resources we can do better,” he says.

Some news reports suggest Professor Wong is leaving CityU with flagging interest and damped enthusiasm. This is not the case; and only those who do not know him would make such groundless comments, he says.

“I am a very positive person. My character will never leave me with flagging interest! Whether I am working at CityU or HKUST, or any other university in Hong Kong, I always serve higher education in Hong Kong and China.”

By Shuyee Chen

Issue 245 - 2006

People
藝術

Spotlight

【藝術】

為大學增添色彩

CityU Gallery adds colour to campus

城市大學美術館策展人楊允慈小姐表示，城大美術館近年來不斷為大學增添色彩，而城大美術館亦成為城大学生及社區的熱門景點。

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Culture

Over the course of their culture, the students and faculty at CityU have been hosting a variety of events to enrich their campus life. They have organized activities to promote cultural awareness and understanding among the students. The events include performances, lectures, workshops, and discussions that cater to different cultural backgrounds and interests. The purpose of these activities is to create a diverse and inclusive environment that fosters learning and appreciation of different cultures.

CityU Philharmonic Orchestra

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) has established its Philharmonic Orchestra in 2006. The orchestra is composed of talented musicians who are passionate about classical music and have a strong dedication to performing at a high level. The orchestra has been performing at various venues around the city, including the Hong Kong City Hall and other cultural institutions. The orchestra aims to promote classical music and increase its accessibility to the community. They have collaborated with other cultural organizations to organize concerts and performances. The orchestra is open to anyone interested in learning and performing classical music.

Mr. Eric Tam, a research assistant in the Department of Manufacturing Engineering and Management, was one of the first to join the orchestra five years ago. He said, "Every time we perform, whether on or outside campus, we have a sense of representing and promoting the University. This is a very significant endeavor, one that is very different to joining other student organizations," he said.

There are many music lovers at CityU. Many sing with the Staff Association Singing Group, which meets every Tuesday. Ms Wan-kam Yu, Acting Head of the Enterprise Solutions Unit, is one of the core members. "I was very excited and impressed by the performance of the CityU Orchestra at this year’s annual concert," she said. "I noticed the orchestra was playing very beautifully and with great dedication. It was a wonderful experience and I learnt a lot about the orchestra. The Singing Group invites all staff members interested in music to join up any time.

Dr. Christopher Cheng, a lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies, decided to join the Singing Group after catching an impressive lunchtime performance. "I enjoy relaxing and singing with colleagues from different departments after a busy day at the office. We are like a big family and it's great to help the cultural advancement of campus through music," he said.

By Grace Ho

### Newsletters

- **Spotlight**

### Culture

- **City University of Hong Kong**

#### Events

- **CityU Philharmonic Orchestra**

#### Members

- **Mr. Eric Tam**
- **Ms Wan-kam Yu**
- **Dr. Christopher Cheng**

#### Collaborations

- **Staff Association Singing Group**

### Advantages

- **Cultural development**
- **Community engagement**

### Conclusion

CityU Philharmonic Orchestra and the Singing Group have contributed significantly to the cultural and social life of the campus. Their performances and collaborations with other organizations have enhanced the cultural richness and diversity of the campus. The orchestra and the Singing Group provide opportunities for students and staff to learn and appreciate classical music and participate in cultural activities. Through their dedication and passion, they have helped to build a vibrant and inclusive campus community.