What is DUE up to?

Two forums were held in March to brief staff and students on the proposed curriculum structure for the new four-year normative degree programme, which is to be introduced in 2012-2013. The organizer was the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Education (DUE), headed by Professor Richard Ho, Dean of Undergraduate Education.

"The Office's main job is to fulfill our role in education in Hong Kong," says Professor Ho. He took the role of DUE in April 2005 and is responsible for the academic planning, policy and quality assurance portfolios.

"We have set ourselves a clear mission, to ensure our programmes are internationally competitive and our teaching and learning are professional and application-oriented within a whole-person development environment," Professor Ho explains.

Through this mission, CityU can produce "ideal" graduates. "Three graduates should be competent professionals, critical thinkers, able to work in an international and culturally diverse workplace, lifelong learners, and appreciative of the arts and sciences," says Professor Ho, a passionate educator who teaches EMBA courses in addition to his DUE duties.

Professor Ho is supported by a team of dedicated education experts working on the Office’s major projects. Ms Enniece Chik is the senior coordinator for the new four-year degree programme and works closely with faculties and senior management to ensure the University is prepared for full implementation in 2012-2013.

Ms Chik is secretary to the Academic Policy Committee, a sub-committee of Senate, and is responsible for helping to prepare the University’s Academic Development Proposal (ADP). "The ADP sets out the programmes and academic development for the future. All universities in Hong Kong submit their ADP to the University Grants Committee every three years in order to secure funding," says Ms Chik.

DUE also runs the Outcome Based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) project, a University-wide initiative. "OBTL is the nourishment that allows our ideal graduates to blossom and mature," Professor Ho says. Mr Aman Shah, the DUE coordinator for quality assurance throughout the University and secretary to the Quality Assurance Committee, coordinates OBTL, a project he believes will strengthen the University.

"OBTL focuses on student-centred learning, which is a shift from the traditional focus of teacher-centred education," he says.

Another area of focus is institutional research and administering quality assurance studies. Ms Tracy Lo, an education development officer in DUE, is responsible for areas such as teacher and course evaluations and the new student intake survey, which collects data on demographics and student study skills, plus the student experience survey. She contributes to the OBTL project and runs course evaluations for the English Language Centre (ELC) and postgraduate programmes for the Faculty of Business.

Promoting the image of the University to help recruit quality students is one of the Office’s key areas. "Our overall aim is to attract good students and demonstrate that we are a university for professionals," says Ms Geraldine Max, the Administrative Officer in DUE, charged with coordinating promotion campaigns and making sure secondary schools hear about CityU’s achievements and overall strengths. Ms Max plays a key role organizing outreach and community-oriented activities such as the annual Teachers Update Course.

On top of all this, DUE is responsible for overseeing the Academic Regulations and Records Office, Admissions Office, Chinese Civilisation Centre, ELC and the Division of Building Science and Technology.

So, in less than a year, DUE has taken on a challenging and wide-ranging brief, setting clear targets to help the University fulfill its mission and making an impact on the University’s future development and direction.

By Michael Gibb
"To paint with love" helps students draw a beautiful picture life

An artist wants to paint a picture, what does she or he need? A paintbrush, some colours and a little inspiration are a start. But how can that artist create a truly touching picture, one that can evoke deeper feelings?

"An artist who really cares about other people and manages to use colour, shade, light and composition to express that level of concern can create paintings that produce a more profound response in the eye of the beholder," says Dr Ming Cheung, an assistant professor in the Department of English (Communication) (EN).

Dr Cheung’s father, an amateur oil painter, taught her how to use oil when she was only four years old. She used to watch how her father sketched the outline of his pictures and then layered the canvases with oil mixed in his palette to create a strong visual impact and express different emotions. Her father’s tutelage proved effective: in 2004, the logo Dr Cheung designed was officially selected as CityU’s 20th anniversary logo.

"My father’s skills as a painter had a very positive impact on me as I grew up and this has guided my career," she says. "I’ve seen how integrating art into my everyday life can cultivate artistic talents, and this has given me great insight into teaching. If we are to develop artistic sensibility and creativity among our students, we should encourage them to visit galleries and art museums, to travel around and observe, and to read books about art."

Before joining CityU, Dr Cheung worked for the government as a Project Manager and then entered the world of advertising as a Principal Consultant. After finishing her Bachelor of Education in English and Music at the University of London, she studied for a Postgraduate Diploma in Translation, a Master of Arts in Language Studies, a Master of Science in Information and Technology Management, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics. This diverse background has given her broad knowledge and working experience. "I really enjoy learning. It can complement and supplement my job," Dr Cheung says.

CITYU biologists captured the hearts and minds of the public when their efforts to save the endangered horsehoe crab hit the headlines earlier this month. Dr Cheung Biao-kin, and his research partner, Dr Paul Shih, both of CityU’s Department of Biology and Chemistry, have been researching ways to help the horseshoe crab breed using new technologies as well as seek effective ways of protecting its natural habitat. "Horseshoe crabs have existed as they are today for about 300 million years," Dr Cheung said. "They are a kind of living fossil, which makes helping them save even more important." The research project has been funded by the Government’s Environment and Conservation Fund since 2004.

By Shyuee Chan

Family fun in badminton tournament

Mr Sunny K Chau, Physical Education Officer with Student Development Services (SDS), is helping once more to organize the annual CityU Badminton Tournament. He places great emphasis on the family fun aspect of the event. "The tournament is a great opportunity for families and the University community to feel the excitement of a sports competition," he says. He regularly takes part in the family matches with his wife and daughter, and this year his son may also take part. A successful coach, Mr Chau has led the CityU Badminton team to a record 11 championships in competitions organized by the Hong Kong Post-Secondary Colleges Athletic Association.

By Annie Sung
服務

服務

解決我們電腦問題的幕後英雄，謝謝您們！

The unsung heroes of the CCC Help Desk

CityU is a large theatre of operations with more than 2,600 players. So it is inevitable that numerous unsung and unseen actors are found working hard behind the scenes. Four colleagues at the Help Desk of the Computing Services Centre (CSC) play such a role, audible but invisible to most of us.

Tucked away in a tiny room on the second floor of the Academic Building, Mr KY Lam, an assistant computer officer and one of the longest serving members of staff at CityU, leads the team. He was assigned to work on the Help Desk when it was set up in October 1997 to aid staff experiencing trouble with their computers.

The tightly-knit team works closely together, a vital part of the job. "The problems we have to deal with everyday are extensive, intricate and require instant solutions, so it's not possible to do the job well without the close cooperation of the team and the support of other CSC staff," Mr Lam says.

Technicians Kenward Chan, Eddie Lam and Tony Tong, the three other members of the staff, have an average of about 100 calls per day. Because of demand, they have extended their hours during school days to 8:40pm on weekdays and 4:40pm on Saturdays. The long hours put a strain on the vocal cords because of all the speaking. Everyone consumes two to three bottles of water a day, sometimes laced with honey to relieve sore throats.

As well physically demanding, working on the Help Desk requires mental agility, and extremely fast problem-solving and crisis management skills. Team members have to be level-headed, patient and capable of providing the best possible advice in the shortest possible time. "We have to be very focused and come up with solutions immediately," Mr Lam explains.

In these earlier years, CityU staff were less experienced at handling their PCs if anything went wrong. This meant the Help Desk team had to assume a greater share of responsibility, not only by solving problems, but also teaching colleagues basic PC knowledge. "Through our detailed explanations, colleagues could pick up some basic knowledge of their PCs and enhance their work efficiency," Mr Chan remarks. After working at the Help Desk for more than eight years, Mr Chan finds that the nature of the job has helped him gain a great deal of interpersonal skills, which he did not expect at the beginning.

In more recent years, the IT facilities at the University and IT proficiency of staff have improved greatly, which in turn has inspired the team to achieve more. "We’ve been motivated to upgrade our own skills because of the rapid progress in computer technology and the diversified problems we have to deal with on a daily basis, which in turn gives us a great sense of satisfaction," Mr Eddie Lam says.

The team agrees that the greatest pleasure stems from helping others. “Hearing people say a simple ‘thank you’ is more than enough encouragement and job satisfaction” Mr Tong says.

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對外拓展

Outreach

英國蘇塞克斯大學教授Patrick Dowling教授2月24日在城大主講題為「企業界的科學探究」。他講述了自己在企業界研究中所扮演的角色，並邀請學生及教師參與企業界的科學探究。

講座

Lectures

CityU has launched its latest mainland recruitment campaign in mid-February. This follows last year’s successful recruiting quality mainland students with the new recruitment campaign.

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文化

追求健康身心 从今天开始

A healthy body and a healthy mind

The Quali-walk, a quality life that stresses walking as a highly effective mode of aerobic exercise, encourages colleagues and students to develop walking as an everyday habit and take daily physical exercise to balance body and soul. This year 100 participants joined the Quali-walk from the University Circle to the student halls of residence as part of the opening event.

“We have had different themes throughout the years but the ultimate objective is to encourage participants to reflect on how to lead a meaningful life,” explains Mr Roy Ngai, a senior physical education officer with Student Development Services and convener of the Wellness March.

Mr Leung Ka-kin, a research assistant in the Department of Biology and Chemistry, is a keen participant in the Wellness March. He helped organize the “Planting seedlings” activity in 2002 when he was a student. “We planted cassis and peepul trees on the hillside trail, and watching the trees grow got me thinking about new ways of looking at life and helping others,” Mr Leung says. “Every year, the statue of Wellness March reminds me of the constant need to create more harmony between work and free time.”

Mr Kingston Sun, Facilities Manager (Estate) of the Facilities Management Office, is a patron of the Wellness March, sees regular jogging as a kind of “chicken soup”. “When I jog alone, I find time to think and reflect, and I often dream up new solutions to old problems,” he says.

Many colleagues take regular physical exercise, while others say there is not enough time. “But time is not an excuse, especially when you know working out makes you healthier and younger,” Mr Sun says.

Health experts concur. Walking ten thousand steps a day is the basic requirement for adults, which will take about one and a half to two hours. So, why hesitate to take a Quali-walk? ■

By Karen Lai

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