Senior management appointments bring fresh outlook

The University has reconfigured the senior management structure. From April 2006, Professor Richard Ho, former Dean of Undergraduate Education, is renamed as Vice-President for Undergraduate Education; Professor Roderick Wong, former Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, is renamed as Vice-President for Research/Dean of Graduate Studies; and Dr Ellen Ko, Director of Human Resources, will concurrently be the Acting Vice-President for Administration, replacing the outgoing Vice-President for Administration, Professor Y S Wong.

The appointments reflect the growing importance and complexity of the responsibilities of both the Dean of Undergraduate Education and Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, says Professor II K Chang, CityU President. “I believe this new arrangement will clarify the management framework and better position CityU to meet future challenges,” he says.

CityU’s professional education and applied research

Professor Ho says he is very pleased with the new appointment because it enables him to contribute further to CityU and higher education in Hong Kong. His future plans include strengthening the competitiveness of local students at CityU; strengthening the recruitment of mainland students to CityU; and strengthening CityU’s internationalization programme.

The top priority now is to liaison with all faculties, schools and departments to design a diversified academic curriculum for the new four-year undergraduate system. “The future world doesn’t allow a curriculum to be designed in isolation. It must be designed in cooperation with others. Our future world will be one of great diversity, so our graduates need to have a wide range of knowledge to cope with the challenges,” he says.

Professor Roderick Wong, who has led the University to make many important contributions to society through innovative applied research, also welcomes the latest move. “The new arrangement reflects the great emphasis CityU places on professional education and applied research,” he says.

Professor Wong says he will spend his time helping to recruit outstanding researchers in science and technology and strengthening CityU’s research culture, and he will try to provide promising researchers and research projects greater room for development. He says he will also strengthen the University’s links with business and industry by transferring CityU’s research to society.

However, applied research cannot be hurried. “We must first identify promising colleagues and then give them proper encouragement and incentives,” Professor Wong says.

Enhancing co-operation and synergy

Dr Ko has been working at CityU for 20 years and has served on various administrative departments, schools and faculties. After assuming the post of Acting Vice-President (Administration), she will oversee four administrative departments of the University: Campus Planning Office, Facilities Management Office, Finance Office, and Human Resources Office.

Dr Ko says her objective is to enhance cooperation and synergy between the four offices and improve the overall efficiency of the University’s administrative work. There is always room for improvement, but I will not undertake any reform simply for the sake of it. I will build on the foundation of a very good system,” she says.

Dr Ko also hopes to enhance communication between administrative and academic departments, to encourage colleagues to work as a team and with increased efficiency.

Professor Chang says the new line up ensures colleagues can work in a stable, forward-thinking environment. “This arrangement helps the University maintain steady progress on projects such as ‘3+4+3’ reform, promotion of applied research, development of self-financed programmes and furthering internationalization,” he says.

By Shuey Chen

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**Bird watching helps environmental protection**

Dr Cheng says bird watching requires commitment. He describes how much he enjoys bird watching and recommends it for those who are looking for a new hobby and for those who are already interested in nature.

**Key to bird watching**

Dr Cheng keeps a systematic record of all the birds he spots because information such as bird song, bird numbers and the overall health of the birds is vital for conservation. He also mentions how observing birds can help us ward off bird flu.

**Bird watching and environmental protection**

Dr Cheng grew up surrounded by nature and he enjoyed watching birds and other wildlife. He believes that bird watching is not only a healthy and relaxing outdoor activity, but also a crucial part of environmental education.

**When you observe birds in their natural habitat, you can see the impact of pollution on the bird population,** Dr Cheng says.
Sharing good practice in interactive teaching and learning

Interaction in large classes: The project team held a seminar on 28 March to share its successes with colleagues at CityU.

To help students overcome their apparent reluctance to speak up in large classes, the FB team launched a pilot project in the first semester of 2004-05 with 130 business administration students from the Department of Information Systems (IS). The pilot was so well received that it was expanded to include all Year 1 students in ISD in the following semester. In the project, students are each given a PDA to respond to teachers’ questions during lectures. The aggregated answers are then projected onto a screen and then reviewed by the whole class.

The project manager, Professor Christian Wagner, the director of First Year Teaching and Learning in FB, said the initiative was proving successful, significantly raising student involvement during class. “It was time we shared our learning with the rest of the university,” Professor Wagner says.

FB now has a well-developed infrastructure for using PDAs: powerful access points have been installed in all lecture theatres and FB has considerable expertise evaluating PDAs, creating online exercises, training student helpers and providing technical support.

Dr Ron Kwok, an assistant professor in IS, helps promote the PDAs throughout FB. “At first some colleagues doubted that computer technology could help teacher-student communication. But after they saw how PDAs motivate students to give feedback, they realized the value of the project and decided to join in,” Dr Kwok says.

Technical guidance and support is crucial to the success of the endeavour. Mr Deep Batra, an assistant computer officer in FB’s Information Technology Services Unit, has served on the project since its inception in a number of capacities: evaluating and testing PDAs, coordinating device deliveries to more than 2,000 students, plus providing training and hardware and software support.

“It’s very satisfying to see the project grow and to see how much the students are benefiting,” Mr Batra says.

Since the seminar, FB has received several inquiries. Dr Bertha Du-Babolock, an associate professor in the Department of English and Communication, attended the seminar and left with new insights. “I plan to look at how the PDA device and Backboard system can be combined to enhance student learning beyond the classroom,” she says.

In addition to helping students participate in class discussions, PDAs will also help maintain CityU’s lead in student IT literacy. We will be very glad to see the PDA project expanded to other faculties and schools and in the campus,” Professor Wagner says.

By Audrey Chung
How do you get your retirement funds growing, fast?

Invest wisely for your retirement

To achieve the lowest possible cost and maximize your investment returns, you should:

1. Diversify your investments by spreading your money across different types of assets, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate.
2. Rebalance your portfolio regularly to ensure that your investments align with your financial goals.
3. Avoid making impulsive decisions and stick to your long-term investment strategy.

By following these tips, you can increase your chances of success and enjoy a comfortable retirement. Don't delay, start investing now!