The Library is planning to carry out major renovation projects in order to provide a better learning environment for students. This timely reorganization comes as the University prepares for the implementation of the four-year undergraduate curriculum and an anticipated increase in student numbers.

A consultant in spatial planning and design was hired in January 2006. He took part in the evaluation of the changing needs and use patterns of users and proposed two design schemes upon the basis of an initial concept. To solicit the views of staff members and students on the renovation projects, the Library organized a consultation forum in February 2007.

During the forum, Professor Steve Ching Hsiang-ho, University Librarian, outlined the challenges facing the Library and discussed the spatial needs of the Library, the provision of services and various management strategies. It was followed by a presentation of the two proposed designs by the consultant, staff and students sharing their views.

"Advances in technology are bringing about changes in the way people use a library and in pedagogy as well. Currently, the Library lacks adequate space for learning and the facilities are ageing," Professor Ching said.

An exhibition was held in March to provide detailed information on the renovation project. A survey conducted by the Library in March and April 2007 to solicit users' input for the renovation projects revealed that 70% of respondents go to the Library every day or several days per week. Respondents said they use the reading area the most, and mainly visit to borrow and return books, search for information and study. About half stay for one to two hours each time, and one third stay from 2pm to 6pm.

The consultation completed, the Library has decided to merge the two design schemes to create zones with different themes. These zones will integrate technology, encourage exploration, promote interactive sharing and create a quality learning environment.

In addition, a common space called the Learning Commons will be located in the central area of the Library. This area will be used for reading, self-learning and study groups. The Learning Commons is being funded by a grant from the University Grants Council which was obtained in August 2006. Construction will be carried out in the summer break between June and September to minimize disturbance on campus. The rest of the renovation project is targeted to be conducted in phases and completed within 24 months.

Plans are also underway to create more space at the Shatin Archive in order to house a total of 700,000 volumes of print collections.

By Jo Kern

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**Focus**

Library "Learning Commons" Renovation coming soon

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**Issue 250 • June 2007**
在郵政局內，中文並非僅是一種語言，也是一個“生命之學”。在郵政局內，我們可以教我們和學生如何活著。作者指出：「中文是生命之學，它裏頭藏著許多知識，它不說的話，現代人未必明白，但郵政局內卻藏著許多知識。」現在，中華文化不僅郵政局的興趣，更是成為一樣熱門的主題。「我的內心是繼續探討中文知識的知識，它裏頭藏著許多知識。」

Dr Cheng Che-bun, an associate professor in the Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics, Chinese language and culture was love at first.

Since primary school, Dr Cheng has been inexorably drawn to all things connected to Chinese culture. As a kid, he could not wait to delve into his older sister’s and brother’s textbooks to learn more, and he was lucky to have had inspirational teachers who stimulated his passion for Chinese civilization.

Dr Cheng has taught Chinese practical writing since he joined CityU in 1993. The most exciting events during his career at CityU so far have been the launch of the first bachelor’s programme in Chinese and the opening of the Chinese Civilisation Centre in 1998, he says.

In an article published in Linkage in May 2000, Dr Cheng wrote: “I would like to understand everything related to China. I will introduce it, whenever possible, to others.” Dr Cheng now has a regular column in a local newspaper that focuses on the usage of Chinese language, and he has volunteered to write about Chinese characters and their origins for City/Trees, the University’s online magazine custom-made for secondary school students.

The Chinese classics that usually sit on his desk writing range from The Book of Songs (Shi Jing), the earliest collection of Chinese poems, to Songs of Chu (Chu Ci), the anthology of poems from the Southern Dynasties during the Spring and Autumn Period, and from The Origin of Chinese Characters (Shuowen Jiezi) to Zuo Zihao and Spring and Autumn Annals (Chun Qiu). But the Book of Changes (Yi Jing) remains his favourite. “The study of Yi Jing helps me understand different fields. I have discovered that many things eventually lead to the same end.”

According to Dr Cheng, Chinese is not only a system of words and sounds, it also contains knowledge about life that teaches us how to understand the world around us. “The Chinese language embodies a rich pool of ancient meaning which is often not interpreted properly by people today, and at the same time we did not bother to think too much about it.”

But Dr Cheng certainly does think about it. “I will continue to explore the relationship between Chinese and other fields of knowledge in order to open new horizons.”

By Michelle Leung
Full-time Tertiary Education
Enhances Quality of Life

Dr Claudia Kwok Siu-kit, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics and Finance; Dr Olivia Leung Shek-ling, Assistant Professor in the Department of Accountancy; and Professor Lo Ting-wing in the Department of Applied Social Studies.

Common to all four is their enthusiasm for teaching which has led them to adopt innovative teaching models and use their own teaching materials to enhance their students’ interest in learning, their language skills and their ability to solve problems.

Ms Dong, who teaches management in Chinese enterprises, says it is critical to boost students’ confidence in order to motivate them to learn. “Whenever students finish assignments, I first give them recognition for their work before giving advice on improvement,” she says.

Dr Kwok of the Department of Economics and Finance uses self-designed teaching materials to change his students’ practice of relying on memorization and boost their ability to analyze. “I am delighted when students tell me that they have learnt a lot of useful knowledge during my classes,” he says.

Dr Leung of the Department of Accountancy encourages her students to read books and magazines to help them improve their English and she chats with them on her blog. “My students’ English skills are improving and we have all become good friends, which makes teaching more interesting,” she says.

Professor Lo of the Department of Applied Social Studies says he does not simply “lecture” his students but instead pursues a hands-on approach in his classes, for example using role-play to help his students improve their counseling skills. “I am delighted to see students apply what they have learnt,” he says.

The Teaching Excellence Awards Scheme was established in 1993 and the four winners this year will be presented with their awards at the Congregation in November. Their names will permanently display on the register in the main entrance to the University’s Academic Building.

By Karen Chang
電子郵差一瞬間信 無休服務“e-Postmen”: instantaneous transmission and non-stop service

服務有多重要？只要留意一下就不難發現大多數人同個辦公室：
首先就是開動電腦進入郵局。

若論這事數服務不講效率，
且讓我們看看電子服務中心
提供的數字，據該中心統
計，大學經常使用的電郵
戶口每日約達80,000多個，
郵件數量為，單是學員數
達85,000個，人數一年
裏有250萬封，去年增至
450萬封。

如何為廣大“用戶”提供及時、快速、穩定的
電子郵政服務，正是“電子郵差”一電郵服務中心的三位
網上主任黃蘇博士、潘潤生先生及葉樂生博士的工作

“電郵服務，是維持我校在頗大的競爭力，
按保守的統計每日約有80,000
d邮件數目為，單是學員數
達85,000個，人數一年
裏有250萬封，去年增至
450萬封。

6月，版數就會被完全取代。

除了郵政系統的郵件派送服務外，
“電子郵差”亦根據郵差、電郵等不同
的問題及業務的問題，以揀選的方式
，內容按需要按時更新，協助解答問題解難。

撰文/徐洛聲

J ust how important is email? Most of us switch on our computer to check our inboxes as soon as we get to the office.

But are you sure your observations are not scientific enough, let’s check out the statistics.

The Computing Services Centre says the number of email sent and received by staff alone has increased from 2.5 million in 2005 to 4.5 million last year. In fact, the number of email accounts at the University is more than 80,000.

You might think that the email is relatively low-maintenance, but the “e-postmen” of the Computing Services Centre, namely Dr Clevin Wong Yuk-yin, Mr Henry Wong Hon-yu and Mr Joseph Leung Chor-shan, work hard to provide us with a fast, prompt and stable service.

These email experts have served CityU for more than 10 years, handling an inextricable array of daily challenges. “The job of handling emails is actually done by the computers and we are only responsible for installation and configuration, so as to ensure a smooth operation,” they explain, all too modestly. In fact, the job is a lot more complex.

Take blocking spam for example. Approximately 70% of email sent to CityU is junk mail and most of it is blocked. But the screening process is incredibly complicated. “Screening out junk mail and links to scam websites, preventing viruses and stopping hackers are major challenges,” says Dr Wong, responsible for online security.

Colleagues may have noticed that their email speed has increased in recent months, Mr Wong explains. This is due to the system upgrade in January, and now email transmission within campus can be completed within a minute.

In addition, a new version of Webmail has been launched with substantial changes to the interface design and toolbars, now much simpler than previously used by email clients. Meanwhile, the new options are now both in use, and the old version will be phased out in the future.

The “e-postmen” also gather feedback from users and advise us on how to get the best out of our email accounts via hotlines and email. “We have an FAQ section on the email services board which we update frequently and assist to solve most problems staff encounter,” Mr Leung says.

By Edith Ng