Strenuous effort behind congregation

November represents not only the start of a hectic season for all faculty and administrative staff, but is also the month eagerly looked forward to by new graduates. Colourful banners and posters announcing the upcoming congregation can be seen all over the campus.

(continued on next page)
The annual number of graduates has grown from 4,000 to 10,000 over the past 14 years, as witnessed by Mr Ringo Tang Sai-chung, Senior Academic and Records Officer of Academic Regulations and Records Office (ARRO). “Since I was transferred from the Human Resources Office in 1995, the number of graduates has constantly increased,” said Mr Tang. “Last year, it surged to 250% of what it was 14 years ago. Also, the number of congregation sessions has jumped from six to 17 over the years.”

Ms Belinda Lo Lee Yee-wah, Executive Officer of ARRO, has been on the front line busily organising the congregation. Belinda started her preparatory work for this year’s congregation last December. “We wish to utilise the best possible combination of time and space by maximising the limited campus space to create the most memorable time possible for graduates and their parents.”

Ringo pointed out that ARRO functions as a coordinator between various departments and units by managing many complex administrative matters. “It is our big challenge to make sure all ceremonies work with seamless cooperation,” said Ringo.

This year, the installation ceremony for the President was held in conjunction with the honorary award ceremony. Besides ARRO, the Working Group on Installation of President cum Honorary Awards Ceremony co-chaired by Professor Paul Lam Kwan-sing, Acting Vice-President (Undergraduate Education), and Mr John Dockrell, Secretary to Council, includes various other departments. Among them are the Council Secretariat, Finance Office, Student Development Services, Development and Alumni Relations Office, Communications Office, CityU Press, Facilities Management Office, Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies, School of Creative Media and The Community College of City University.

There are two new arrangements for the congregation starting from this year. “We will present a ‘golden first-class-honour award ribbon’ to outstanding students in recognition of their distinguished academic achievements,” said Ringo.

The other new arrangement is the presentation of certificates to graduates in the congregation, rather than the former practice that required graduates to come back again in December to collect them. “The text gilding and graphics on the certificates can now be done precisely with the newly installed photocopier in our department,” said Belinda.
Sweet memories of a decade at CityU

Having served CityU for a decade, Mr Chung Shui-ming left the post of Chairman of CityU Council on 21 October.

"It is the power of fate, I believe, that has made me work here for almost 11 years, in the capacity of Treasurer, Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the Council. It has taken up one fifth of my lifetime so far," said Mr Chung at his “Thank-you” reception. "CityU has left me with three abiding gifts, namely a unique experience, unforgettable memories and cherished friendships. For all this, let me say a thank-you to all my colleagues here, from the bottom of my heart.”

Mr Chung said he had mixed feelings about leaving. He singled out the article titled “A real hermit lives downtown”, from University President Professor Way Kuo’s blog, to illustrate his plans. After handing over the reins, Mr Chung said he would like to enjoy his own life while still contributing to society.

For the past 11 years, Mr Chung said he had confronted many hurdles with the University and yet he was glad that despite all the challenges, CityU has made good progress in various areas and was able to break into the world’s top 150 universities. Mr Chung also praised CityU colleagues’ devotion to education and the way they face problems and tackle difficulties.

Mr Chung said he hated to part with CityU as it approached its 25th anniversary and was mapping out its next five-year development plan. Yet he is happy to see that the new management has settled smoothly into the role. "Neither sorry, nor worried," concluded Mr Chung about leaving CityU.

Professor Kuo offered three wishes for Mr Chung, whom he hoped would continue to give CityU his support.

"I hope he supports us, just like water keeps flowing down from a mountain; I hope our love and friendship will last forever; and furthermore, as educators, I hope we make our decisions based on the truth," Professor Kuo said. At last, may all of us wish Mr Chung all the best.

Profile of Mr Chung Shui-ming

- Treasurer from 1999 to 2003 and concurrently Chairman of the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees;
- Deputy Chairman since 2004;
- Chairman of the University Council in June 2006;
- Chairman of the Working Group on Associate Degrees and concurrently Chairman of the Strategic Development Committee; helped craft the University’s new Mission Statement.
A tribute to colleagues for their long, unselfish service

Scarlett Leung

“CityU has done very well in the past 24 and a half years because its staff have provided long and unselfish service,” said Professor Way Kuo, President of the University, as he opened the Long Service Award Ceremony 2008 by saving his highest praise for long-serving colleagues.

The ceremony was held on 21 October 2008 to thank 266 colleagues for their contributions to the University. Among them, 44 have served CityU for 10 years, 139 for 15 years and 80 for 20 years. Three colleagues have been with the University for the full 25 years. Professor Kuo expressed his gratitude, on behalf of students, alumni and staff, for their dedicated service.

One of the colleagues receiving the 20-year service award, Professor Man Kim-fung of the Department of Electronic Engineering, said he derived much pleasure from witnessing CityU’s transition from a polytechnic to a university. Also receiving the 20-year service award was Dr Tsang Kim-fung, Associate Professor of the Department of Electronic Engineering. “I was grateful to CityU for the support and flexibility given to me to achieve outstanding research results on the one hand and fulfil educational needs on the other,” said Dr Tsang. He also said he believed CityU would continue to achieve in both the academic and research arenas and wished the University success on the road to the four-year curriculum.

Miss Brenda Tai Sui-chun, Clerical Officer at the Computing Services Centre (CSC), had been working in the same department for 20 years. She said she was proud of working for CSC as it provided excellent technical support services to students, staff and alumni. She hoped that through the provision of outstanding service, CityU’s academic status would be further enhanced.

Having served CityU for 15 years, Ms Silvia Leung Suk-mei, Clerical Officer with the Finance Office, gained job satisfaction through job rotation within the department. “Rotating jobs offered challenges within a framework of stability,” she said. Having endured the financial crisis many years ago, Silvia was delighted that senior management was far-sighted in leading the team through the hard times, during which their team was able to maintain high service standards to colleagues and students. She said she would like to see the University recruit more top students and improve in terms of world rankings.

As one of the staff members receiving the 10-year service award, Ms Pheony Tsang Yee-ping, Alumni Relations Officer with the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DAO), was a typical CityU advocate. An alumna herself, Pheony enjoys her job at the University as her sociable and cheerful personality and the versatile job nature are a perfect match. She said she was glad to be a member of DAO, which had undergone different stages of development towards the provision of excellent service to alumni.

Editor’s Note

Sit back, take a screen break and enjoy reading about the people and developments taking place on your campus. And do the same next month when, as part of the 25th Anniversary coverage, we bring you the first interview in our monthly trilogy on staff members who have been with CityU since the beginning.
It would seem computer science and art exist in entirely different galaxies but the two can in fact co-exist harmoniously. One good example is the display of paintings in the newly-renovated Department of Computer Science. This seemingly unlikely perfect match not only generates a refreshing atmosphere, but also inspires the imagination and an environment for conjuring ideas for developing computer programmes.

Professor (Chair) Frances Yao Foong, Head of the Department of Computer Science, talked to Linkage about the “transformation” of the Department’s outlook. “For many years, we had two old and worn-out mailboxes placed on either side of the department’s entrance. As it had been more than 10 years since our last renovation, we decided to have a drastic remodelling,” she said. The department consulted interior designers for professional advice and set up a working group to follow up on the renovation work.

Following the designers’ advice, the old mailboxes were replaced and an artificial ceiling built above the centre of the foyer. A reception has also been set up to improve interaction between teachers and students. Yet, the most special transformation is the colourful paintings hung on the wall above the mailboxes and outside the meeting room that liven up the surrounding area.

The paintings are artworks created by Dr Andy Chun Hon-wai, Associate Professor of the department, who has extensive experience in creating portraits and abstract paintings. Upon Professor Yao’s request, Dr Chun completed four paintings. Two of them are modelled on the works of Mark Rothko, a renowned abstract expressionist painter, to create a relaxed ambience through a simple design.

The other two paintings are intended to create a more specific mood. “The one created using a jet ink technique with a theme on the universe, aims to inspire deep thinking, while the other one through a splash ink technique with a floral theme creates a pleasant mood,” said Dr Chun.

Looking at artistic works can actually help programmers develop new computer applications. “When appreciating artworks, we will use our right brain to think, and the creative ideas so inspired will help us develop programmes,” Dr Chun explained.

In future, if you are seeking a spark of creativity, why not stroll around the Department of Computer Science for inspiration?
I have to admit I have a passionate interest in buildings. During the past dozen years, I have made numerous trips covering the progress of more than 50 major construction projects in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. While they are not exactly the subject I'm teaching, they add a unique perspective and depth to classroom teaching. These projects include buildings, public facilities and infrastructure projects, such as railways, highway networks, port facilities etc.

I started to cover the Guangzhou Metro Line, for example, about 10 years ago. Since then, I have visited Guangzhou three to four times a year on average, each time spending three to four days tracking the changes and progress. Some of the projects range from 10 to 30 kilometers long. I covered the distance by walking in sections, very often with lunch boxes in my backpack. Sometimes it means starting from 9am and going through until 6pm. Once I have covered the actual site, I start to gather data and prepare papers or reports to substantiate the study.

These pictures only provide a glimpse of what I have done. More pictures of the sites, and artworks I made as part of my personal hobby, can be found on my homepage (http://personal.cityu.edu.hk/~bwsmwong/) that was originally designed for teaching purposes about 10 years ago.

Raymond Wong Wai-man, BST

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- Chow, Karpo, 周嘉寶, Programmer I to Assistant Scientific Officer

Office of the Provost
學務副校長室
- Liew, Vivian, Liang-ya, 劉亮達, Personal Secretary I [VP(U)] to Personal Secretary
Mr Chow Lung-fei, Assistant Computer Officer, Department of Information Systems

A few minutes with...

What was the first paying job you ever had?
A. Repairing ATM machines.

How do you unwind away from work?
A. Listen to music.

Do you have anything that has shaped your life?
A. Getting married and the birth of my daughter.

How would you like to be remembered?
A. As not a bad guy.

When did you start to work at CityU?
A. June 2008, but I had previously worked for SCOPE since mid-2004.

What would you like to be doing in five years’ time?
A. Do my best to achieve as much as possible in my job.

If you could spend a week in the shoes of HK SAR Chief Executive Donald Tsang, what would you try to achieve?
A. No chance.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
A. Hong Kong.

Do you participate in any sports? If so, what?
A. Yes, soccer.

What book is on your bedside table?
A. Reader's Digest.

What is your favourite dish?
A. Steamed fish.

If you could take a CityU course outside your own college/school, what would it be?
A. Business administration or logistics.

If you could be a superhero, who would it be?
A. The cop in Die Hard.

Describe your perfect holiday.
A. A round-the-world cruise with my family.

Name your favourite Hong Kong beach or countryside location.
A. Tai O on Lantau Island.

How can I link up with Mr Chow?
A. Email: chowlunf@apple.cityu.hk

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