

Annual Letter 2017

Dear Communication Alumni,

The past year was a fruitful one and has given us much to celebrate. We were overjoyed that about 300 alumni returned for the School Homecoming Day in September.

To mark the 60th anniversary of HKBU, the School held an array of celebratory events, including inviting several world-class scholars and experts to share their insights with us. Renowned writer Professor Lung Yingtai was the speaker for the closing lecture of the Shun Hing Distinguished Lecture Series. This lecture drew more than 1,200 members of the university and the general public. Other notable speakers included Professor Elizabeth Daley, Dean of the School of Cinematic Arts of the University of Southern California; President Valerie Smith of Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania; and Professor Peter Golding, Emeritus Professor of Northumbria University. They spoke on a number of media-related topics including media arts, liberal arts and the political economy of the media.



Communication students are well known for their originality and creativity. To help them realise their bright ideas, the School launched the Creativity and Innovation Fund last year. So far, we have awarded about \$1 million to more than 20 projects ranging from film productions, mobile apps, visual installations and campaigns for the promotion of local culture. We are calling for another round of applications and look forward to seeing the fruits of our students' innovations.

The School has continued to enhance the quality of its research. Last year, our number of applications for research funding from both the University and the University Grants Committee increased. With the founding of the Centre for Film and Moving Image Research in 2016, we are confident that we will continue to expand our scope of research by establishing ourselves as a distinguished communication school in research as well as teaching.

With the goal of advancing the way public relations education is conducted, a 4-day international Public Relations Summit was co-organised by our School, the City University of Hong Kong and the Public Relations Society of China. Over 160 communication scholars and practitioners from Greater China, North America, Europe and Oceania shared their insights and research findings at the conference.

Our long term tripartite collaboration with Leipzig University in Germany and Ohio University in the United States has continued apace. More than 100 students and faculty members from these three universities have so far made seven trips to one other's campus to immerse in a cross-cultural learning and teaching experience. Another trip is being planned for March, and closer collaborations are in the pipeline for the coming years.



Last year, more than 60 undergraduate students went for one or two semesters of exchange to partner universities in Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Japan, Korea, the Mainland, Sweden, Taiwan and the United Kingdom. We believe that studying overseas helps students become informed global citizens ready to meet the challenges of an inter-connected world by broadening their horizons, enhancing their cultural competency and strengthening their communication skills. Our policy is to encourage all undergraduates to have at least one semester-long overseas exchange experience during their four years of studies with us. To that end, we will continue to increase our subsidies for such experiences where resources permit. For both undergraduate and graduate students, we have continued to organise overseas study tours. Last year, their destinations included Taiwan, Cambodia, Brunei, Czech Republic, Austria, the United Kingdom, Poland and Russia.



More good news: Many of our students have brought honour to the School and the University through their outstanding performance. Alumnus Steve Chan of the Academy of Film won first place in the First Feature Film Initiative in 2013. With the support of associated funding, he produced *Weeds on Fire*, which did very well in the box office when it was commercially released in Hong Kong last summer. Ms Oliver Chan, another alumna of the Academy of Film, won the same honour in January 2017 with her creation *Still Human*. She has been awarded HK\$3.5 million to bring her winning script to the big screen.

To promote the importance of organ donation, faculty members from the Department of Communication Studies and the Academy of Film joined hands with the Hong Kong Society of Transplantation to produce an animated video clip, *Say Your Wish, Save a Life*. As one of the activities to mark Whole Person Education for a Better World, the theme of HKBU's 60th anniversary, our staff, students and alumni worked together to publish the book *Sharing Plates Hong Kong*, which features the inspiring journeys of cancer patients, survivors and caregivers.

Last year was the 20th anniversary of the Master of Arts in Communication Programme and the 10th anniversary of Chang Kuo-sin Award for Aspiring Young Communicators. The occasions were marked respectively by special homecoming activities and the publication of two works by the late Mr Chang: *Eight Months Behind the Bamboo Curtain* and *The Two Worlds of Journalism*.

Next year, the School of Communication will be 50 years old. We look forward to seeing all our alumni and students joining hands on campus to celebrate this major milestone.

As the year of the Rooster arrives, we wish you another happy, healthy and fulfilling year.

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