

# COMING FULL CIRCLE

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**Not everyone has the opportunity that HKUST has given me to return a favor. I earned my undergraduate degree from this university and I have been able to come back, PhD in hand, to teach new generations of undergraduates.**

My experience earning a doctorate abroad provided me with a global outlook that dovetails perfectly with Hong Kong's impending 3-3-4 Curriculum Reform. I benefited from HKUST's growing internationalism as a member of its first class of undergraduates, and I embrace the university's role in elevating Hong Kong's higher education system to world-class standards. Although I was born and raised in Hong Kong I am not Chinese, but I've never felt more at home than I did in my UG days here. I've come home to give something back to the school that launched my career.

## As students...

As one of HKUST's first undergraduates, I experienced some of the university's growing pains. When I wanted to make a phone call, for example, during my first orientation evening I gave up because of the long queues that would form by the one and only phone line in the entire student hall. How times have changed! These little inconveniences mattered little to me then because I felt privileged to have been admitted to any Hong Kong university to earn what was then the rare honor of a local undergraduate degree. I so enjoyed and prospered intellectually here at HKUST that I remained to earn an MPhil degree from the Division of Social Science

before embarking on my doctoral program at Cornell University in the US. I bring to my teaching and scholarship a long-term perspective that spans the history of UG education at HKUST. As a teacher I now am able to extend the university's best traditions of geniality and cooperation, which remain mainstays of the undergraduate experience, to my own students.

## As teacher...

I so enjoy teaching here because the same values that enriched my undergraduate experience endure: academic excellence, a broad-based curriculum with an international outlook, and teamwork. The breadth of courses offered at HKUST shaped my career path, as I became interested in social science thanks to the undergraduate requirement to take general education courses outside of my home school (Business Management). My success as a teacher and scholar reflects a tradition of interdisciplinary learning at HKUST that not only remains but is a hallmark of the policies proposed by President Chan, who likes to say that you can have a 'crossover' education here. This crossover idea is especially characteristic of my field, science and technology studies (STS).

## The things I like most...

One of the things I like most about this university is its tradition of warm relations among students and between students and faculty. I, for instance, had the privilege of personally knowing and being inspired by HKUST's founding President, Chia Wei Woo, who left a deep impression on me as regards his vision for the development, mission and goals, of HKUST: a vision that strongly included the value of teamwork. It is enormously rewarding for me to create a culture of

teamwork and civility in my classes. I suppose I am able to do this because I remember what it was like to be a student here. I am able to put myself in my students' shoes because I walked in them myself.





While I am dedicated to giving my students all the information they need to master my course material, it's even more important to help them learn how to use that information wisely, both in and out of the classroom.

### **Educational Partnership**

I therefore try to engage my students in an educational partnership, realising that cooperation—among the students and between them and me—is the key to learning. I want all my students to take lessons from my classes that they can apply throughout their lives. I try to instill in them a thirst for learning through which they acquire knowledge, practical skills,

and an attitude that will help them succeed elsewhere at HKUST and in their post-graduate careers. In doing so I design my courses in a way that matches the current trend towards outcomes-based learning, an approach that is designed to increase the chance of success at the next level, whatever that is.

Hong Kong's curricular reform, which takes effect in 2012, will position its universities for even greater international prominence than they now enjoy. I am privileged to have been a part of this educational system as both a student and a teacher/scholar and this perspective fills me with hope as I see Hong Kong responding to global trends that shape today's knowledge-based economy.

### **Innovation and Technology**

I study innovation and technology and I understand that

HKUST, despite its relative youth, is poised to assume a leadership role on the cutting edge of education for the twenty-first century. That is why I am so dedicated to teaching students how society adopts to new technology. I turned down offers to join overseas faculties so that I could help HKUST, my alma mater, lead the way into the future. This is a dynamic university committed to continual renewal and transformation, which makes it a perfect fit for me, and a perfect fit for students aspiring to become global leaders.

