

In response to the changing international and local environment, SS has decided to consolidate two UGC-funded majors, namely, BSS in Criminology and BSS in Applied Sociology, into a new major: BSS in Criminology and Sociology, beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year. The new major comprises a similar number of criminology and sociology courses and aims to give students an in-depth understanding of both disciplines. Students are expected to develop a sharp understanding of society and social factors, including the family, work, community, organization, civil society, crime, social order, and offender rehabilitation in Hong Kong and overseas, thus building a solid knowledge foundation for a broad range of career options.

Quality education culture and performance has direct and positive impacts on student learning, and is evidenced by the positive feedback from professional organizations. Notably, all three Social Work programmes, Master of Social Work, BA Social Work and BSS Social Work, have been under accreditation assessment in the last few months by the Social Workers Registration Board to confirm whether our graduates are up to the professional standards required to become Registered Social Workers upon graduation. In recognition of its outstanding performance, MSW was given an 8-year recognition period. Verbal feedbacks on the other two programmes have been very positive, and we are awaiting formal announcement from the Registration Board.

Accumulated over 35 years of quality practice experiences, outreach youth work has been very developed in Hong Kong. To share our wisdom with overseas youth workers, the "International Conference on Outreach Work: Youth gangs, Violence and Female Delinquency" was organized in the first week of December 2015. It was the first time that such kind of conference was organized in Asia. Speakers from Norway, USA, Scotland, Singapore, mainland China and Hong Kong gave plenary speeches in the conference. Many frontline outreach workers from Hong Kong shared their valuable working experiences in the District Youth Outreach Work Service, Overnight Outreach Service for Young Night Drifters, Pilot Cyber Youth Outreach Projects, Counselling Centre Service for Psychotropic Substance Abusers, and Community Support Service Scheme. Youth workers from Singapore and Macau also participated and shared their wisdom in reaching out and working with at-risk young people in their communities.

The City-youth Empowerment Project was awarded the Bronze prize by the Agency of Volunteer Service this year for the second time. One of the highlights of this project was the Homeless Outreach Population

Estimation (H.O.P.E.) Hong Kong 2015 that was held in October, 2015. Representatives from 5 universities (City University of Hong Kong, Lingnan University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, University of Hong Kong) and 4 NGOs (Christian Concern for The Homeless Association, Salvation Army, Society for Community Organization, and St James' Settlement) delivered speeches and expressed support to volunteers. Training Workshops were held to train volunteers the background information, knowledge, engagement skills, as well as appropriate attitudes to communicate with the homeless. A city-wide street count of the homeless was conducted on 29 October 2015 by 300 volunteers, and they identified 868 homeless people from the routes provided by the 4 agencies.

In order to strengthen students' knowledge, reflection and commitment to ethical practice in social work, the 'Voices of the People/Powerless' project has been launched for students of the BSS Social Work Programme. It aims to nurture the students to become social minded social work practitioners through listening to the voices of people from all walks of lives. A series of out-of-classroom activities were organized where students were provided with opportunities for direct conversations with potential clients of social services. Students became more sensitive to various life challenges and worldviews, situations they are caught in, and issues related to social injustice, oppression and discrimination. Students strengthen social commitments through understanding the perspectives of socially disadvantaged groups and becoming more aware of their own personal bias and social barriers built up by dominant social discourses.

**Prof Wing Lo**  
Head  
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Department of  
**Applied Social Sciences**  
Serves the **Society**



## From "Officium et Civitas" to "In lumine Tuo videbimus lumen"

As I write this article, New York is painted with autumn's colours. Soon enough, winter will come and cast a hue of black grey and white over the city, but New York never loses its vibrancy. New Yorkers' dreams light up this city brighter than anywhere else. Friends back home and new people I meet here have been asking me what it is like in New York, more specifically, Columbia University in the City of New York. My answer is – Intimidating and hard.



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## From "Officium et Civitas" to "In lumine Tuo videbimus lumen"

It is intimidating as I realized that it is a big world out here and how small I am at this stage. As a joint bachelor's degree program student, I am admitted to Columbia University through the School of General Studies (GS). This school is one of the colleges that provides undergraduate degrees to its students along with Barnard College and Columbia College (CC). However, unlike the other two colleges, students in GS come from different walks of life and everyone has what we call a "GS story" to share. Some of us are veterans, Broadway performers, professional dancers, stay-home mothers or even fulltime working-students who went straight to work after high school and now felt the need to go back to school. Others might be post-bac/pre-med students, who are here to pursue their dreams, or an older adult who values the spirit of learning. One of the universities in France, Science Po, also has a similar program of a Dual BA degree here at Columbia, and so there's another group of students who share similar experiences with us. So to say the very least, GS is an extremely diverse school, but the GS community is very welcoming and all of us share the same aspiration – we are here to learn. Although I belong to GS, my classmates include students from Barnard and CC as well. Hence, I am also meeting people who are around my age and have experienced a different education system.

All students here are intelligent and hardworking; everyone has a dream they want to pursue and they are constantly working on getting closer to that dream. To put it another way, they are not only about thinking big, but they are also putting their thoughts into action; doing small things every day to build up something big. Columbia has a lot of resources that students here are never shy to take advantage of, to actualize their plans. This intimidates me, because I realize that there is an extraordinary amount of possibilities for me out there in this world; everything is literally possible as long as I put my heart, mind and effort into it.

It is also hard because the courses here in Columbia are definitely not a piece of cake. Although I did not come here thinking that it would be easy, I definitely did not foresee the amount of readings that I would be given here. Apart from textbooks, each of my psychology courses has at least two journal articles that we are expected to read before class. My global core course has over four thick textbooks that are being covered over the semester, and if you think it is okay to not read them, you are wrong; because there are always in-class discussions that I must participate in. There are home works and short discussion blog posts due every week, not to mention midterms start to roll in from the second week of October (at least for the fall semester), which continues to the end of November, and then final exams come in to wrap up the semester in December.

My roommate and I have calculated the amount of time we spend in class learning versus the time we spend studying out of class; the

conclusion is that we are definitely spending at least triple the time studying out of class than we do in class. It is indeed hard, but as one of our deans here would quote from a movie, A League of Their Own: "The hard is what makes it great." Studying in Columbia is hard, but it's the consistent challenges that Columbia gives its students that make this place great. With every challenge we are given, we are taken out of our comfort zone, and this is where the magic happens; where learning happens. Despite the heavy workload, the faculty members and professors here are very patient and helpful whenever I have questions. Columbia encourages students to not only stay in libraries 24/7 (their libraries here are magnificent), but also be actively involved in the society with hands-on experience. Thus, there are regular careers fairs, lab previews and student organizations that students participates. To better prepare everyone with these opportunities, the university has put an effort to provide a wide range of resources to students: mock interview training, writing centres, tutors for different subjects, reading coaches – you name it, 99.9% of the time, they have it here. Therefore, even though it is hard here, it is rewarding as well.

The famous Columbia Bubble is between 110th Street Broadway and 121st Street Amsterdam. This is the area where most of the Columbia students are stuck within since we could find almost everything we need around this area. However, I will make an effort at least once every two weeks to leave this bubble during the weekend. Central Park in New York is the best place to go for a quiet walk, especially when I am fed up with all the buildings around me and need some green scenery. The Art Initiative that Columbia has allows us free access to almost all big museums here, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. In addition to museums, we also get discounted tickets to see Broadway performances and orchestral shows. Over the fall break, I went to visit Princeton, which is only an hour and a half away from here, with my roommate. Many other prestigious universities or historical landmarks are very close by to visit during the short breaks we have. New York is definitely not a boring place, every block in NYC is unique in its own way and every one of them is worth spending time to explore on. Columbia is intimidating and hard, but CityU has definitely prepared me well for this rigorous environment. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to study at Columbia University; it has and will continue to make a huge difference in my life.

Miss Yan Ying Fong  
BSSPSY Student



## Homeless Outreach Population Estimation (H.O.P.E.) Hong Kong 2015



City-Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP) jointly organized Homeless Outreach Population Estimation (H.O.P.E.) Hong Kong 2015 with four universities and four NGOs, they included: Lingnan University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The University of Hong Kong, Christian Concern for The Homeless Association, Salvation Army, Society for Community Organization (SoCO), and St James' Settlement. H.O.P.E. It was once organized in 2013 by CYEP in collaboration with three NGOs. Upon receiving the UGC Teaching Excellence Award 2014, Dr Elaine AU, Convener of CYEP formed a joint-university platform of service-learning and expanded the scope of H.O.P.E. to a wider scale. This platform aims at uniting the student volunteers from different local universities to serve and learn about homeless as well to bring community impacts.

The action day was 29th October, 2015. There were over 300 volunteers (nearly 40 of them were team leaders) from six universities participate in this project. They were divided into teams (Each team consists of volunteers from different universities) and cover all the districts to conduct questionnaires and a head count on the homeless in order to explore more on their living conditions and the barriers that prohibit them to be housed. The accurate numbers and information collected will enable NGOs to lobby for appropriate and effective resources as well as policy changes on both individuals and systemic levels to help the homeless get out of such destitution.



There are over 300 volunteers participate in the project.





# People

## Creating a Future Narrative with Project X



On 4th October - Briefing and Training I, Dr. Elaine AU shared about the background and the core mission of the project.



Representatives from institutions and NGOs kick off the homeless street count on 16th October, 2015.



Team leaders from CityU had strong commitment in the project.



Volunteers conducted the survey and the headcount until midnight.



Training workshop for volunteer leaders.



Team leaders experienced a homeless night before the street count on 9th - 10th October.

During the transition from foundation year at CLASS to major study within SS, there is a period of adaptation for students. During this time, students have lots of questions concerning their new study curriculum, out-of-classroom opportunities, as well as learning resources. In the academic year 2015/16, there are 145 sophomores and 129 senior entrants across 4 undergraduate majors newly admitted to SS. Building on the previous 8 years' worth of student development frameworks, Project X not only continues to provide support to all new SS students, but we have also extended our work under the conceptualization of the Character and Career Development (CCD) project. When students receive their personal profiles upon completing a CCD survey, Project X staff offer individual or small group consultations to discuss students' study plans and future development. We hope every new SS student is able to strengthen their individual growth in four core aspects, namely: motivation in learning English; learning to be a connected and caring person; building peer networks; and volunteerism. During Semester A, the number of student advising sessions was far more than staff anticipated; students are actively and independently making appointments and sharing the dreams they want to be actualized here at CityU. We are very grateful that the team is able to identify suitable resources and join the learning path of every SS student.

All SS students receive a welcoming gift from SS. The gift is our MAJOR-BASED TRAINING CAMP! Major-based training camps are organized by student mentors under the supervision of Project X. We are happy to announce that all training camps (i.e. Social Work, Applied Sociology, Criminology and Psychology) were successfully conducted during July and August 2015. To facilitate students to better prepare to study their major, student mentors organized various activities accordingly; such as team building activities, agency visits, self-understanding workshops, community walks, life planning exercises, role plays, situation tasks, and alumni sharing, etc.

This 'Gift' was delivered for SS students with two distinctive purposes: 1) For personal development, students can have better self-understanding through several sharing and life planning sessions; 2) For social development, students can build up a cohesive social support network among peers, mentors, teachers and alumni. Moreover, students can have a brief framework about what they will study in their major. Hence, students would have better adjustment in the Department; they can also establish a clear picture to plan their career path. Besides, student mentors sincerely wished to pass on "SS spirit" to our new members. We hope everyone can be an excellence learner and community contributor. Through the major-based training camps, we believe students can endure our passion, vision and mission. Once again, welcome to our SS family!

Four students from our core majors have been invited to share their experience in training camp and student advising.





**CHOW Chun Pong Animus,**  
Major in Applied Sociology, BSS2 Cohort 2015

I am Animus, I am an Applied Sociology Year 3 student. Since I was studied Psychology and Forensic Policing in other institutions, I was indeed anxious about my adaptation of major change in City University of Hong Kong. However, I overcame my anxieties with the support of the well-established system in SS and new acquired friends. Training Camp was the first contact point where I met my friends in CityU. Training camp was our initial platform to meet our classmates. This camp, unlike other ordinary orientations, intended to introduce us to the discipline of Sociology, where participants find the details deliberately designed for Sociology students. Organizers of the camp had a very strong commitment to lead us to understand our aspirations in the following 2 years. The introspection has led us to make clear our plans for our upcoming time in CityU. Also, academic articulation and career aspirations were also well introduced in the training camp. We were able to grasp a better concept about how to become an AS student and the qualification can equip us in future career planning.



Applied Sociology is a relatively novel discipline, and I was quite worried about how should I adapt to the new logical reasoning pattern. But most professors here have a high attained academic background, which can offer knowledgeable insights to us. Also, our professors are willing to discuss different issues with us. Our programme is designed to equip us with advanced level research skills. The curriculum has equipped me with skills that have enabled me to work as a research assistant. My newly acquired sociological interpretation of social issues has also served me well in understanding different social forces that shape our social reality. SS is a well-established department, where opportunities, resources and support are abundant. I have received different opportunities and support needed as soon as I enter SS. SS students have a very clear information dispersing channel that we can always reach out to the chances and vice versa. Another emphasis of SS is its enthusiasm in outreach to the local communities and social issues. SS has kick-started different projects that aim to alleviate different social problems and also grant us students a practical situation to apply our knowledge into operation. This makes SS become way more meaningful to our society and our professions.

**WONG Lok Hei Tasha,**  
Major in Criminology, BSS4 Cohort 2013

To be honest, building a sense of belonging is never easy in university because we no longer have fixed classmates and easily approachable teachers, like during high school. However, I am so lucky to gain this sense again after joining Project X. Their office door welcomes SS students to seek advice and personally I have received a lot of kindly help for scholarship application. Project X staff of do not only introduce sources of financial assistant, but also spend time helping me to prepare for an interview. At times, they warmly ask after my recent situation both at school and in my family. They are like my mentors rather than staff. Therefore, I am now participating in Project X activities including the training camp organization and mentor network scheme, wishing to pass on the culture. Facing the last year of my university life soon, it is high time for me to develop a clearer career goal. I plan to join the Police Mentor Program and overseas internship in order to apply criminology knowledge in the working field, as well as better preparing my life direction after graduation. Once again, I would like to thank Project X for facilitating my university life.

**TAM Wai Jan Flora,**  
Major in Psychology, BSS4 Cohort 2013

After accepting the offer from CityU last year, I received a phone call from Project X inviting me to join the Training Camp. However, I refused immediately. At that moment, I just thought it was like the other orientation camps which were meaningless to me. This thought was the same till I joined the camp as a mentor this year. For the few days in the camp, participants not only had a chance to become familiar with their groupmates but also had a chance to reflect themselves. Through sharing their past, they could integrate the important events in their lives so that they could have a better understanding of themselves. What's more, they were able to appreciate how they got through those events and learned to make use of those strengths in the future. Hence, joining the Training Camp is not just a matter of building bonding with others, but indeed an occasion for us to grow up. Even though I never joined the Training Camp as a mentee, I still learned a lot from it. I stepped out of my comfort zone by trying something I would have never done before. Also, I was more encouraged to speak out my own opinion and appreciation when I was in a group. Not only did I learn a lot from the camp, but also the mentees in my group changed a lot. They first thought that it was a type of orientation camp just like me but they said that they learned a lot and grew up during the Training Camp. Moreover, I found that they seemed to be more aware of their own and other groupmates' strengths. They became more genuine and sincere when getting along with others as they learned to view things in a more positive way. I believe it is worth joining the Training Camp, especially for mentees because they may only participate the camp as mentees for one chance. For the next time, they can only join as mentors that is a different type of experience.



**LEUNG Hoi Ki,**  
Major in Social Work, BSS4 Cohort 2012

I am incredibly honoured to receive the HSBC Social Work Scholarship. In the coming months, I will continue to take up new pursuits and open up myself to new challenges. I always believe the more I try, the faster I grow. The support the scholarship provides will definitely enable me to continue pursuing my academic and personal growth at the University, and for that, I will always be grateful. Once again, I offer my sincerest gratitude for the remarkable generosity and support of HSBC.

