



NEWSLETTER

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Professional and Applied: Department's Winning Formula



The Department of Applied Social Studies has begun the new academic year stronger than ever, with a student-oriented range of programmes that uphold the department's mission of offering professional and applied training. With 11 programmes now taught, the department has played a key role in CityU's recent elevation in the Times Higher Education Supplement's international rankings of the best social science universities from 93rd place to 53rd.

"We have been able to achieve this by developing our core strengths, which are our dedicated and professional teaching and research staff and our commitment to professional development," said acting head of department Professor Alex Kwan.

With a team of 48 full-time academic staff, 30 part-timers and 11 support staff, the department has carved out several niches for itself and is at the cutting edge of research into many disciplines.

"We are very strong on youth and elderly issues," explains Professor Kwan. "We just won a 1.5 million dollar grant for an inter-generational studies project, which will examine the relationships built up between youngsters, adults and the elderly. This is a further example of our commitment to developing applied and professional programmes," said Professor Kwan.

In a similar vein, the department will see the first graduates of a unique applied programme in criminology soon in the coming year.

One of the areas in which the department has seen great success is in professional development. Professional training is a key policy of the government for all industries and vital to advancement in an increasingly competitive environment. The department has a history of catering to such demands.

"Since the department began with just two study programmes we have placed a great deal of emphasis on applied teaching and professional enhancement," Professor Kwan said. "Now as demand has grown, we have introduced more and more programmes."

To this end the department runs six self-financing programmes in psychology and social work and counselling that cater for

students who are already practising in those professions. The courses allow them to develop their skills for career advancement. Alternatively, they offer students who graduated in different subjects to gain professional qualifications that will allow them to enter the professions of psychology and social work.

Keyne **Iu**, who now works in clinical psychology, benefited from one of these courses. "I graduated in economics from the University of Hong Kong, but it wasn't really a subject I wanted to work in professionally," Keyne said.

So Keyne signed up for a City University Department of Applied Social Studies Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology (PGDP). "This study experience was a necessary stepping stone, which led to my further study for a professional degree in clinical psychology. It allowed me to have part-time study and continue working full time - to save more money for future studies!" Keyne added. "It also gave me a chance to think thoroughly about whether I was really determined to pursue further studies in psychology (which would be a major career change for me)."

Dr. Julian Lai, associate head of department, said the study programmes are good for the students and for society in general. "Getting a higher qualification like these is beneficial for a candidate's job prospects, for personal knowledge and for personal development," Dr. Lai said. "From the point of view of students, their feedback indicates very clearly that enrolling in the programmes offered by the department not only enables them to meet their needs for advanced knowledge but also enhances the contribution they make to their work," Dr. Lai added. "This will ultimately enhance the quality of the workforce which should definitely have a desirable impact on the community at different levels."

With strong foundations laid, the department is now looking to the future and looking to extend its activities overseas with link-ups and exchanges with other universities around the world.

"We have found that being able to offer our students the opportunity of research or study overseas broadens their world view and gives a boost to their studies," said Professor Kwan, adding that the department has already begun talks with universities in the United States and Taiwan to establish joint study programmes and exchange schemes.

Departmental Highlights

Graduate Studies Information Day

SDS will organize the CityU Graduate Studies Information Day on 13th January, 2007 from 1pm to 6:30pm in the Purple Zone on 4/F, Academic Building, CityU of Hong Kong. The event aims to provide information to students who are interested in postgraduate studies in the areas of Applied Sociology, Counselling, Educational Psychology, Psychology and Social Work.

Two Information Seminars will be held.

1st Session

Venue & Time: LT-12, 1:30 - 2:45pm
Programme: MPhil/PhD; PGDP; MSSPSYED

2nd Session

Venue & Time: LT-12, 3:00 - 4:15pm
Programme: MPhil/PhD; MSSAS; MSSSW; MSSC.

A Study Tour to Shenzhen

A group of 18 students of SS, led by Dr. K. K. Leung, Dr. T. Y. Lee, Dr. Lena Zhong and Ms. Stephanie Lai, joined a study tour to Shenzhen specially organized for foundation year students on 21st October, 2006. It was one of the out-of-classroom learning activities to expose students to learn more about the recent developments in rehabilitation facilities and services for disabled persons in the mainland by visiting the Disabled Persons Federation; about elderly services by visiting Yee Hong Heights - the latest home for the elderly in Guangdong Province; and had a fruitful sharing session with the local students and teachers at Shenzhen University on the social issues of Shenzhen.



Taught Postgraduate Programmes

Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology Programme Leader: Dr. Julian Lai

The Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology is a two-year part-time programme designed primarily to provide degree-holders having no undergraduate training in psychology with the necessary knowledge and practical skills for pursuing further study and a career in psychology. Successful completion will give eligibility to become Graduate Members of the Hong Kong Psychological Society and the British Psychological Society, and to receive further training in psychology at the Master or Doctorate level.

Students' Feedback on the Program

Ivy Chan, a graduate of the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology (PGDP) programme, who studied marketing in her first degree, completed her study of an MPhil in psychology earlier this year. Similar to her classmates, she rated the learning experience highly: "the two-year part-time study of PGDP at CityU not only has strengthened and enhanced my knowledge in psychology, but it has also greatly enlightened my insights into conducting research. The course requirements were in fact quite demanding but I still enjoyed most of the lectures as the professors were highly enthusiastic in their teaching". According to Ivy, one of her most precious experiences was the publication of her PGD dissertation. "I experienced a great sense of achievement when I saw my work published in an international journal in Psychology and my academic perspective was broadened internationally as well".

(Code: PGDP)

Master of Social Sciences in Counseling Programme Leader: Dr. Raymond Ngan

The programme is designed to provide continual professional education for practitioners engaging in a broad range of professional and occupational activities for which competence in counselling contributed directly or indirectly to excellence in performance. The programme is designed for graduates of diverse disciplinary background and supports continual professional development. The programme opens up career fields in professional work, such as human services, education, social work and human resources management.

Students' Feedback on the Program

Priscilla Wong, one of the first graduates of the Master of Social Science in the Counselling programme, has indicated that the knowledge and skills that she has learned during the two-year study have greatly enhanced her work as a counsellor in a care and attention home. "I am enriched by the knowledge gained in the course as well as from the practicum teachers and classmates whom I can turn to for collegial support. They have been a great comfort to me on my MSSC journey as they reassured me that there was light at the end of the tunnel". She also had a very positive learning experience in the practicum, which she attributed to "the multidisciplinary mix of the classmates in the practicum that provided an excellent learning opportunity to widen my academic and professional scope".

(Code: MSSC)

Master of Social Sciences in Applied Sociology Programme Leader: Dr. Raymond Chan

This new and unique programme provides education to equip students with theories and methods of Applied Sociology, and put an emphasis on the application side. The programme aims to train social science and human services practitioners with sound knowledge in concept and practice of sociology and social research methods to help people, organizations and communities solve their problems, and to be competent in undertaking and managing services in organizations.

(Code: MSSAS)

Master of Social Sciences in Psychology of Education Programme Leader: Dr. John Tse

The programme is to equip students with a comprehensive and in-depth study of major psychological theories and studies in relation to the practice of education. Upon graduation, students are expected to be highly competent teachers in regular schools in general and in inclusive settings in particular.

(Code: MSSPSYED)

Master of Social Sciences in Social Work Programme Leader: Dr. Joseph Kwok

This is a self-financing programme aiming to provide professional advanced training to practitioners working in a variety of social services settings. Human services professions, such as teachers, student guidance teachers, counselors, health workers and others may also find this programme useful to their personal and professional development needs. Graduates of this programme will be equipped to take on senior level administration and leadership positions in human services settings, and engage in advanced practices in selected areas of direct practice.

(Code: MSSSW)

Book launch Ceremony cum a Seminar on "Back to Faith, Meet the Challenges"



A book launch ceremony cum a seminar entitled "Back to Faith, Meet the Challenges" was co-organized by SS, the Division of Social Studies, City University Community College, and the City University Press in September 2006. The new book "Hold On to Your Faith - 30 Letters to Social Work Students", consisting of 30 letters written by 21 social

work teachers emphasizes the professional beliefs, ideals, and values of social work. According to one editor of the book, Dr Kam Ping-kwong, the book and the seminar provided a platform for social work teachers, students, and practitioners to reflect on how to uphold their faith, serve others and face challenges. The event attracted more than 150 participants. Professor Richard Ho Yan-ki, Vice-President (Undergraduate Education) of CityU; Professor Alex Kwan Yui-huen, Acting Head of SS; Dr Wong Pik-yuen Chan, Vice-Principal, Community College of CityU were the guests. The speakers included Mr. Tsui Cheung-ling, the winner of the first Hong Kong Outstanding Social Worker Prize; Mr Lai Sau-man, a veteran social worker in elderly services; and Dr Kam.



A Taste of University



Dr. John Wing Ling Tse

"A university should step in to improve the community; therefore we bring university to the prison." This is how Dr. John Wing Ling TSE explains the reason he initiated the project "A Taste of University".

Co-organized by the Correctional Services Department of the HKSAR and the School of Continuing and Professional Education of City University, "A Taste of University" was first launched at Tung Tau Correctional Institution in September 2005 and was offered again in March, 2006. Through ten lectures delivered by university professors, participants were introduced to knowledge ranging from sociology, psychology, business, language and

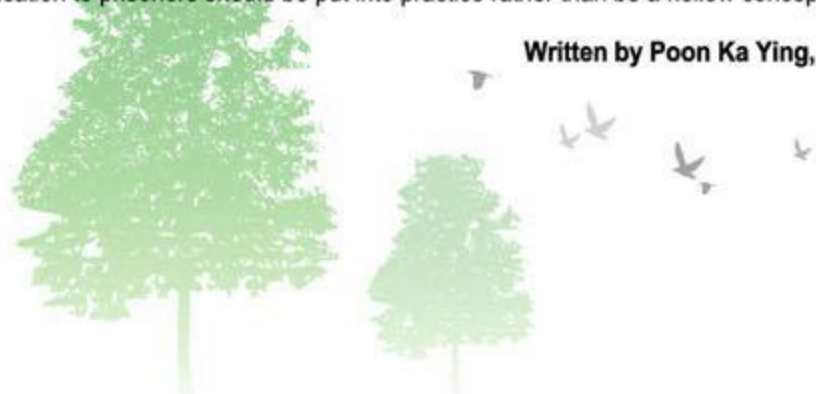
law to computer skills. It is intended that the programme will stimulate prisoners' interest in pursuing further studies.

The programme has been well received since it was first offered. This year, more than a hundred inmates from Shek Pik Prison voluntarily enrolled for the programme. The turn-up rate was very promising because it was nearly one quarter of the inmates in the prison. Participants also gave very positive feedback about the programme. According to the questionnaires they returned, they generally found the lectures interesting and the learning valuable.

In designing the programme, Dr. TSE said that the most crucial objective was to provide university education opportunities to prisoners who may or may not have had a chance to receive tertiary level education. Therefore the content involves not only practical skills but also the academic knowledge that university students learn. As Dr. Tse comments, "After joining this course, inmates will have a glimpse of what university learning is about. There is a great possibility that some committed crime just because they did not receive enough education. If we now take the first step to educate them, we are actually doing good to society."

The programme is more than teaching and is actually about empowerment. Dr TSE continued, "I hope the prisoners can develop more skills even though they are imprisoned. The programme is actually "prey" to arouse their interest in studying. That is why subjects they have never studied are offered. We want to empower them and equip them for the time when they are released. No matter what kind of crime they committed, if they are willing to learn, we are always pleased to give them a second chance. Offering education to prisoners should be put into practice rather than be a hollow concept."

Written by Poon Ka Ying, Melanie



Positive Ageing

Positive Ageing is not about living longer, nor about how to avoid growing old — it is about living a positive life to the full.

Ageing is a serious issue in Hong Kong. Government statistics reveal that 11.7% of the 6.8 million people living in Hong Kong in 2003 were 65 years or older. That proportion is likely to rise to 27% by 2033.

Instead of viewing the ageing population as a burden to a community, Professor Ng Sik-hung of the Applied Social Studies at CityU regards older people as an asset. He says, "they have skills, knowledge and experience that are highly valuable."

With longevity (75 years plus and still increasing) now commonly achievable, Professor Ng believes Hong Kong is now in a position to shift its attention from prolonging life to enhancing the quality of long life.

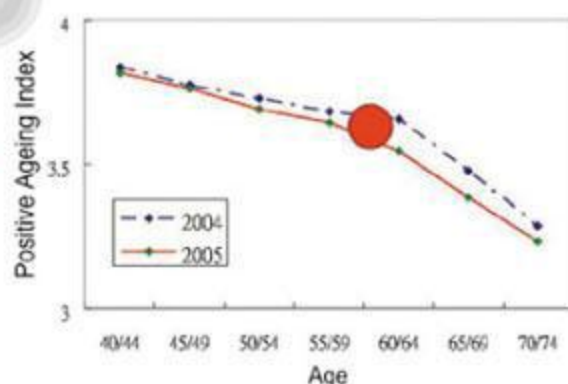
To find out the quality of life and ways of improving it for middle-aged and older adults, he carried out a longitudinal research on "Positive Ageing" with researches from CityU and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Nearly 3000 Hong Kong residents aged 40 to 74 years were interviewed in 2004 and then again in 2005. In the interviews, people were asked to rate their health, physical and cognitive functioning, love and care of people around them, and contributions to society through work and other services. These four elements made up the Positive Ageing Index, the first of its kind in Hong Kong.

The surveys showed that Hong Kong people age well. About 82% of the interviewees scored above the satisfactory mark, including those in the oldest age group.



Professor Ng Sik-hung



However, the surveys also identified a significant decline in positive ageing around 60 years (relative to 40 years), followed by further dives among older groups. The Positive Ageing Index also shows that men age better than women.

To enhance the quality of life as we age, the researchers have identified several empowering

factors: a healthy and balanced lifestyle, a supportive social network, financial security, a sense of humor and a positive attitude to making the best use of time remaining in life. "The most powerful enhancers are a robust social network and a positive approach to the time remaining in one's life," Professor Ng said. He stressed that for these empowering factors to work, we must cultivate them from an early age.

According to Professor Alex Kwan, the Acting Head of SS, and a member of the PA research team, people cope better with ageing and adapt better to different changes in life if plans are made, and strategies put into place, well ahead of time. If we change our mindset and start developing the personal resources needed for ageing better at an earlier stage, we can take better control of our future.

In addition to Professor Ng and Professor Kwan, the PA Research team consists of Professor Jean Woo, Professor (Chair) and Head of the Department of Family and Community Medicine from the Chinese University of Hong Kong; Dr Alice Chong, Associate Professor of Social Work and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at CityU; and Ms Stephanie Lai, Senior Research Assistant.



The research team hopes the PA Index will prove to be useful for government, community and welfare groups involved in drawing up policies that affects older members of society and the implementation of strategies geared towards helping people to age better.

Written by Angie and Revised by Prof Ng Sik-hung

Learning Counseling with Support



Joseph Lo, current student of Master of Social Sciences in Counseling

'To begin with, I would like to say this programme has helped me with my personal growth. It helped widen my views and sharpen my self-understanding.' When asked to share his experience in the counselling practicum of the Master of Social Sciences in Counseling, Joseph Lo, a current student of the programme, said that he treasured his personal development through the practicum as much as the counselling skills and theories he learnt. Joseph explains, 'This is important because we must first gain a good understanding of ourselves before we can reach out to others and to help others find their strength.'

Joseph said that the counselling placement gives student good fieldwork experience, but good learning cannot happen without good supervision. 'As far as the supervisor goes, I found it quite positive and they have done a good job in giving students useful advice and guidelines. In my case, I felt that the supervisors have done well in giving instant feedback through emailing and giving good support to me emotionally. Apart from the good support, I also appreciate the process in which the supervisors guide how the students view different things as well as helping them sharpen their counselling skills.'

Apart from the support given by supervisors, Joseph also mentioned the importance of peer support for counsellor trainees. Joseph found the group supervision sessions the programme offers particularly useful. 'In group sharing, I enjoyed another kind of learning different from individual supervision because I could learn from the cases of other students, particularly those in a similar field as I am working in. The emotional support from peers was essential as well.' Nonetheless, Joseph continues, 'Group support cannot replace individual supervision, because it allows me to discuss matters more in depth with the supervisor and gain more undivided attention from the supervisor.'

Written by Vincent Wong

Words from the Coordinator :

Through this program I wish the students will gain experience, thus able to use the theories they learn in real life situations. Through the opportunity with group interaction I hope the students will be able to gain more information from students that are in different fields.

Finally my hopes for the students after their completion in this program are their success in personal, professional and interactive growth.



Dr. Annis Fung
Counseling Practicum
Coordinator

過去兩年在城大的學習生活，最享受的莫過於能夠與一班同學老師相知、相識。特別是我們一夥友好的同學，無論上課時或前後、上 tutorial 或做 project 分組，總要走在一起，令其他同學誤以為我們早就相識。但我們確是感情很好，對我來說，上課的日子雖然忙碌頂透、疲憊不堪，但也是期待，也是快樂得不得了。由於我們一拍即合，便組成了「城大大家庭」，成員不斷增添，有爸爸、大女兒、小女兒、後期收養的兒子、大舅父、管家、大廚、司機...真是異常溫馨。

難忘的事實在太多，記得第一次做 research project，由於「不可分開」的信念實在太強烈，我們簡直不擇手段。雖然大女兒屬另一 tutorial group，應在另一課堂上課，但她如何也不肯離開。我們分組做功課時即使被提醒組員過多，卻充耳不聞，還厚著臉皮向當時還未成為大舅父的大舅父反口，不肯重新分組。幸好老師和大舅父也是心胸廣闊之人，沒有計較我們一時任性。後來做實驗時，有一位同學出奇地熱心幫助我們，結果他也加入這大家庭，成為養子。

一定是背後的一股神秘力量牽引，除了小女兒之外，我們的 Final Year Project 都被編排跟隨同一位導師。當然，小女兒也申請轉讀這位好評如潮，叫好不絕的老師。儘管做 Final Year Project 是相當艱苦的過程，但這位盡心盡力教導和協助我們的老師，加上同學間互相支持鼓勵，我們都獲得珍貴的學習。在此要向 Dr. David Lok 說聲：「多謝，你辛苦了！」

而平日我們一家人常於上課前在學校飯堂 New Marché 晚膳及閒聊。這也是慶祝生日的時段，年中我們不斷切生日蛋糕、許願、吹蠟燭，好不熱鬧。雖然我、爸爸和小女兒現已畢業，但慶生時仍有繼續。除了一家人日常相聚外，我們也積極參與班制活動，與其他同學聯誼。例如第一次考試後，同學們到酒樓慶祝，大家的情緒高漲，比畢業更興奮。早前老師和同學們又在校內餐廳辦晚宴，難得大家也抽空出席。這才留意到我們有不少非正式的團隊：有好幾位圖書館「常客」，連續多月由早到晚，不屈不撓地在圖書館為 Final Year Project 奮鬥；又有好幾位羽毛球愛好者，常相約在 Sport Complex 打球，及後還要追趕 Super Sandwich 的 last order。由此可見，我們花在校園的時間可不比 undergraduate 少，見同學比見真正的家人還多，「城大是我家」並非浪得虛名。

回想起來，這兩年過得相當充實，真的不捨得畢業。但畢業肯定不是我們「講拜拜」的時候，我們會將快樂延續。就好像今年暑假我們一行五人到東京旅遊，慶祝我、爸爸及小女兒畢業。明年呢，應該要慶祝大女兒、養子和舅父畢業。目的地是什麼地方好呢？

