

A place on the international stage in 10 years? Certainly a tall order for a brand-new university. However, HKUST's band of eminent academics brought back more than skills and talent from North America and Europe. They brought confidence. They were about to found a university and believed it should, and would, take the world by storm.



Recognition Abroad

HKUST's faculty have collected a hefty array of international accolades in the University's first decade. They have become fellows and honorary professors of leading institutes, gained honorary doctorates, presented "best papers" at international conferences; and received awards from many countries.

One outstanding example is Professor Leroy CHANG, a member of five national academies. The prestigious awards he has received include the International Prize for New Materials from the American Physical Society (1985), the David Sarnoff Award from the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (1990), and the Stuart Ballantine Medal from Franklin Institute (1993).

In 1998, Professor Lung-Fei LEE secured entry to the econometricians' Hall of Fame for being one of the three most productive econometrics scholars in the world.

Professor Pang-Hsin TING, Dean of Humanities and Social Science, was elected an Honorary Member of the Linguistic Society of America in 1999 — a rare honor for a Chinese linguist.

Such brilliance has helped build the University's reputation among international institutions. It has attracted talented younger academics from overseas and local students who might otherwise have gone abroad.



A man of honors: Prof Leroy Chang.



An AEARU faculty workshop (left) and a summer camp for students organized on HKUST campus.

Long-Distance Partners

The faculty's outward-bound approach meant they actively sought and established partnerships with institutions outside Hong Kong. They looked into the Mainland and out to the West, and used their own academic ties with leading institutions to forge links for HKUST.

One of the earliest was an arrangement with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1990, which formalized academic cooperation between the two universities.

Other carefully selected and nurtured partnerships followed, including joint laboratories with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, an Academic Alliance with Peking University, and a highly successful executive MBA program launched with

Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management in the United States.

Links with the Region

The founding President has been the main driving force behind these national and international ties. "Strange as it may seem," Professor Chia-Wei Woo pointed out in 1996, "interactions among the academic sectors within East Asia have not been all that significant."

In the same year, top research institutions in the region came together to discuss the possibility of a link-up. The result was the Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU) comprising members from the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. AEARU's major

aim is to facilitate substantive cooperation among faculty and students. Professor Woo was elected its founding Chairperson.

The organization now has 17 members, sponsoring more than 10 faculty workshops and student leadership camps every year.

HKUST also became a member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) in 1997, the only university from Hong Kong invited to join.

The objectives of this group of 34 top universities initiated by leading American universities on the Pacific coast are to strengthen pan-Pacific academic links, and to turn itself into the higher education and research arm of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).



Prof Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker (right), President of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), inaugurated the German Center of the Europe Institute in 1999.



Visiting students from France organized Le French May at HKUST to promote cultural exchange in 2000.

Links with Europe

There was also action to be taken on the European front. While Britain had obviously been a major point of contact in the past, other European countries had a lower profile in Hong Kong. Once again taking the initiative, the President worked with the consuls general of European Union member countries in Hong Kong to set up the Europe Institute at HKUST, within which a series of virtual national centers would operate.

Through such an organization, exchanges could be arranged and research collaboration facilitated. R&D footholds in East Asia could be established by European universities, foundations, and corporations. The idea was enthusiastically received. A French

Center and a German Center quickly made their debut.

Many European students are now doing postgraduate work at HKUST in science, engineering, and management. Joint conferences between HKUST and European universities are held. Research units have been set up on the University's campus by Europe's multinational technology-based firms.

A Meteoric Rise

Science and engineering are global enterprises; and HKUST, through its faculty's research accomplishments, has become well known far and wide. However, obtaining such world recognition is not so straightforward for a business school in Asia.

Among the happiest men on the HKUST campus is Professor Yuk-Shee CHAN. As founding Dean of Business and Management, he is able to report one of the most dramatic international success stories of the University's first decade.

Not only has the School established itself as Asia's leading business school, its MBA program has been ranked among the world's very best.

"At the time we started, not many business schools in Asia were placing a strong emphasis on research," Professor Chan says. "So you can say that we started out without an example in Asia to compete against. Our competitors really were — and still are — internationally recognized business schools outside Asia. They are the

ones we always benchmark ourselves against."

The results are clear to see. HKUST's School of Business and Management has gained full accreditation from the US-based International Association for Management Education (formerly AACSB), one of the first two Asian business schools to win such recognition. It was the first time in the organization's 80-year history that an institution less than 10 years old had been fully accredited. The University was only eight years old at the time.

In addition, it is the first, and so far the only, business school in Asia to be accredited by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), another leading international

organization assessing management education.

There was even more to cheer about when the School found itself included in the *Financial Times* MBA rankings in 2000 and 2001 — the only Asian business school to have made the top-50 list, ranking first in the world for the international experience that its MBA program offers; and second for its international faculty.

"With regard to international recognition, we have done exceptionally well," says Professor Chan. "It's beyond our early expectations. We have endorsement of our teaching and research programs, and a most attention-grabbing addition — the *Financial Times* rankings."

Representatives of the HKUST Business School and AACSB at the accreditation presentation ceremony in 1999.





President Woo with alumni in Beijing (left) and California (bottom).



Students Make International Moves

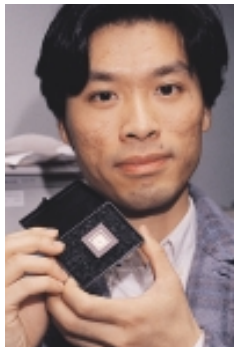
Success generates confidence, and confidence is catching. With a faculty and a University so at ease on the global scene, HKUST students soon followed.

Since 1993, the University's growing body of alumni — now 15,000 strong — has been injecting HKUST drive and energy into the world job market. Former students are at work in countries East and West. There is an alumni chapter in California, bringing together HKUST graduates pursuing advanced degrees or working in biotechnology, materials, and IT in and around Silicon Valley. There is



another in Beijing, where a number of HKUST's doctoral degree recipients now teach in China's leading universities.

Individuals have also been making their international mark. Felix CHEUNG had not yet finished his MPhil program in HKUST's Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering when he became the first person from Hong Kong to be selected to present a paper at the IEEE International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC) — or "Chip Olympics" — the world's top microelectronics conference held in the United States.



The postgraduate's microchip, designed to aid signal reception of portable satellite and television receivers, was given a major boost internationally when presented at this conference. His selection in 1997 was a fillip to faculty and other students at HKUST, realizing one of the founding faculty's ambitions for the department in just six years. Between 1999 and 2001, HKUST postgraduates have been invited to the "Chip Olympics" for three consecutive years, following Felix Cheung's pioneering footsteps.

The Fast Track to Success

The breakneck speed at which those at HKUST have established themselves as a force to be reckoned with, in both research and the talents it produces, has become another source of international acclaim for the University — and one of pride for its founding faculty.

"Many visitors have told us that HKUST is a miracle in the history of the world's academic community," says Professor Woo. "At the beginning, people said we were too ambitious and unrealistic, but it has turned out that we have been able to far exceed the high expectations we had in the early days."



Onward Vision

What of the future that lies ahead of HKUST in its next 10 years? Who will pass before the "Red Bird" sundial in the Piazza? How will the University continue to strive for the heights and open skies of new discovery?

HKUST was founded at a time when few in Hong Kong paid attention to science and technology. A decade on, the pushing and prodding and the breakthroughs of the University have had their effect.

The Hong Kong SAR Government has now acknowledged that science and technology are to be the drivers of change; the community has already started to move towards the "New Economy". As the building of HKUST has illustrated, once Hong Kong's dynamic capabilities are fully focused, it will move fast and will not be stopped.

The University has determined to head both deeper into the community and wider into the world. Its tradition of partnerships is leading to new links with local institutions. There will also be further ties with institutions in the Mainland and the world's advanced economies to share vision and strengths.

HKUST will continue to concentrate efforts on core academic fields. It will also promote new areas of excellence and high impact. It will fulfill its goal of being a key player locally, nationally, and globally in the knowledge economy.

For students, HKUST sees the introduction of a four-year degree program as a vital step to shed the "high pressure" label of the University's founding years and to provide all-round development.

"We cram our students with the specialist knowledge they have to master, and we are reasonably successful in that objective," says Professor Woo. "But we need extra time for the students to attend lectures outside their specialties; to take part in cultural, athletic, and student organization activities; and to discuss, argue, debate. Nothing makes one learn to think more carefully and logically than participation, self-expression, and debate. Three years just won't do."

"We definitely need four years," says Germaine Chore-Man CHAN, fresh from her battle to balance accounting studies with her duties as President of the Students' Union. "Now we're always chasing, chasing, chasing. We need to be able to discuss things more deeply, to have more time to analyze."

The Challenge Ahead

Of the known challenges that lie ahead, the greatest will be sustaining HKUST's terrific upward curve amid fierce international competition for top academics. For competing on world terms for the highest flyers means their numbers are small and their opportunities wide.

"It's the one thing that has been very clear in my mind from day one," says Professor Ping KO, former Dean of Engineering. "If you want to produce the best students, you had better find the best faculty for the University. The problem is, if these people are so good, they have a lot of opportunities. So you had better provide them with an environment in which they can become and remain happy."

In the beginning, HKUST had one huge advantage. Timing.

If started 10 years earlier, when Hong Kong seemed destined to remain a colony, most founding faculty would not have wished to come. If started 10 years later, the world would have moved far ahead of Hong Kong and the economic climate would have made international recruitment of top scholars too tough to contemplate.

The timing was right. Top scholars came, with their hearts leading their heads. For future generations, heart will no longer suffice. It will have to be the University's culture, quality,



First and second generation helmsmen: (right to left) Prof Chia-Wei Woo and Prof Paul Chu.

and reputation that draw first-rate scholars.

HKUST must never relax in its recruitment and retention of world-class faculty. As President Woo has constantly pointed out since his arrival 13 years ago:

"Faculty are the soul of the University."

Change at the Top

This will be the task for HKUST's new guiding force. For the University's 10th anniversary year sees the retirement of Professor Woo as founding President.

As the chief architect and builder of the University's heart and soul since its planning days, Professor Woo has helped realize HKUST's conception and birth, energized its first steps, and

propelled its precocious growth. In the future that task will fall to a young and dedicated University Council headed by a dynamic Chairman, Dr Vincent H S LO, and to top physicist Professor Paul Ching-Wu CHU as the University's second President.

In the pattern of those who have come before him, Professor Chu, a world leader in high-temperature super-conductivity, returns to Asia after over 30 years in the United States. He finds a University that has made a startling journey in a very short time, one determined to fling open the gates of knowledge, and fully ready to rise higher and see further.

A firm foundation has been laid. A solid platform of past accomplishments and present strengths has been built. The Red Bird has lifted off.

Now, once again, it is time to soar.