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HKUST L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Laureate Honored

Prof Nancy Ip, recipient of the [L'ORÉAL-UNESCO for Women in Science Award 2004](#) today (23 March, 2004) attended an award ceremony at the China Club hosted by L'ORÉAL in honor of her achievements. The Award further highlights the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)'s strengths in the fields of neuroscience and biotechnology.

Mr Henry Tang, Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR, and HKUST President, Prof Paul Chu, officiated at the event. Said Prof Chu: "Prof Ip has shown that Hong Kong has the best people to do the best job when it comes to scientific research. I am sure that her distinguished achievements will also encourage more female students and researchers to follow in her footsteps and find a rewarding career in science and technology."

Prof Ip, Director of HKUST's Biotechnology Research Institute (BRI) and Head of the Department of Biochemistry, was born and raised in Hong Kong. She excelled in science subjects from the onset of high school. In her research career, she has gone on to achieve global recognition for her seminal accomplishments.



Prof Nancy Ip: I sincerely hope that my passion for science will inspire and encourage more women to dedicate their efforts towards the advancement of scientific knowledge



From left: Prof Paul Chu, Stephen Mosely, President and Managing Director, L'ORÉAL-Hong Kong/Taiwan Limited, Prof Nancy Ip, Mr Henry Tang, French Consul General Serge Mostura and Prof Arthur Li, Secretary for Education and Manpower

Through her pioneering research she has discovered a number of novel neurotrophic factors and demonstrated how they activate specific receptor molecules on nerve cells, providing important insights into how such proteins affect the differentiation and maintenance of neurons during brain development. Prof Ip's studies have also led to the identification of potential pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, and her recent notable discovery of [novel signaling mechanisms at the neuromuscular junction](#) could provide important clues for the treatment of nerve-muscle disorders.

In recent years, HKUST's reputation for excellence in the life sciences has burgeoned: Of late, the BRI has received HK\$175 million from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to set up a biotechnology company; [researchers discovered the fifth gene associated with the causes of schizophrenia](#) ; and the

University is leading a significant government sponsored Area of Excellence project entitled, "[Molecular Neuroscience: Basic Research and Drug Discovery](#)".

On 20 February 2004, Prof Ip attended the Great Hall of the People to receive the [State Natural Science Award](#) , China's highest honor in the natural sciences, which was presented to her in the presence of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. As a highly accomplished researcher, she has received many other awards including the Croucher Foundation Senior Research Fellowship and election to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the highest academic honor bestowed on Chinese scientists.

[Speech by Financial Secretary Mr Henry Tang](#)