

29/01/2003

New HKUST-HKIEd Collaboration to Nurture Science Teachers

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) will jointly offer new teacher education degree programs in major science subjects and science education, with the objective of producing outstanding teachers for Hong Kong's secondary schools.

The four-year, full-time Bachelor of Science programs in Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Science Education will begin in September this year.

The launching of the new programs was announced today (29 January) when Prof Paul Ching-Wu Chu, President of HKUST, and Prof Paul Morris, President of HKIEd, signed a three-year agreement for academic collaboration between the two institutions.

This is the second collaborative agreement between the HKUST and HKIEd since 2000. The first agreement embodied a joint offering of a four-year full-time degree program "Bachelor of Science in Mathematics (Mathematics and IT Education)". It was first offered in September 2001. The programme will continue under the new agreement and a total of 72 students are currently enrolled in the programme.



President Paul Chu, President Paul Morris of HKIEd, and students of the two institutions at the signing ceremony

These joint programs are unique in their integration of academic studies with professional teacher education from year two onwards. The teacher training modules, amounting to approximately one year's study, will include practice at secondary schools for students to gain hands on teaching experience. Graduates will be conferred a Bachelor of Science degree by HKUST, and will be eligible for Qualified Teacher Status.

Addressing the audience at the signing ceremony, which was attended by staff and students on the HKIEd campus, Prof Chu said: "This agreement signifies the shared commitment of HKIEd and HKUST to science and technology education in Hong Kong. To continue to thrive in the 21st century, Hong Kong needs to step up its standards of science education, research and application. Science education disseminates the knowledge necessary for all scientific pursuits, and therefore its importance cannot be exaggerated at all."

Prof Morris noted how undergraduates would benefit significantly from this latest academic collaboration. "The students enjoy the best of both worlds. They spend time on both campuses and are taught by staff of both institutions. The resources and facilities of both campuses are accessible to them. Students also acquire practical school knowledge through field experience. Taken as a whole, the programs are achieving the goals of preparing future teachers with substantial subject knowledge and expertise in science education," said Prof Morris.

The innovative academic and teacher education programs have received strong support from the business community

in terms of scholarship provisions. The Jebesen Educational Foundation, Hang Seng Bank, and the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Chamber of Commerce have altogether pledged a total of \$620,000 on scholarships earmarked for students enrolled in the programs.