

27/04/2000

President Chia-Wei Woo Resigns

Professor Chia-Wei Woo, President of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, tendered his resignation and will leave his post in March 2001.

In his letter of resignation to the University Council, President Woo said: "Succession is an important issue which every organization must face sooner or later. This is the case for a government or a corporation, and so it is for a university." He said: "Hong Kong is finally moving towards becoming a knowledge-based society. There is much excitement in the air for developing and exploiting the prowess of science and technology. At the same time, the University's many successes in teaching, research and development have become widely recognized. Once more we are ready to soar - this time from a solid platform of achievements. The timing is perfect for an orderly succession to take place, that is, for the University to find a dynamic, visionary, resourceful, and caring person to take over its academic and executive leadership."

"Our colleagues and students need not be concerned about the transition," President Woo said. "A thorough academic review was completed in March 1999. Mid-triennium academic planning tasks were completed in August 1999. Academic plans for the coming triennium (2001-2004) were submitted to the University Grants Committee in November 1999. During the coming 2-3 months, a complete inventory of the University's resources will have been taken, and the University's personnel, facility, and funding needs will have been assessed. This series of preparatory tasks place the University on solid ground for the upcoming transition." He then added: "Recently, under the leadership of the Council Chairman, the University adopted a 'Mission, Vision, and Objectives Statement', which will serve as macroscopic guidelines for the University's future development. Council Chairman Dr Vincent H S Lo and I will be co-chairing a task force on long-term development strategy comprising members of the Council, Court, and Senate. This task force will use the 'Mission, Vision, and Objectives Statement' as a basis to chart the University's future and produce a set of action plans. All the above will have been completed in an orderly manner before I leave my post. Thus, there will be no disruption whatsoever as leadership changes hands."

Chairman Vincent Lo said: "It is regrettable that President Woo has decided to retreat from the University's helm after taking HKUST successfully to a crest of solid achievements." He added: "HKUST was established and grew rapidly during a period of change, overcoming difficult hurdles in the process. Its scholarly achievements have propelled the University into the upper ranks of the academic world. Its many technological innovations and research results have benefited Hong Kong's enterprises. Its business and management education has won wide international acclaim. To have achieved so much in just a little more than eight years, HKUST is described by many as a miracle in the history of universities. Even though President Woo always credits the miracle to his colleagues and Members of the Council under the leadership of former Chairman Dr S Y Chung, the fact rings true that President Woo's extraordinary capability, dynamic leadership, total commitment, and tireless efforts are a main cause of HKUST's success."

Professor Chia-Wei Woo was invited to join the University's Planning Committee in 1986, and was appointed its founding President in 1988. In 1983, at the age of 45, he was appointed President of San Francisco State University, and became the first Chinese to take up the presidency of a major American university.