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Top Science Teachers Honored

Two professors have been honored for their excellence in teaching by the [School of Science](#) of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

The awardees for the Science Teaching Award 2000 are Dr Bradley Foreman, Assistant Professor of Physics, and Dr Randy Poon, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry. The presentation ceremony will be held at HKUST in late November.

The annual award is established to recognize and appreciate excellence in teaching and related activities. The highly rigorous selection process is based on a range of criteria, including student feedback, peer review and examination of their teaching philosophy. Every year, less than 3% of the School's total faculty receives the honor.

To Dr Poon, teaching and research are complementary. "I think good teaching in biomedical sciences cannot be achieved without a strong basic research program in my own laboratory. A lecturer's dedication and enthusiasm in basic research should be able to trickle down to the students to arouse their interest in science," he said. His Cell Cycle Laboratory studies how the cell cycle is being controlled and develops novel therapeutic approaches for the treatment of cancers.

Dr Foreman attributes his teaching success to keeping in mind the students' perspectives and encouraging active interaction in class. "After many years of advanced studies, lecturers often have difficulty remembering the problems experienced by first-time learners," said Dr Foreman. "I make a special effort, each and every semester, to look at things entirely from the students' point of view. My lecture notes try to emphasize the correct way of thinking that is used in successful problem-solving," he said.

To encourage participation in class, Dr Foreman awards "bonus points" to students who speak up, ask questions, and make comments during lectures. "That provides me with an immediate feedback channel, and gives my students a sense of active participation in the learning process," he said.