

Professor Nancy IP

Pro-Chancellor Dr. John CHAN, Council Chair Professor Harry SHUM, Court Chair Dr. the Honorable Andrew LIAO, Council and Court members, distinguished guests, members of the Class of 2024, parents, friends and colleagues,

Welcome to HKUST's Congregation 2024! Today we celebrate a significant milestone in the lives of our graduates and honor the achievements of our honorary doctorate recipients. These distinguished individuals have made unique and impactful contributions in their fields and serve as exemplary role models for our graduates.

Each year, our university congregation is an event I look forward to with great anticipation. Witnessing the radiant smiles and eager faces of our graduates, I see limitless potential ready to be unleashed into the world. Graduates, I am immensely proud of you. Although your HKUST journey began amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, and your first experience of university life was virtual through Zoom, you persisted. Through determination and a positive mindset, you managed the challenges of online learning and excelled academically. You showed resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity. As you step out into the world, continue to embody these powerful qualities. They are key to overcoming any challenges life may present.

Graduates, during your time here, you have been stretched in ways you may not have expected,

which has fostered your personal and academic growth. At HKUST, we aim to offer an exceptional academic experience that develops inherent talents and cultivates new skills. Our academic programs are continuously evolving to expose students to the latest, cutting-edge tools and technologies. We also leverage innovative technologies to enrich teaching and learning experiences.

A notable example is Artificial Intelligence (AI), arguably the most exciting advancement in the past decade. Recognizing its vast potential to shape the future, we have promptly leveraged its capabilities in research and education. HKUST was the first local institution to make generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, available across campus. Additionally, HKUST was the first local institution to offer an undergraduate extended major in AI, providing our students with an early understanding of this transformative technology.

Furthermore, supported by the University's state-of-the-art AI supercomputing facility, one of the best among Asian universities, our faculty have launched a number of exciting projects, from innovative applications in medicine to the development of the Hong Kong's first local version of ChatGPT.

We are also continuously expanding our academic programs at HKUST to meet the diverse needs of our students, and society as a whole. I am

delighted to share our aspiration to establish the HKUST Medical School. Building on our pioneering work in bioscience, AI and engineering technologies, and leveraging our strengths in innovation and cross-disciplinary collaborations, HKUST is poised to nurture future-ready clinicians to strengthen healthcare services, drive biomedical innovation, and support Hong Kong's development into an international hub for health and medical innovation.

While HKUST is known for its science and engineering programs, an education here goes beyond just disciplinary knowledge. The University has expanded the humanities and arts on campus to foster empathy, compassion, and a deeper understanding of the human experience in students. HKUST also promotes entrepreneurship and innovation, encouraging students to explore new ideas and take risks in bringing those ideas to life. This holistic approach aims to inspire students to create and innovate in ways that benefit society. Graduates, carry this mission forward. Leverage your knowledge and experiences in your social and professional circles. Strive to build tools and solutions that enhance human experience and contribute to the betterment of society.

This year, HKUST reached a significant milestone. Our alumni community, spread across all corners of the world, crossed the 100,000 mark! As our community continues to expand each year, one

constant remains: we are united as one HKUST family, ever ready to help, support, and guide one another. Graduates, as new alumni, you are now part of this esteemed network. I encourage you to lean on this community and actively contribute to its strength and vibrancy in the years ahead.

In closing, remember that you leave today with more than just a degree. You have acquired solid disciplinary knowledge, diverse skills, the capability to navigate life's challenges, and valuable connections and friendships. You are also now part of HKUST's global alumni network that believes in and supports you.

Embrace these gifts and face the future with confidence, knowing that you are well-prepared. Have the courage to follow your dreams, make a positive impact, and pursue your goals with the same determination and spirit that you demonstrated during your time here. Remember that success comes in many forms. The future is yours to shape, and I have no doubt that it will be a bright and brilliant one.

Thank you all for joining us today. Graduates, please have a great day with your parents, teachers and friends. I am sure that this beautiful day will be fondly remembered by everyone for many years to come.