

President Nancy IP's *I*nstallation Speech



I am deeply honored and excited to be here today, the highlight of an exhilarating journey that began almost 30 years ago.

I joined HKUST as a junior faculty member in 1993, only two years after its founding. Back then, HKUST was a small institution, barely known within Hong Kong and virtually unknown outside. Normally, one is drawn to an established and prestigious university to build a career, but HKUST presented the opportunity to contribute on a vastly different scale. The University had been established with a clear mission — to be Hong Kong's first research-intensive university, with a future-oriented pedagogy, to nurture generations of talent to drive and support Hong Kong's transformation into a knowledge-based economy. I was incredibly intrigued by the opportunity to be a part of the research, technology, and innovation movement in my hometown.

The early years, while demanding and challenging, were equally exciting and invigorating. The HKUST community essentially became an extended family. While still building our own credibility as educators and researchers, we worked long and hard to lay the groundwork for future research and education excellence. Inspired to action, I gravitated towards administrative leadership. Over the next three decades, I went on to serve in different capacities, gaining keen insights into university administration along the way. At the same time, I have had the privilege to work with incredible leaders and mentors — including all four of our former presidents, as well as our past and current Council chairs. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most sincere thanks to our founders and previous leaders for their stewardship and dedication in establishing such strong foundations to build upon. Thank you also to our talented community, past and present, for your unremitting efforts in building a world-class university from the ground up.

In the short span of 31 years, HKUST has developed into a globally recognized and vibrant academic and research institution. Our faculty include academicians and world-class scholars nurtured within the University. And we have cultivated a campus-wide entrepreneurial culture and a strong network consisting of local, regional, and international industrial and governmental partners. However, building excellence on our three pillars — education, research, and knowledge transfer — is an ongoing endeavor. During my tenure, my goal is to strengthen the University's position as an academic,

research, and innovation powerhouse by widening our talent base, empowering our community, and fostering collaboration and innovation across campus, thus paving the groundwork for HKUST to become the most innovative university in Asia.

The key determinants of innovation are people and culture — the two areas that I am most passionate about. People are at the heart of our success, and to attract and retain world-class talent, we need a vibrant environment where everyone can excel. My immediate priority is to foster a highly inclusive and collaborative culture where our students, faculty, and staff are empowered to share ideas, communicate openly, and work together. Stronger engagement will also cultivate a sense of belonging and ownership among our community and build trust. With the right talent and culture, we will be well positioned to spark innovation, affect change, and drive the University's advancement.

To develop truly impactful innovations that address societal needs, however, we must instill a deep understanding of humanity and human values. Advancing the humanities on campus to nurture empathy and compassion among our community is thus vital. This joint emphasis on innovation and humanities, while distinguishing us from our peers, has a larger purpose — to extend a humanism mindset beyond our campus. When faculty and staff move on and students graduate, not only will they bring knowledge, skills and a strong network to their companies and communities, but also the wisdom to engage in work that has a beneficial impact on society.

Since its inception, HKUST has been at the vanguard of innovation. We were the first university in Hong Kong to emphasize entrepreneurship across the campus, and our efforts to establish a strong foundation for entrepreneurial education, training, and support are reaping tremendous benefits. To date, we have more than 1,600 active startups and 9 unicorns, with 7 IPOs in Hong Kong. I believe there are many more to come as long as we continue to nurture our creativity and can-do spirit, and inspire each other to take greater risks in research and education to drive innovation. We must also strengthen the innovation pipeline from discovery to market and make our research breakthrough more accessible to the community.

Innovation is important for making our mark as a global research university. In an increasingly complex world, we must take a leadership role in enacting

positive change. This requires strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration to develop innovative game-changing and people-oriented solutions to pressing global issues such as aging population, pandemics, and the climate crisis. To help address these grand challenges, we need to partner with renowned international institutions and forge deeper levels of engagement and mutually beneficial collaborations with government, industry, and other areas of society.

Earlier this year, we opened HKUST(Guangzhou), expanding our reach in the Greater Bay Area and signifying a new stage of development. HKUST(Guangzhou) complements the strengths of our existing Clear Water Bay campus and brings our vision of higher education, international outlook, and signature world-class programs to the Mainland. The new campus also brings exceptional opportunities to the entire HKUST community. This new synergistic platform will strengthen our integration and engagement in the Greater Bay Area, facilitating greater levels of collaboration. We will be well positioned to pioneer cross-disciplinary solutions to address global challenges and bring our education, research, knowledge transfer, and entrepreneurial endeavors to a new level.

Thirty-one years ago, HKUST was just a fledgling university. Today, it is a vibrant and flourishing center of activity, where individuals from multiple backgrounds are collaborating to expand frontiers of knowledge, nurture future leaders and innovators, and create new ideas and innovations, to advance humanity. I am honored to have witnessed HKUST's amazing growth, proud to have contributed to it, and am now incredibly excited to work with the entire HKUST community to steer the University to a higher level of excellence. I will dedicate all my efforts to ensure that the flame of innovation continues to burn bright at our university, and to build a harmonious and collaborative community where everyone can achieve and exceed their potential. By embracing the HKUST spirit and culture, together we can take the University to new horizons of excellence.



Professor Nancy IP

Members of the Class of 2022, distinguished guests, parents, friends, and colleagues,

Welcome to HKUST's 30th Congregation! Thank you for joining us on this special day as we celebrate the outstanding achievements of the Class of 2022. Whether you are attending this ceremony at the Shaw Auditorium in person, or virtually from elsewhere, please join me in congratulating our graduates on their well-deserved success, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Let's also not forget the many faculty, staff, and family members who have worked tirelessly to keep our students' studies on track during these past two incredibly tough years.

I am greatly honored to be celebrating our graduating class in my new capacity as President. Having been part of the HKUST family since 1993, it has been a pleasure to watch timid teenagers blossom into confident, mature and well-spoken young adults through their journey at HKUST — the result of their own perseverance and diligence and the dedication of their teachers and mentors. And I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of our academic staff for their continued efforts, both in and out of the classroom, in educating and inspiring our students, and nurturing them to become forward-thinking future leaders.

Members of the Class of 2022, in a few moments, you will leave this campus, the place you have

called home for the past few years. As you turn the page to the next chapter of your life, I hope you will continue to cherish and uphold the core values of HKUST, continue to do your best to strive for excellence, uphold integrity, and maintain a global and diverse vision, with respect for all. I also hope you will carry HKUST's spirit of innovation with you, wherever you go, to touch lives in all corners of society.

Possibly there are some among you who are thrilled to leave your days of study behind. Graduating today does not mean your learning stops here. You may soon experience the challenges of the real world, such as pandemic stress, global economic uncertainties, and a competitive job market. You are also the generation that will need to tackle the daunting issues of the 21st century. As you navigate through these uncharted waters, be brave and step outside your comfort zone. Keep an open mind and embrace new experiences in this fast-changing complex world. I trust that your time at HKUST has equipped you with the knowledge, skills, ingenuity, and a "can-do" attitude to transform adversities into achievements, and I am confident that you will each find creative and effective ways to turn challenges into opportunities. If hurdles stand in your way, jump over them and keep going. Your resilience is the engine that will propel you forward.

Whether you are starting a career or pursuing further studies, you will likely encounter different

opportunities, leading to crossroads of indecision. In such times, remember that you can never go wrong when pursuing your interests. Doing something you love will give you fulfillment and the strength and perseverance you need to reach your goals. Your passion will also inspire and empower those around you to excel in life. And for those of you aspiring to become future leaders, let me share with you the advice – integrity, empathy, humility, and passion are the key elements to making positive impacts on the world and the lives of others.

In closing, wherever life takes you beyond this point, remember we are always One-HKUST! Rest assured that the doors of your alma mater will remain open to you. Please keep in touch with each other, and with us, to share your experiences and insights, or even to explore future collaborations. I can't wait to hear about the many exciting places your HKUST degree will take you in the ensuing years.

On behalf of the entire HKUST community, congratulations Class of 2022!