

Acceptance Speech

Council Chairman, Vice-Chancellor, and Distinguished Guests,

It is my privilege to deliver a speech on behalf of this year's honorary fellows of The Chinese University of Hong Kong: Professor Arthur Cheng, Mr Enders Lam, Mr Aubrey Li and Professor Henry Wong. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks for this honour!

The Chinese University of Hong Kong has always been committed to fostering the educational and personal growth of students by integrating the highest standards of teaching with the pursuit of cutting-edge research across various disciplines, with outstanding achievements. We are dedicated to upholding a progressive and enterprising spirit for the benefits of students and staff alike. The integration of East and West cultures has been attracting scholars from all over the world to take up teaching positions at CUHK. This enables our students to not only absorb new knowledge, but also broaden their international horizons, thus laying a sound foundation in their journey to become an important part of society in the future.

When I was a child, I first visited CUHK to attend my cousin's graduation ceremony. I was impressed by this beautiful campus and started to fantasize about studying here one day.

However, when I was 11 years old, I contracted bone cancer. The hospital I went to get treated at that time was the teaching hospital of CUHK: the Prince of Wales Hospital. In the days of living in the ward, I often imagined that when I grow up, I wish to enrol in a medical school to become a doctor. This would have been a mission I am proud of.

After my recovery, I moved on to continue my secondary education. Now wearing a prosthetic limb, I chanced upon the sport of wheelchair fencing and became a student athlete. Juggling sports and studies, I was dreaming about what an honour it would be to one day representing Hong Kong at the Paralympic Games.

Throughout all that time, I have benefitted from elite training provided by the Hong Kong Sports Institute. After my public exam, I resolutely applied for the Department of Geography and Resource Management at CUHK. While I am passionate about geography, I was also attracted by the geographical location of CUHK, which is very close to the Hong Kong Sports Institute. The generous support from CUHK and the Department also enabled me to pursue both my university studies and my fencing training with joy and ease.

You may remember that a major earthquake shook Wenchuan, Sichuan, in 2008. At that time, Professor Chan Kai-ming from the Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology established 'Stand TALL', a charity dedicated to providing rehabilitation services and prosthetic limbs to the victims of the Sichuan earthquake. I became a member of the 'Stand TALL' team and, together with the medical team of CUHK, we helped many of the injured after this devastating earthquake. This is how my relationship with The Chinese University of Hong Kong built up from childhood to adulthood.

I believe that every honorary fellow has a sincere and unique affection for The Chinese University of Hong Kong. In my time at CUHK, I not only gained knowledge and broadened my

horizons but, even more importantly, developed a sense of justice and duty to the society.

Many people assume that the responsibility of an athlete is to train hard and perform well in competitions. But I think athletes today should have a bigger mission and responsibility. As an athlete with disability myself, I see it as my duty to encourage more people with disabilities to fully engage with the society, as well as to foster inclusiveness. 'Inclusion' should be more than just a slogan. It should be an attitude that drives the general public to better understand that it can contribute to providing equal rights for different minorities, so that they too can become part of the society.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been raging around the world for some years, and it is more necessary than ever for us to inject positive energy and motivation into our society. In the fight against the pandemic, people will inevitably experience disappointment and even fatigue. Combined with changes in the economic environment, the pandemic can make us prone to physical and mental problems. One message that I would like to share with everyone: 'It is ok to be not ok'. In these difficult times, we all need to listen to ourselves more and take good care of our emotions. Sports is one of the best ways to relieve stress. When we exercise, our brains release endorphins, which are known as the happiness hormones. I hope that everyone here, as well as your loved ones, get to feel the happiness brought by sports. Trust me, it is a very enjoyable sensation.

Lastly, I would like to thank CUHK again for awarding this Honorary Fellowship. I sincerely hope that my alma mater will continue

to uphold the spirit of '博文約禮' (Through learning and temperance to virtue), to cultivate more outstanding talents, and nurture great achievements across all fields of society for generations to come. Thank you.

*This acceptance speech is delivered by Ms Yu Chui-ye
on behalf of the Honorary Fellows*