

Scholarship and Bursary Donors' Tea Reception 2017-18

Welcome Address

Dr. Albert Chau, Vice-President (Teaching and Learning)

Dear Donors, Guests, Colleagues and Students,

Welcome to Hong Kong Baptist University and the Scholarship & Bursary Donors' Tea Reception of the 2017-18 academic year. Every year, I am very delighted to attend this Reception at which we celebrate the achievements of our students together. On behalf of the University, I wish to express my most sincere thanks to all of our donors for your generous and continued support. President Roland Chin is currently on a business trip. He asked me to forward his heartfelt gratitude to the donors and warmest congratulations to the scholarship recipients.

This year, we were blessed with over 1,900 scholarships and 220 bursaries amounting to more than HK\$46 million. The generous donations opened up numerous precious opportunities for our students to learn outside the classroom.

Inclusiveness and diversity are the core beliefs for HKBU. In order to put these values in practice and support promising students of different backgrounds and talents to pursue their education at our University, we have used different scholarship schemes strategically. Last year, we launched the Admission Scholarship for Outstanding South and South East Asian Ethnic Minority Students. With the kind donations from various donors particularly Tsim Sha Tsui District Kai Fong Welfare Association and Mr. So Chung Ping, the University is able to admit six local ethnic minority students under the Scholarship this year. The Scholarship broadens the horizons of all students at HKBU through cross-cultural interactions, and encourages them to gain insights from and become culturally sensitive to people of different races who are very different from their backgrounds, ideas, beliefs, and ways of life. This is an essential "skill" or "competence" that students need to acquire in order to make a contribution in a highly globalised world.

Besides, recognising the importance of providing cross-cultural learning experiences to students, in 2017 we admitted 46 international students from 12 countries or regions to pursue a full degree at our University. This is a four-fold increase compared to the previous year. It is only possible with the admission scholarships that we are able to offer to some of them. For the next academic year, we aim to admit 70 international students and further increase to 130 in 2023. We need all the help from donors to attract more international students so that **ALL** HKBU students can benefit from a truly international campus ambience.

Another scheme that fortifies the University's caring culture and tradition is the First-Generation University Student Fund. Research has shown that this group is likely to be in a disadvantageous position as most of them come from families with financial constraints and lack advice from the family. Our data indicates that around 75% of our freshmen belong to this group, which is substantially higher than the sector norm. The First-Generation University Student Fund gives first-generation university students extra financial support to participate in outside-of-classroom learning activities that are critical to their whole person development. Our colleagues in the Student Affairs Office also provide them with advice on planning their university life and personal life after graduation. For the long term continuation of this meaningful scheme, contributions and strong support from generous donors, like all of you, are again critical.

In addition, our Department of Physical Education has an agreement with the Hong Kong Sports Institute under which elite athletes may pursue a full degree at our University. Under the Elite Athletes Admission Scheme, 8 students who represented Hong Kong to compete at the international level were admitted in 2016-17 and the number increased to 11 in 2017-18.

The benefits of the scholarships and bursaries indeed come in many different forms and ways. I would like to share three short stories with you. Two BBA students established a start-up company to develop local agriculture as a high value-added industry and to promote "green lifestyle" in general. They sell online a variety of seeds to foreign and local farmers, provide tasty recipes with these ingredients and share interesting information related to plants and green living. Their entrepreneurial techniques and creativity were recently recognised by Jobable Scholarship and their business plan stood out from more than 100 entries at a competition.

The second story is about a Journalism student. With the support from the Uniqlo Scholarship, the student took a 5-day trip to Tokyo to learn about the apparel industry and the fast fashion business. He was taken to the company and had a chance to speak with the founder in person.

In the third story, a BBA Finance student chose to board a 105-day voyage, with financial assistance from various donors, to visit 12 cities in 11 countries on the "floating campus" of Semester at Sea. The biggest takeaway for the student from the voyage was the exposure, awareness of and receptiveness for diverse cultures, religions and traditions of different places.

These are just three of many hundreds of stories of our students. We firmly believe that attracting and supporting students with multiple talents and providing all of them with cross-cultural learning experiences outside HK and in the campus are important steps to provide **best student experience**, which is the first priority in the University's Institutional Strategic

Plan 2018-28. We are committed to nurturing our students to become creative, caring and ethical leaders and who will contribute to the development of Hong Kong, the region and the world. Your donations to the scholarships and bursaries are critical for achieving these goals. We are very grateful to have you as our partners in developing our students and work towards a better future for the generations to come.

Once again, thank you all for your generous donations and we hope you will enjoy the conversations with our students and listening to their stories. Thank you very much.