

New Student Orientation 2016
Welcoming Address by President Leonard K Cheng
23 August 2016

Students, Teachers, Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon to you all.

On behalf of Lingnan University, I welcome you all to our New Student Orientation. It really gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome our freshmen to the University community. I joined Lingnan three years ago, intrigued by the University's unique education philosophy, i.e. liberal arts education. I hope you are as excited as I have been to enter a campus with unlimited possibilities.

Recently, there is a survey which indicates that the salary of university graduates has dropped to a level which is almost the same as that of high school graduates. Some critics therefore say that pursuing a university degree is a waste of time and money.¹

But is this really the case? What is the value of a university education? I believe that the main goal of university education is to facilitate the intellectual maturation and development of students. Albert Einstein once said, "The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks." What then are the things that cannot be learned from textbooks alone? Today, I wish to share two.

The first thing is the joy of discovery with a close group of scholar-teachers and peers. If you check out our University's vision, mission and core values, you will see that our first Core Value is "to build a community of learning and discovery with collegial students and scholar-teachers who respect each other, keep an open mind, embrace diversity, tolerate different views, uphold academic freedom and freedom of expression, and accept responsibility for their words and deeds." I hope this is something you will appreciate and put into practice as you pursue for knowledge.

We emphasise the importance of "collegial community" because we want to make sure that students' learning process is one with guidance and support. Our small

¹ <http://skypost.ulifestyle.com.hk/港聞/新聞頭條/20160805/001/%E8%BF%91%E4%BB%A3%E5%A4%A7%E5%B0%88%E7%94%9F%E6%94%B6%E5%85%A5%20%E8%88%87%E9%AB%98%E4%B8%AD%E5%AD%B8%E6%AD%B7%E7%84%A1%E7%95%B0/225242>

class size ensures that students can make the most out of their study by working closely with a group of dedicated, learned and approachable faculty. Your professor's door is open when you need to discuss an academic subject, a career choice or even a personal problem, because the goal of our collegial community is your whole-person cultivation and all-round development, which make up our second Core Value.

The second thing I hope you will learn from university is empathy, i.e. the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Today, we live in a world where conflicts and violence between nations, races, religions, political parties and individuals are a daily fare. We need a generation of young people who have genuine care and respect for nature and humanity, as well as a broad understanding of the world. Indeed, "to care for others, to be responsible for their own actions, to serve the local community and beyond, and to make a positive impact for the betterment of humanity" is our University's third Core Value.

Our multi-cultural residential campus provides an excellent environment for us to understand the idea of common good, diversity and respect. In the coming four years, you may interact with hall-mates whose character and habits are entirely different from yours. You may also work with someone who has opposite views on your joint project. No matter what the situation is, I hope you will always have empathy and respect for each other. You are the first cohort for which Service-Learning is a graduation requirement. Through applying your academic knowledge to serve social needs of our community, you will not only discover new knowledge but also see your role in building a more humane society. Since only about 30% of your age group is admitted to a publicly funded university in Hong Kong, your privilege also entails social responsibility.

Going to university is not only about getting a well-paid job; it's a place for you to explore and transform. How much you receive at the end of the journey depends on how much efforts you have put in. As you begin your studies here at Lingnan, I urge you to develop winning attitudes right from today: set goals for yourself; study hard; learn as much as possible; make good use of the various opportunities available here at Lingnan and always remember the Lingnan Spirit of "passion, loyalty, perseverance, openness to different ideas and cultures, and a readiness to serve," our University's fourth core value. I trust that the vigorous and personal education at Lingnan will help you grow and achieve your potentials.

I hope you will enjoy the three-day orientation programme and I look forward to seeing you all on campus. Thank you!