

# Outstanding Consultancy Awards 1998

The PolyU Technology and Consultancy Co. Ltd. (PTeC), set up in 1997, is a not-for-profit service arm of the University. Many corporations and organizations have benefited from its comprehensive services, covering consultancy services, contract research, product development and design, laboratory testing, system design and improvement, surveys as well as sources for new technology and products.

PTeC has organized an award ceremony recently where awards were presented to departments or staff in recognition and appreciation of their valuable contribution to various consultancy projects.



## Highest Total Project Value (Individual Award)

Winner: Prof. Ko Jan-ming, Department of Civil & Structural Engineering  
 Merit: Prof. Tang Pak-lai, Department of Applied Biology & Chemical Technology  
 Dr. Li Xiang-zhong, Department of Civil & Structural Engineering

## Exceptional Consultancy Growth (Departmental Award)

Winner: Department of Applied Biology & Chemical Technology  
 Merit: Department of Applied Social Studies  
 Department of Applied Physics



**Prof. Albert Chan (left), Head, represented the Department of Applied Biology and Chemical Technology to receive the award.**

## Highest Total Project Value (Departmental Award)

Winner: Department of Civil & Structural Engineering  
 Merit: Department of Applied Biology & Chemical Technology  
 Department of Applied Social Studies



**The team behind the big award – members from Department of Civil and Structural Engineering.**

## Significant Staff Participation (Departmental Award)

Winner: Department of Civil & Structural Engineering  
 Merit: Department of Land Surveying & Geo-Informatics  
 Department of Building Services Engineering

## Largest Consultancy Projects (Individual Award)

Winner: *Investigation of Lantau fixed crossing and Ting Kau Bridge wind and structural health monitoring system*

- Project Leader: Prof. Ko Jan-ming
- Team Members: Dr. Chan Hung-tin, Dr. Law Siu-seong, Dr. Xu You-lin  
(all from Department of Civil & Structural Engineering)

Merit: *An evaluation of the need to upgrade the service professionalism of Hong Kong's tour co-ordinators*

- Project Leader: Dr. Kevin Wong, Department of Hotel & Tourism Management
  - Team Members: Dr. John Ap, Department of Hotel & Tourism Management
- Review of Vocational Training Council's apprenticeship system*
- Project Leader: Dr. Cheung Chi-ho, Department of Applied Social Studies
  - Team Members: Dr. Chan Yuk-chung, Department of Applied Social Studies  
 Mr. Chun Ping Kit, Department of Applied Social Studies  
 Ms. Lee Tsor-kui, Department of Applied Social Studies  
 Dr. Wong Ho-ching, Industrial Centre  
 Mrs. Yam Tang Pui-ye, Department of Business Studies  
 Mr. Yeung Fu-yiu, Department of Applied Social Studies



**The second Merit winner team, made up of the Department of Applied Social Studies, the Industrial Centre and the Department of Business Studies, showed a good example of strong inter-departmental collaboration.**

## Asian Industrial Technology Congress '99

In support of the Government's strategy to strengthen technological entrepreneurship, the PolyU is organizing the Asian Industrial Technology Congress (AITC) to promote high value-added technologies to industrialists in Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific Region.

The event will take place on 26–29 April at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Mr. Alwin Wong, PolyU's Head of Industrial Development (Technology Resources) and AITC Project Director, said, "The event will surely provide an

excellent opportunity for companies and research institutes to introduce new technologies and services to a large group of potential industrial users."

Naturally the congress will also be an important gathering for industrialists who wish to seek new technologies and products to improve the productivity and competitiveness of their operations in Hong Kong and other parts of Asia.

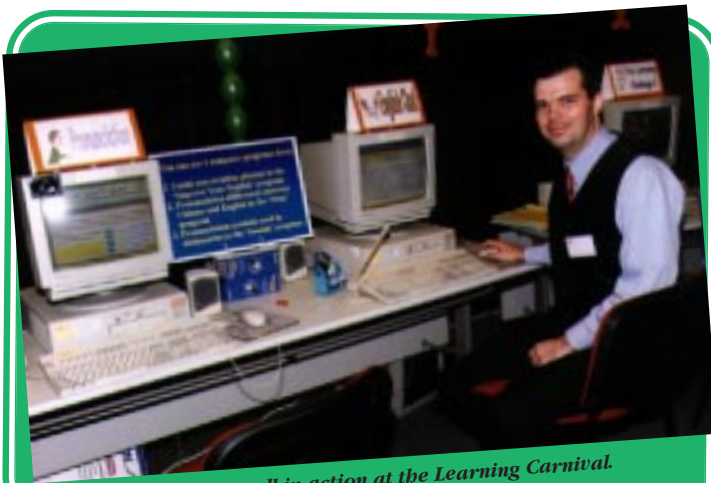
The last AITC held in 1997 successfully attracted nearly 600 senior executives from key industrial establishments within the region. With the support of 68 local and overseas industrial organizations, the

response to AITC '99 is expected to be more encouraging.

AITC '99 will focus on three functional technology areas, namely manufacturing and design technology, new materials for manufacturing and environmental technology, the applications of which are expected to grow significantly in the coming decade.

Mr. Chau Tak-hay, the Government's Secretary for Trade and Industry, and Dr. Chiang Chen, Chairman of Chiang's Industrial Charity Foundation, are Honorary Patron and Honorary President of the congress respectively. ❖

## Jockey Club Learning Carnival



*Andy Morrall in action at the Learning Carnival.*



*Participants and guests watch an entertaining dance show which kicks off the event.*

At the invitation of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Chris Greaves and Andy Morrall of the English Language Centre demonstrated language learning packages produced by the Centre at the Hong Kong Jockey Club's "Learning Carnival" on November 26–27 last year. The event was provided for all Jockey Club staff and showcased a number of learning-centred exhibitions and activities, with contributions from various

Hong Kong institutions and publishers. The English Language Centre contributed to the "Talking Shop" part of the event, and featured two language learning programmes developed by Andy Morrall and the Virtual Language Centre website, co-ordinated by Chris Greaves. The programmes were demonstrated and displayed in a booth with four computers set up for visitors' use. ❖

## Study calls for professional training of tour guides

A recent consultancy study conducted at the PolyU has called for compulsory training for new tour guides and the introduction of a certification and registration system to enhance the service professionalism of tour co-ordinators in Hong Kong.

Entitled “An Evaluation of the Need to Upgrade the Service Professionalism of Hong Kong’s Tour Co-ordinators”, the study was commissioned by The Hong Kong Association of Registered Tour Co-ordinators (HARTCO) and financed by the Industry Department’s Services Support Fund.

The survey was done in response to a general impression that the level of service professionalism of local tour co-ordinators had been declining, which might not be up to international standards. There was a need for review and upgrade.

Following the conclusion of the 10-month project in September last year, the findings and recommendations of the study were released last December. As one of the PolyU’s largest consultancy projects in 1997/98, the study has claimed a merit



*Dr. Kevin Wong looks into the service professionalism of local tour co-ordinators.*

award in the University’s recent Outstanding Consultancy Awards scheme. (See related story on page 20.)

The project was led by Dr. Kevin Wong, Senior Lecturer and Dr. John Ap, Associate Professor of the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management. Dr. Wong was the Principal Project Consultant and Dr. Ap was the Project Consultant.

“The objective of the study,” Dr. Wong said, “was to evaluate the current professional status of Hong Kong’s tour co-ordinators, and to examine the need to upgrade their service standards.”

The researchers began with an extensive international benchmark survey to obtain an overview of tour guiding standards and practices elsewhere in the world. Questionnaires were sent to 46 relevant associations in countries and cities including the Mainland, Macau, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Canada, the US and the UK.

This was followed by a critical assessment of the current practices of tour operation in Hong Kong. In-depth interviews with key industry players were arranged and a questionnaire survey was conducted on the perceptions and views of HARTCO’s registered tour co-ordinators.

The findings and results obtained were used to formulate the agenda for the third and final stage, which involved a focus group interview and the formulation of Strategic Action Plans for HARTCO.

HARTCO was established in 1984 under the auspices of the Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) to promote the professional status of tour co-ordinators in the territory. Its membership is open to qualified tour co-ordinators who have



*Key tourism industry members and representatives from PolyU’s Department of Hotel and Tourism Management gathered for a focus group meeting held in July 1998.*

successfully completed the training programme organized by HKTA. Presently, however, among the estimated 2,500 tour co-ordinators, only 500 are HARTCO members and “Registered Tour Co-ordinators” with HKTA.

Based on their findings and analyses of practices in other countries, the research team formulated a set of policy recommendations:

**Training** – It was recommended that all new entrants to the industry undergo comprehensive basic training and pass a basic examination. The training programme should be 40 per cent theoretical and 60 per cent practical, with an emphasis on simulated tour guiding activities, on-site and on-coach practicals. For practising tour co-ordinators, the training and examination should be totally or partly waived, depending on individual experience and qualifications. An advanced executive tour management course can also be offered at a later stage for the tour co-ordinators who would like to become tour managers.

**Registration/licensing** – To maintain tour co-ordinators’ professionalism, formal registration/licensing should be implemented. This can be done by self-regulated registration or licensing through legislation. Registration should be renewed every two or three years. Advanced registration can be introduced for those with upgraded qualifications.

**Monitoring system** – It was recommended that a practical and enforceable monitoring and control system be adopted, including the issuance of photo identity



*Tour guides play an important role in promoting Hong Kong to visitors from various parts of the world.*



cards to all registered tour co-ordinators, random on-the-spot checks of these cards, and the establishment of a schedule of penalties for unprofessional or criminal conduct.

**Code of conduct/ethics** – In terms of service quality, the study proposed that a code of conduct/ethics, based on international standards and practices, be set up for Hong Kong’s tour co-ordinators. It also suggested reviewing under-cost pricing by some tour operators, setting up an Industry Task Force to review tour co-ordinators’ heavy reliance on shopping commissions, and improving on the overall language proficiency of tour co-ordinators, especially in English and Putonghua.

**Public awareness** — The study urged that special public awareness programmes be held to help dispel misconceptions about the profession, and raise its profile and image in the community.

**Role of HARTCO** — The study suggested that HARTCO should play a more active role in representing the interests of and providing more tangible benefits for its members.

Hong Kong’s tour co-ordinators form a crucial front line in Hong Kong’s tourism industry. This study provides a valuable framework for the further expansion of this important sector of the tourism industry in the territory.

The PolyU’s Department of Hotel and Tourism Management is currently the only higher education institution in Hong Kong offering hotel, catering and tourism studies. The Department is also actively engaged in research and consultancy to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism industry. ❖

## Workshop probes treatment technology and motorcycle emissions

The PolyU and the Environmental Protection Department jointly organized a workshop last month for experts at home and abroad to discuss new technologies for reducing in-use diesel vehicles and control of motorcycle emissions.

The workshop, held at the Chiang Chen Studio Theatre on campus, was inaugurated by Prof. Poon Chung-kwong, President of the PolyU; Mr. Ira Kasoff, Chief Commercial Consul of the US Consulate General; Mr. Dale Mckinnon, Deputy Director of Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association; Dr. Michael Shen, Regional Sales Manager of Engelhard Asia Pacific INC. and Mr. Mike Stokoe, Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Department.

The two-day event was sponsored by Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited, United States-Asia Environmental Partnership, United States Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association and Engelhard Asia Pacific INC, and attracted more than 190 participants.



*Prof. Ronald So (right), Chair and Head of Mechanical Engineering, presents a souvenir to Mr. Dale Mckinnon, Deputy Director of Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association.*



*Mr. Ira Kasoff (left), Chief Commercial Consul of the US Consulate General, compares notes with Mr. Mike Stokoe, Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Department.*

The workshop, as mentioned by Prof. Poon at the opening ceremony, carried the mission of the University, i.e. partnership with the business and industry community.

The workshop was organized into three sessions. The first session focused on the vehicle emissions and control strategies at national level, presented by the State Environmental Protection Administration of China, and also that at city level, presented by Environmental Protection Agencies in Guangzhou, Zhuhai and Hong Kong.

State-of-the-art diesel emission control technologies were introduced in the second session. Michael Walsh, an American diesel expert, predicted that technologies could be improved to a stage at which the incoming and outgoing air quality through a diesel engine would be the same, if not better.

In the last session, Dr. C.S. Cheung of PolyU's Mechanical Engineering Department presented a particulate trap being developed. There was also a discussion amongst representatives from various vehicle organizations regarding diesel vehicle exhaust emission control measures imposed by the Environmental Protection Department in Hong Kong.

Mr. Tse Chin-wan, Assistant Director of the Environmental Protection Department, concluded at the closing of the workshop that the event provided an excellent opportunity for participants not only to get the latest possible solutions to diesel emission but also to share their experience with people in the same industry. ❖



*Mr. Lui Po-chiu, Operations Director of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Ltd. (right) receives a souvenir from Prof. Ko Jan-ming, Head of the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering.*



*(Sitting, from left) Mr. Michael Shen, Regional Sales Manager of Engelhard Asia Pacific INC, Mr. Dale Mckinnon and Mr. Mike Stokoe listen as President Prof. Poon welcomes all to the workshop.*