In recent years, Hong Kong’s textiles and clothing industry has been labelled by some people as a ‘sunset’ industry. Is the industry really going downhill? Prof. Philip Yeung Kwok-wing, Dean of Faculty of Applied Science and Textiles and Chair of Textiles and Clothing, and industrialist Ms. Sophie Leung Lau Yau-fun have talked to Profile about the challenges and opportunities facing the industry.

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The road ahead for Hong Kong’s textiles and clothing industry

by Connie Chan

For decades, the textiles and clothing industry has been one of Hong Kong’s largest export-earner and the dominant employer of the territory’s manufacturing workforce. But in recent years, some people are suggesting that the industry is shrinking, labeling it as a ‘sunset’ industry. Is the industry really going downhill?

Prof. Philip Yeung Kwok-wing, Chair of Textiles and Clothing and Dean of Faculty of Applied Science and Textiles at the PolyU, said people who hold this pessimistic view see only the manufacturing part of the industry. “It’s true that manufacturing activities in Hong Kong have diminished, due to expensive land and manpower, but if the industry is viewed as a whole, taking into account product development, marketing and merchandising etc., Hong Kong’s textiles and apparel business is as strong as ever.”

Government statistics provide the best indicators that bespeak the importance and vitality of the industry. In 1997, domestic exports of textiles and clothing products, including re-exports, amounted to $291,947 million, accounting for 20 per cent of the total export. Hong Kong is also a world leader in textiles and clothing trade and has consistently ranked in the top five of the world’s largest exporters.

According to Prof. Yeung, the true picture is that the industry is gradually assuming a new look.

Over the past decade, Hong Kong’s textiles and clothing industry has undergone a substantial transformation. From a pure manufacturing base, we have moved to become an important regional business centre for sourcing garments and textiles products,” Prof. Yeung said.

In view of the escalating cost of producing locally, many companies have moved their production plants to the Mainland and Southeast Asia to take advantage of the low labour and space costs, while operating local offices and factories to deal with product development and design, merchandising and the overall production control and management.

This strategy of a global production network, together with efforts in product and process upgrading, have enabled the industry to successfully maintain its leading position in the global market.

“Hong Kong has established a good name as a reliable sourcing and control centre for international buyers. We are well known for good product quality, flexibility and above all on-time delivery. Many buyers in fact are willing to pay 10 to 20 per cent more sourcing from Hong Kong for the guarantee of quality.
“And I believe this will continue to be the direction of development for the industry in the foreseeable future,” the professor said.

Prof. Yeung pointed out that manpower requirements have also changed along with the changing face of the industry.

To remain competitive in the world market, the industry needs high-calibre people who are skilful in advanced technology to upgrade products and processes. People with good marketing and management skills are also in great demand to support Hong Kong’s operations as a control centre.

The PolyU’s Institute of Textiles and Clothing (ITC) has promptly responded to this industry need by introducing new programmes with a merchandising and marketing core, and plans are in hand to bring in the focus of product development in the

Apparel Product Development and Marketing: Set to become an Area of Excellence

Major projects

**Development of Product-based Information Systems**

The objective is to develop product-based information systems for denim wear and knitwear, integrating databases and expert systems of relevance to consumer needs, market competition, product specification, textiles and clothing manufacturing technology, design, merchandising and marketing strategies.

**Design of Light Weight Denim Fabrics for Apparel**

The project will deliver a developed technology for the design and production of lightweight denim, in addition to providing sampling service for aesthetically enhanced fabrics and apparel. Fine counts of rotor-spun yarn will also be developed.

**Study of Colour Variations that occur after Denim Warp Yarn Dyeing and Garment Washdown**

By establishing a correct control of warp yarn dyeing parameters and by working out the relationship between dye penetration and dyeing parameters, the quality of warp dyeing will be significantly improved. The problems of shade depth variation often encountered by garment washing companies will also be solved.

**Investigating the Markets of Denim Wear in Hong Kong and the Mainland**

This project will investigate the consumption patterns, consumer behaviour and brand awareness of young people in the Mainland in the context of denim apparel. Research will focus on Beijing, Shanghai, Xian, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Harbin of the Mainland as well as Hong Kong. Information obtained will be useful to manufacturers and retailers in determining product characteristics and merchandise assortments.

**Alternative Methods for Pumice Stone Washing**

Denim washing using pumice stones generates considerable solid waste. The project will explore alternative methods of achieving the stone-washed effect and the possibilities of modifying pumice stones or replacing it with new materials.
undergraduate curriculum. Technology training too will be product based.

In addition, a new award in Fashion Retailing has been added to the Higher Diploma/Higher Certificate Scheme in Fashion and Textiles Studies and a new award in Apparel Merchandising has also been added to the distance-learning Certificate in Fashion and Clothing Manufacture in the current academic year.

"As Hong Kong's sole provider of textiles and clothing education at tertiary level, ITC has the responsibility of meeting industry's manpower requirements promptly and correctly. That's why we've always been proactive in assessing training needs and all our programmes are subject to regular review to ensure that the contents are up-to-date and meet the current needs of the industry," Prof. Yeung emphasized.

Industrialist Mrs. Sophie Leung Lau Yau-fun agreed with Prof. Yeung that Hong Kong has a competitive edge as a regional or even global service centre for international buyers, but she warned that it can be dangerous if the industry relies too much on outward processing arrangements.

"The massive shift of production operations to low wage countries will not benefit the industry in the long run. If Hong Kong is to focus on high value-added products, then manufacturing should be based locally so that the production process can be closely monitored to ensure optimal quality and on-time delivery," said Mrs. Leung, who represents the textiles and garment functional constituency on the Legislative Council.

Prof. Yeung and the legislator are on the same front when we talk about the problems facing the industry.

People's misconception of the industry is the biggest problem. Prof. Yeung said Hong Kong people often wrongly think that the local textiles and clothing industry is a 'sunset' industry where career prospects are few and gloomy, and many young people are thus discouraged to join the industry.

Furthermore, people nowadays prefer working in the service and financial sectors, thinking that they offer better prospects and this has made manpower recruitment really difficult. "Indeed, the industry has been gravely misunderstood and neglected," Mrs. Leung exclaimed.

Hong Kong's textiles and garment industry has been relatively slow in adopting hi-technology and this is another major problem, according to Mrs. Leung.

"The industry has not been very active in research and development, and this probably has to do with the fact that most companies were traditionally mainly engaged in commissioned jobs which normally do not require a lot of R&D on the part of the local company," Prof. Yeung elaborated.

But in order to expand into the high value-added market, the industry needs to employ advanced technology that will help to increase productivity and improve quality.

"It is against this challenging background that the PolyU has recently selected Apparel Product Development and Marketing for further development into an Area of Excellence (AoE) of international pre-eminence. Our goal is to build upon our existing strength to help industry enhance its competitiveness through application of advanced product development and process techniques," said Prof. Yeung.

More recently, the Government's Industry and Technology Development Council has recommended a grant of $4.99 million to support ITC and the Clothing Industry Training Authority to jointly establish the territory's first Textiles Manufacturing Technology Centre to help the industry develop and upgrade their employees' skills in quality evaluation.

The road ahead for Hong Kong's textiles and clothing industry is filled with potentials and opportunities as it is with challenges and obstacles. But given Hong Kong people's intelligence and adaptability to changes, chances are high that we shall overcome all obstacles and thrive on the challenges if the industrial sector, the university and the government will join hands in working out a long-term development strategy for the industry.
香港紡織及製衣業的發展前景

過去數十年來，紡織及製衣業一直是香港外貿的重要支柱和勞動人口的主要僱主。可是，近年來有關這門工業萎縮的傳聞四起，究竟紡織及製衣業是否真的變成了“夕陽工業”？

理大紡織及製衣學講座教授兼應用科學及紡織學院院長楊國榮教授表示，持這種悲觀論調的人的着眼點有限於工業的生產部分。他說：“無可否認，由於香港的土地價格及投資成本，純粹從事工業生產的業務規模的確大不如前；但是若我們從宏觀的角度看，把產品發展、市場推廣和營銷也考慮在內，香港的紡織及製衣業仍是十分興旺。”

事實上，根據政府統計，一九九七年外銷的紡織及成衣產品佔本港外貿總值兩成；論成衣外貿貿易額，香港一直位列全球第五名內。

楊教授指出，紡織及製衣業在近年經歷了重大的轉變，香港已經由一個專注生產的基地蛻變為亞太區內購置成衣產品的重要商業中心。很多公司已將生產線遷移到內地和東南亞，由香港的辦事處負責產品設計和管理工作。這些投資全球生產網絡模式的策略，配合產品質量提升，進到香港的紡織及製衣業可以在世界市場保持領導地位。楊教授相信，在可見的將來這也是工業應有的發展方向。

另一方面，隨著工業發展出現新面貌，對人力資源有不同的需求。楊教授稱業界不僅需要高素質的技術人才提高產品和生產程序的質量，也需要外僑的市場推廣和管理專才從事營運和管理工作。為配合這發展，理大紡織及製衣學系已因應推出多項不同程序的新課程，滿足業界的需求。楊教授強調，理大作為全港唯一有提供紡織及成衣課程的高等院校，對培育專才資質勞資；校方會定期評估業界對培訓的需要，並確保課程內容足以應付工業的需要。

資深業內人士，首屆立法會紡織及製衣界功能界別代表梁劉楚芳女士認為楊教授的意見，認為香港確有成為國際成衣貿易服務中心的優勢。不過，她指出若業界過分依賴工序外包還會帶來隱患。她說：“長遠而言，把生產過程大幅遷移到低工資國家對工業發展沒有好處。若然香港要發展高增值的產品，便需培育本地生產能力，配合海外生產地也加以配合。這樣纔可以令生產過程受到更嚴格的監控，確保質量控制和生產標準。”

論及業界面臨的問題，楊教授與劉議員異口同聲指出“勞工”是最大問題。由於香港人普遍有錯覺認為紡織及製衣業為夕陽工業，很多年青人毫無信心及興趣而對此產業不願意投身業內發展，令到招聘人材方面遇上困難。

此外，劉議員指出紡織及製衣業要換用高科技亦構成另一挑戰。楊教授補充說，大部分本地公司從傳統的生產模式轉型，而是要擴展高增值產品市場，紡織及製衣業需要採用先進科技提高生產力，改善產品質量。他說：“理正是在這個挑戰性的背底下，選定服裝產品開發及市場推廣為卓越學術領域。我們的目的是要建構在現有的基礎上，透過推廣產品發展和生產的先進技術加強工業的競爭力。”最近理大更獲得政府工業支援資金的捐助，與製衣業訓練局合作籌辦全港第一所紡織科技研發中心。

香港的紡織及製衣業的前景既有機遇，也有障礙。憑著香港人一貫面對轉變的智慧和適應力，工業界，大學和政府定可攜手合作釐訂對策，促使紡織及製衣業蓬勃發展。

理大將發展成卓越學術領域——服裝產品開發及市場推廣

主要研究項目

發展產品資訊系統
研究發展牛仔布產品資訊系統，就顧客所需，市場競爭及產品類別，紡織及成衣製造科技、設計、寶寶推銷以及市場策略等範疇而設立綜合資料庫及專家系統。

探討香港與中國內地的牛仔布服裝市場
是項研究項目將深入分析年青人對牛仔布服裝產品的消費模式及商標意識等。主要研究地點包括中國多個城市，結果將有助製造商及零售商確定產品的特點及商品分類。

設計輕便牛仔布織帶
這研究計劃可提供更優良的織物及服裝樣本，推動設計及製造輕便牛仔布的先進科技，及發展軟材料的幼枝。

研究牛仔布輕紡染及成長洗後出現的顏色差異
透過準確的輕紡染色變數控制及設計，了解染料滲透能力及變數的關係，輕紡染色的素質控制可以顯著改善。這項研究將是解決成長洗後公司日常遇到的顏色深淺差異問題。

淨水石洗技術的另類方法
傳統方法會產生大量固體廢料，是項研究將開發另類方法，改良現時淨水石洗技術或改用新的物料取代，達到環保的理想效果。
**Newcomers to the University Council**

**理大歡迎校董會新成員**

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University welcomes four new members who were appointed by the Government to serve on the University Council for a term of three years from March 31, 1998.

The four appointees are: Mr. Victor Cha Mou-zing, Managing Director of HKR Asia-Pacific Pte Limited; Dr. York Chow Yat-ngok, MBE, Hospital Chief Executive of Queen Elizabeth Hospital; Mr. David Chris Lee Tsung-hei, JP, Managing Director of David C Lee Surveyors Limited; Mr. Liang Xiao-ting, First Deputy General Manager of the Bank of China (Hong Kong Branch).

The PolyU also bid farewell to four members who have recently completed their term of service. The four outgoing members were Mr. Vincent Cheng Hoi-chuen, Prof. Tam Sheung-wai, Dr. Lui Ming-wah and Mr. Allan Wong Chi-yun.

**Council Chairman exchanges views with student leaders**

Dr. Sir Gordon Wu, the University Council Chairman, and Prof. Poon Chung-kwong, the President, met with 28 outgoing and incoming Executive Committee members of the Students’ Union at a tea gathering on March 27 to exchange views on a wide range of issues including Hong Kong’s development in politics, university education, and other matters of concern to the students.

Sir Gordon emphasized that apart from imparting knowledge and professional skills, university education must seek to develop the character of students and strengthen their sense of social responsibility.

The students were also briefed on the PolyU’s policy to introduce mandatory general education programme in the 1998/99 academic year, and on a number of extra-curricular programmes organized by the Student Affairs Office, like the Complementary Studies Programme and Dinner Talks which seek to facilitate the all-round development of students.

There were also discussions on issues such as: government expenditure on education, financial assistance for students, the design of student hostels, and communication between Students’ Union and PolyU Management.
振興香港工業策略
Strategies to vitalize HK’s industry

香港理工大學校長潘宗光教授於六月十九日在振興香港工業策略會議上演講
The PolyU President Prof. Poon Chung-kwong shared his insights on how to vitalize the short-term and long-term development of the industry in a recent Conference.

香港經濟有今天的局面，固然由多方面因素造成，其中包括受地區經濟環境影響，內外勢力的相互影響，等等。香港工業界在過去數十年裏曾經歷過春風，也經歷過冬天。這其中所存在的問題，是多方面的，也是複雜的。但總的來說，我們可以看得到，香港工業界在經歷了長期的困難時期後，現在正逐步走出了陰霾，開始出現了新的希望。

我們建議工業社團和高等教育院校積極對話，進行下面的合作：

(1) 與高等院校的學校和知識界，以定期交流的方法，為工業界設計和開發在短期內可以推出的新產品和中長期可以用以增加競爭力的新科技。

(2) 透過高等院校的聯合，儘量運用中國內地高素質和低成本的技術和人力資源。

(3) 建立中短期員工持續培訓計劃，使員工經濟不景期中吸收更多新知識和技術。

(4) 支持優秀的領導層員工，在不離職的情況下於大學進修實用性的高等課程。

(5) 推行大學各系的大學生暑期實習計劃，使學生熟悉實際工作環境和習慣。

(6) 鼓勵高素質的教學人員參與工業界的應用科研和產品開發；或分期投入工業界的工作，從而了解工業的需求和趨勢。

(7) 大學在新設科研部門的前綱下，開放設施，為工業界提供服務，並投入本身的資源，支持上述的合作項目。

(8) 工業界採取更多的主動，與大學討論及進行合作，並在實用專業知識和財政上，積極支持上述的合作項目。

我們向政府建議：

(1) 正視工業界在整體經貿中的重要性，不要偏重服務行業。增加社會，尤其是年青人，宣傳工業的重要，鼓勵他們修讀有關科及在工業界就業。

(2) 修訂大學資助資助的辦法，承認職員在應用科研工作的努力和成果，和與工業界的合作和服務。

(3) 檢討和修訂有關資助章程，刪除不必要的和有障礙的條文，並增加款支持大學與工業界共同進行新產品設計開發，新品牌的拓展和市場研究。

(4) 撥款支持中小企業與大學合作進行新科技開發和高等人力培訓，或提供額外的減稅額（Tax credit）。

(5) 撥款支持學生暑期實習計劃，為工業界培養實用人才。

理工大學希望能盡一份子力，為振興工業盡我們的力量。所以我們在未來的六年裡，將會投入大量的資源，開放我們的優良和先進設備，鼓勵我們的員工，和工業界進行好幾項合作計劃，包括：

(1) 成立創新高級產品開發中心：僱用全職專業人員，在學者專家指導下，為工業界開設新產品。初期計劃與玩具業，醫療器械業，家電業和紡織機械業合作。由16間國內外著名大學組成的理學協作網，將積極參與這個中心的工作。理大將分擔開設的風險。

(2) 提供新的實用課程資助，培養能具體結合管理和市場專門知識的工業人才。並將整體課程用模塊式的培訓，提供給工業界人士。初期計劃為不設四個行業提供十項中短期的及新課程。

(3) 為業內人士提供不需退職的實用深造研究課程。學員可改變企業和企業領導層指導下作特定的研究生完成後可獲碩士學位。理大派出席資設施外，將資助學員薪資的一半。首批將設置約20個名額。

(4) 通過理大在杭州浙江大學的培訓中心和在廣州華南理工大學與香港青年工業家協會合作成立的培訓中心，為香港工業在內地的員工提供大量的中短期培訓。初期每年為約十千企業提供服務。

理大深切明瞭當前的困境，但對香港人克服挑戰，再創業的能力充滿信心。讓我們同舟共濟，結合智慧和力量，一起為我們和下一代的未來奮鬥，再放東方之珠的光芒。
More than 90 per cent of the 1997 batch of degree graduates secured suitable employments within six months after their graduation.

According to the Graduate Employment Survey conducted by the PolyU’s Student Affairs Office, 1,619 (91.3 per cent) of the 1,773 respondents with bachelor’s degrees found full-time employment while 3.2 per cent or 57 were still seeking suitable employment by end-1997.

The average basic salary of this group of graduates stood at $12,275, representing an increase of 5.2 per cent compared to that of 1996.

The study reviewed the employment status as of December 31, 1997 of the 3,679 PolyU graduates who completed their full-time studies at undergraduate, sub-degree and postgraduate levels last summer.

Overall, 84.7 per cent of those surveyed found employment and 0.2 per cent were self-employed. While another 8.7 per cent continued with their academic pursuit, 1.4 per cent were underemployed — starting off with a part-time job, and 4.2 per cent were unemployed.

<table>
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<th>Level of Award</th>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree 碩士學位</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>$19,781</td>
<td>−13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree 學士學位</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>$12,275</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-experience Diploma 違修文憑</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$41,620</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Diploma 高級文憑</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>$10,192</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma 文憑</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>$12,937</td>
<td>−2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic salary by award and employment sector 畢業生平均基本收入
The overall basic monthly salary of graduates averaged $11,899, representing an increase of 2.7 per cent over that of 1996. The figure comes to $12,578 when allowances and commissions are counted as well, i.e. a growth rate of 2.4 per cent over the previous year. More than half of the graduates received salaries in the range of $8,000–$11,999.

Of those employed, 62 per cent had more than one job offer, and more than 80 per cent secured their first offer by August 1997 and said that their training at the PolyU was relevant to their jobs. The average number of job offers received was 2.6, same as in the previous year.

Given the University's strong links with industry, a substantial 547 (22.2 per cent) of the employed graduates have previous working experience with their current employer, undertaking training during placement or doing summer job before they graduated. This represents a steady growth compared to the 1996 figure.

The Survey also revealed that as in 1996, about 17 per cent of those employed were required to work outside Hong Kong, and among them, 85 per cent had to work in the Mainland.

The above findings were based on 2,902 questionnaires returned, making up a response rate of about 79 per cent.
Despite the current economic downturn, nearly 400 students of the PolyU will enjoy the privilege of undertaking summer training in established companies and organizations in Hong Kong and overseas.

The summer placements in Hong Kong are secured by the PolyU with Partner Companies participating in the ‘Preferred Graduate’ Development Programme, a collaborative scheme which was established in 1996 with employers to provide practical training to students before their graduation. About 170 companies have already joined the unique scheme.

Under this scheme, the PolyU successfully placed 255 students in Hong Kong during the summer of 1997. This year, a total of 314 local placement openings are available to PolyU students.

Backed by the success of this initiative, the PolyU has recently expanded this Programme to an international level with the support of the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) and various academic departments within the Institution.

Specifically, 40 students will take up job placements for more than four weeks in China Mainland, the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Norway. Travelling subsidies are granted to participating students on a need basis.

The students, who come from 10 departments, are recruited from the disciplines of engineering, hotel and tourism management, optometry, radiography, nursing, health sciences and applied sciences. Some of them will have the opportunity to work in famous international companies like Walt Disney or Nokia.

In addition, 18 students in maritime studies will be heading for practical training in Japan and Shanghai in two groups, while another 30 students in optometry and radiography will be placed in hospitals in China Mainland.

On June 6, the students received special orientation on working in a different culture and general adjustment arranged by the PolyU’s Student Affairs Office. A number of enthusiastic PolyU staff members who have lived or worked overseas also shared their experience with these students.

Besides, all participating students of the ‘Preferred Graduate’ Development Programme were invited to join the Pre-Placement Orientation Programme which featured keynote presentations by prominent speakers on such topics as Communication at Work, The Effective Team Player, “Winning” in the World of Work and Surviving the First Day/Week at Work.
Under this Programme, Partner Companies are invited to enter into an agreement for an initial period of three years, during which the PolyU will provide them with an agreed number of students in disciplines that match the needs of the companies. Based on the requirements of the companies, the PolyU conducts a recruitment exercise among its full-time, non-final-year undergraduate students to find suitable trainees. The number and types of students required may be flexibly reviewed by the companies.

During the summer placements, Partner Companies provide the student trainees with on-the-job training which is relevant to the disciplines they study, while the PolyU provides the students with pre-placement training and help monitor their performance during the placement period.

Upon satisfactory completion of the placement exercise, each participating student will receive a Certificate of Accomplishment jointly issued by the Partner Companies and the University.
New centre to launch general education courses

With a view to broaden students’ horizons and further strengthen its full-time curriculum, the PolyU has recently set up a General Education Centre (GEC) as an independent academic unit to offer mandatory courses in a wide variety of subjects starting September this year.

The Centre will adopt a curriculum framework which emphasizes informed judgement and critical thinking. Initially, it will offer a total of 25 subjects categorized into five broad domains, i.e., Science, History, Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Values. (Please refer to table)

The PolyU President, Prof. Poon Chung-kwong, said the subjects were designed “to facilitate an enriching process to enable students to perceive their main studies in a broader perspective and relate their chosen profession to a wide variety of contexts.”

With the Hong Kong society undergoing various social and economic changes, our students need to acquire awareness and understanding of the changes taking place and recognize their social responsibilities,” he said.

The PolyU Senate decided in February 1997 that starting 1998/99 all full-time PolyU students of first degree programmes funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) would be required to study two compulsory subjects of general education. Each worth three credits, these subjects are to be taken from two separate domains in two separate years. All full-time students enrolled in UGC-funded sub-degree programmes must also take one mandatory general education subject worth three credits.

General Education subjects will be taught in mass lectures as well as in small group tutorials. While there will be continuous assessment of students' assignments throughout the semester, all students will also be required to sit for an examination and pass the mandatory subjects before they will be awarded their qualifications.

Taking up the challenge of running the new centre is Dr. Stephen Lau Shek-lam, who joined the PolyU as Acting Head of the Centre on May 1 when GEC was formally established. Dr. Lau has been instrumental in setting up the General Education Division in Lingnan College and developing its General Education Programme.

Given the “pragmatic” attitude of some of today’s students, he said it was not that easy to make general education successful. Nevertheless he was confident that the PolyU is off for a good start: “The range of subjects we offer is rather comprehensive and I’m most happy to see extremely enthusiastic support from other academic departments.”

The general education subjects will be taught by, apart from GEC’s five full-time lecturers, teaching staff of a number of other academic departments.

Dr. Lau expresses confidence in the future of GEC.
Advanced facilities promotes independent Chinese learning

A new Centre for Independent Chinese Language Learning has been set up to provide PolyU students with the opportunity to brush up their language skills at their own pace.

Despite its relatively small size, the Centre is equipped with many self-learning kits and supported by on-site tutors. Notably, some interactive software programmes on wrongly written or mispronounced characters, simplified Chinese characters, punctuation and practical writings have been developed by PolyU staff.

Starting from the 1998/99 academic year, written Chinese and Putonghua will be included as compulsory subjects in all full-time curriculum, and the Centre is expected to attract more students to make use of its services.

The Centre was incorporated into the Chinese Language Centre which was established in June to oversee curriculum development and Chinese teaching.

General Education subjects to be offered

**Philosophy**
- Critical Thinking
- Aspects of Western Philosophy
- Morality and Politics
- Science, Superstition and Society

**Values**
- Social Ethics
- World Issues and Human Responsibilities
- Love, Intimacy and Sexuality
- Life and Death
- Culture and Society
- Introduction to Worldviews
- Introduction to Popular Culture
- Gender and Ethics

**Aesthetics**
- Appreciation of Chinese Music
- Art and Aesthetics
- Film, Art and Society
- Hong Kong Cinema

**History**
- Socialist Market Economics and China
- History of Modern China
- Modern Southeast Asia
- The Making of Modern World
- The Emergence of Hong Kong Society

**Science**
- The Earth and Its Observation
- Energy and the Environment
- Nuclear Perspectives
- Exploration of the Cosmos

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HEADLINE NEWS

A visitor plays with the touchscreen computer programme on learning simplified Chinese characters. Looking on are Dr. Young Kun-kang (right), Mr. Cheung Kai-pui and Mr. Poon Cheuk-lam.
PolyU receives strong boost from Industry Support Fund

In the recent allocation exercise of the Industry Support Fund (ISF), the Government’s Industry and Technology Development Council has recommended a grant of $15.91 million to support the PolyU to carry out five initiatives that would enhance the competitiveness of local industry.

These projects should be completed within a period of four years, and funding committed for the year 1998/99 amounts to $5.75 million.

With this grant, the PolyU, again, will be hosting the Asian Industrial Technology Congress in January 1999 to promote technology transfer in the Region. Moreover, research teams from three academic departments will embark on their respective endeavours, and the Institution’s unique Teaching Company Scheme (TCS) will continue to operate for another four years.

The Congress will comprise three symposia focusing on different technology areas, and more than 120 readily transferable new technologies will be introduced to 700 key industry executives from Hong Kong and the Region.

With funding support from the ISF, PolyU receives strong boost from Industry Support Fund

The Material Research Centre.

The Material Research Centre.

The Material Research Centre.

three different initiatives undertaken by the Institute of Textiles and Clothing (ITC), the Department of Applied Physics and the Department of Manufacturing Engineering will

理大獲工業支援撥款 進行五項大型計劃

透過工業支援資源計劃的撥款，來自理大紡織及製衣學系、應用物理學系及製造工程學系的研究人員將會積極展開五項大型應用研究。其中，理大紡織及製衣學系與製衣業訓練局將攜手合作，籌辦港內第一所紡織科技研發中心。

身兼研究項目負責人的理大紡織及製衣學系主任盧德均博士表示，該中心將協助本港從事紡織品生產與貿易有關的商戶推廣品質評估，推廣品質保證的觀念。

由理大所舉辦的亞洲工業科技大會，目的為提高亞洲區工業的生產力及競爭能力。會期內將舉辦三個大型研討會，討論不同範疇的科技發展，並向與會者介紹超過一百二十項可即時應用的新穎科技及產品。預期活動會吸引到逾七百位來自香港及亞洲其他地區的工業家參與。

同時間，理大應用物理學系的陳顯昌教授與原材料研究中心的工作人員，將研究使用「智能」材料，作具有廣泛用途及高度經濟效益的製造傳感器與機械元件上，例如將壓電與熱敏電材料應用於醫學上的超聲圖像。

另一方面，製造工程學系的文煒忠博士及其研究人員，正進行發展鐘錶、眼鏡及首飾製造業所需之無線防擴散技術，以符合歐洲經濟共同體所制定有關出口貿易條例的嚴格要求。

文博士表示：「鑒於歐共體禁止飾物用錶與人體皮膚有直接接觸，對本地製造業及金屬業構成了嚴重的影響。因此，這項研究對製造業可以帶來莫大的裨益。」

此外，由理大一手創辦，深受工商界歡迎的廠校合作研究計劃，亦再度獲得工業支援計劃撥款繼續推行。
Stronger ties forged with mainland institutions

The Department of Nursing and Health Sciences (NHS) recently entered into an agreement with the prestigious Tianjin Medical University, heralding a series of collaborative research and academic exchange in fields of nursing, optometry, radiography and biomedical science. This is already the sixth co-operative agreement which NHS has signed with a mainland partner institution.

Prof. George Woo, Chair of Optometry and Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Studies, said the agreement, signed between NHS and the Nursing Department of Tianjin Medical University, will facilitate for both parties exchange of faculty and students, curricula development as well as the recruitment of graduates.

As part of the agreement, Ms. May Fok, NHS Assistant Professor, will launch a collaborative research project which studies the self-care ability of patients in major Tianjin hospitals who are undergoing haemodialysis — one of the dialysis methods used in the treatment of patients with renal failure.

Prof. Ida Martinson, Chair of Nursing and Head of NHS further disclosed that the two partners were already exploring the scope for research and academic exchange initiatives in radiography and biomedical science. Joining her in the working out these plans in the trip were Associate Head Dr. Thomas Wong, Ms. May Fok and Dr. Danny Gohel from NHS and Ms. Maria Law from the Department of Optometry and Radiography.

Tianjin Medical University is the first higher learning institute of medical science established after the founding of the PRC and is one of the highly ranked institutes of medical sciences in China.
Hong Kong’s first postgraduate scheme in industrial safety sends forth 40 graduates

The territory’s first distance learning postgraduate scheme in Occupational Safety and Health (POSH), jointly offered by the PolyU and the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury (UWS-H), sent forth its first cohort of 40 graduates at a ceremony on March 28.

These graduates, after completing an 18-month part-time programme, received the Graduate Diploma of Applied Science in Occupational Safety and Health at the ceremony. The majority is proceeding to the second part of the scheme, which is a one-year part-time programme leading to the award of Master of Applied Science (Safety Management) — the highest academic qualification awarded locally in the discipline of occupational safety and health.

The ceremony was officiated at by UWS-H’s Deputy Chancellor, Prof. Geoffrey Roberson, and Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. John Clark; PolyU’s Vice-President, Prof. Leung Tin-pui, Director of Industrial Centre, Dr. Chris Wong, and Director of the Centre for Professional and Continuing Education, Dr. Anthony Tam. Deputy Commissioner for Labour, Dr. Lee Kai-fat, attended the ceremony as guest-of-honour.

Since its launch in 1996, the scheme has received extremely favourable response every year with an over-subscription of several times of the intake quota. The key objective of the scheme is to provide advanced management studies for practitioners aspiring to positions of leadership in the field of occupational safety and health.

The scheme is jointly organized by UWS-H’s Faculty of Science and Technology, and PolyU’s Industrial Centre and Centre for Professional and Continuing Education.
Teaching innovations on top agenda

A total of 29 initiatives that would enhance the quality of teaching and student learning were presented at a mini-Conference titled “Showcase ’98: Teaching Innovations for Promoting Student Learning at PolyU” held from June 9 to 10.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Vice-President (Quality Assurance) Prof. Leung Tin-pui said the two-day function “provides a valuable opportunity for PolyU staff to explore new teaching methods and to introduce fresh ideas for improving the students’ learning process”.

The function has received overwhelming response from teaching staff. Notably, staff members from 16 academic departments and the Educational Development Unit presented their innovations which were grouped into four broad areas: new approaches to teaching; enhancement of students’ learning; interactive multi-media teaching; enhancement, development and implementation of curriculum.

The mini-conference also addressed important issues like the use of information technology in teaching, communication skills in different learning context as well as problem-based learning. Participants also shared their views on matters related to good teaching practices.

The teaching innovation projects were supported by the PolyU’s Learning and Teaching Development Grants. Meanwhile, the Educational Development Unit is also organizing a series of conferences and workshops to promote teaching quality.

Distinguished alumnus comes home

The Hon. Leung Chun-ying, a highly respected surveyor and a graduate in 1974, brought his latest research findings on housing supply in Hong Kong to the Alma Mater in a public lecture held on June 1 on the university campus.

The lecture attracted a full-house audience of senior personnel in the real estate and surveying professions, not to mention the huge number of media representatives who flocked to the venue to gather first-hand information on the hot topic.

Mr. Leung is a Member of the First Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. He has long dedicated his professional expertise to serving the community, and has served on nearly all land-related committees of the Government.

The function was organized by the Department of Building and Real Estate.
Landmark Fashion Foundation helps groom design talent

The School of Design has received a strong boost from the Landmark Fashion Foundation, a new educational trust which will sponsor fashion design students of the School on various occasions in the coming years.

On May 28, the Foundation announced that funding amounting to $1 million will be granted to provide the following sponsorships to design students:

- The Landmark Fashion Foundation Creativity Award at the 1998 Graduation Fashion Show;
- A 10-day study trip for final-year students to visit couture houses and trade exhibitions in the fashion centres of Europe in October this year;
- An outstanding student to pursue a Master’s degree at the Royal College of Art in London.

Mrs. Clara Weatherall, Chairman of the Foundation, said: “We believe that the development of young local talent is vital to the future of Hong Kong’s fashion industry. Hong Kong has some extremely gifted individuals and we hope these grants will enable them to maximize their potential.”

The endowment of the Foundation was donated by retail fashion tenants located principally in The Landmark, and also by its owner Hongkong Land.

Roadshow highlights research and consultancy

To keep the public abreast of its latest research and consultancy activities, the PolyU mounted a series of roadshows at seven bustling locations in town from April 18 to May 16.

On display were the PolyU’s research and consultancy achievements, as well as the university’s wide range of services and facilities for supporting the development of business and industry. Brochures on the services provided by the PolyU Technology and Consultancy Company Limited were distributed to visitors.
PolyU offers new postgraduate programmes

The PolyU will continue to consolidate its taught postgraduate programmes by introducing course-based programmes up to the doctorate level to meet the surging needs of the community for professional manpower development.

In the coming academic year, the PolyU will offer a total of 20 programmes, including the popular course-based Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme. A new distance learning programme leading to the Master of Science/Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management will also be introduced for the first time.

Since the first local DBA programme was launched in 1996, competition for admission has been keen. In view of the popularity of course-based doctoral programme, the PolyU plans to offer another new programme leading to the degree of Doctor of Engineering in the 1999/2000 academic year.

The Master of Science/Postgraduate Diploma programme in Project Management is targeted for construction professionals in Hong Kong and the Mainland.

Mr. Francis Wong Kwan-wah, Programme Leader and Associate Professor of the Department of Building and Real Estate, said the programme will provide a study opportunity for construction managers, engineers and other related professionals in the construction industry to broaden their knowledge in project management.

“Considering the massive expansion and the increasing complexity of infrastructure development in Hong Kong and the Mainland, there is an urgent need for construction professionals to upgrade their knowledge and develop innovative approaches to project management,” he stressed.

The programme will adopt a distance learning mode to provide more flexibility for construction professionals who need to constantly travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

Novel initiatives in business English launched

The Centre for Professional and Business English (CPBE) has launched two significant initiatives in the area of workplace language training to meet the increasing demand of the public and of corporate clients.

CPBE has begun to work with a number of professional associations to introduce a new style of training for their members. Under the concept of “Tailored-Opens”, the new courses address the language needs of a particular professional group, and are made available to members through individual subscription. Relevant courses have already been developed for company secretaries and accountants.

This year CPBE has also introduced the Cambridge Business English Certificate to Hong Kong. This relatively new qualification is offered by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, one of the world’s leading examination authorities. The Certificate can be taken at three levels, based on robust and well-researched grading of language proficiency, and in contexts that reflect a business environment.

Meanwhile, the Centre is in the process of developing a distance learning programme for graduate engineers and self-guided materials for use on a company Intranet.
SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

World-class experts to speak at Asia Pacific Conference on Co-operative Education

More than 80 papers on issues concerning co-operative education will be delivered by international experts from more than 10 countries at the 1998 Asia Pacific Conference on Co-operative Education, to be held from August 24 to 28 this year.

Hosted by the PolyU and co-organized by China Association for Co-operative Education, the Conference will focus on the theme "The Industry and Academic Symbiosis — a Global Partnership". It will be made up of two sections: a three-day programme in Hong Kong and a one-and-a-half day excursion to Guangzhou organized by South China University of Technology.

The Conference will consist of keynote and other paper presentations in four sub-themes, namely “Interactive Partnerships: Employers/Educationists/Students”; “Challenges and New Trends”; “Problems and Opportunities for Developing Economies”; and “Management and Marketing Issues”.

Eminent keynote speakers who will speak at the Conference include:
- Prof. Brian Low, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia;
- Dr. David Lowry, Vice-President, Social and Developmental Programs of Freeport — McMoRan Services Company, USA;
- Dr. Ng Tat-lun, Deputy Chairman of the Vocational Training Council, and Managing Director of Eveready Battery Co. Inc. Hong Kong, China;
- Prof. A. A. Sfeir, Dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture, Lebanese American University, and General Secretary (1992-1997) of the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE), Lebanon; and
- Dr. Zhang Weijiang, Director-General of Education Commission of Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, China.

Under the auspices of the World Association for Co-operative Education (WACE), the regional Conference is held biennially to provide an opportunity for educationists and employers to interact with one another and discuss issues of common interest. This is the second time for the PolyU to host the WACE conference following the Seventh World Conference in 1991.
Technical tour to Tangshan unfolds post-earthquake developments

A 16-man delegation led by staff of the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering (CSE) and comprising members from seven other establishments visited Tangshan with a view to understanding the impact of earthquake and meeting mainland experts involved in this field of study.

The technical tour, conducted in late 1997, was jointly organized by CSE and the Institute of Engineering Mechanics (IEM) of the State Seismological Bureau in Harbin, China. Participants included government officials from four different departments, members of the Structural Division of the Hong Kong Institute of Engineers and three tertiary institutions. Prof. Ko Jan-ming, Chair and Head of CSE, was Chairman of the Tour; Dr. Eddie Lam, Dr. Y.L Wong and Dr. K.T. Chau of the Department also joined the tour.

During the six-day tour, members conducted field investigations on some of the remains of the 1976 Tangshan earthquake and reviewed the redevelopment of the city after the disaster. The field trip was followed by visits to construction site and residential developments. Technical sessions organized by IEM provided participants with understanding on preventive measures and future directions of R&D.

Reflecting on the tour, Prof. Ko commented that “earthquake engineering is an art as well as a science which we still do not fully comprehend”, and “learning from the past is probably the best source to explain the principles and theories of this important subject”.

“The visit has provided an excellent opportunity for us to meet world-renowned mainland scholars and researchers responsible for post-earthquake investigations and design practice,” Prof. Ko added. The technical tour was concluded with a final session on earthquake resistance design.

According to a review conducted by the Government’s Geotechnical Control Office on seismic activities within 350 km of Hong Kong, the territory is subject to potential seismic hazard. In a quest to study the issue, a seismic study group was formed within the Department. Currently the group is conducting some collaborative researches with IEM and other researchers from New Zealand and the United States.
兒童閱讀障礙非蠢鈍，適當教學亦可成大器

科學家愛因斯坦被公認為天才，他所提出的相對論對近代科學的影響極其深遠；但有多少人知道，愛因斯坦在年幼時曾被學校老師視為無藥可救的蠢材？愛迪生在世時發明了電燈及多項產品，但在孩提時代也曾遇上學習問題，究竟他們出了甚麼毛病？

甚麼是閱讀障礙症？

一九八六年，一位美國學校校醫詹姆士．卡爾（James Kerr）發現有些視力沒有問題的孩子閱讀有障礙，便把此症狀稱為「字盲」。後來一位德國教授 Karl Kussran 正式將此症狀稱為「閱讀障礙症」，而美國心理學家在三九四九年再將此症狀歸類為「閱讀障礙症」（Reading Disorder），「書寫障礙症」（Writing Disorder）和「數學障礙症」（Mathematic Disorder）。（有關症狀可參閱附冊。）

據黎程正佳博士解釋，患閱讀障礙症的兒童在語言組織能力方面有特別困難，雖然這些孩子很聰明，但在學校的成績表現上遠低他們的智力。他們的腦子好像沒有組織能力，不能將訊息吸收到第二層，讀不懂，處理，及準確和迅速地應用出來，所以在學習表現上，很多時都及不上同班的同學，令他們在學習上受損，而影響他們的自尊心。這些孩子在學習過程中表現得很勤奮，缺乏興趣，粗心大意，及不願意提起學校裏的事物。其實這些反應，在教師及父母適當的幫助下是可以避免的。

黎博士說：「患閱讀障礙症的兒童和普通兒童最不同的地方，是他們需要用具體的形式來做心智運作，依靠具體的實物來得到意念。」

研究工作

自一九四九年開始，黎程正佳博士便一直開始搜集本地患閱讀障礙症兒童的個案，並先後獲得校內校外研究撥款共四十多萬元，建立全港首個有關特殊需要的閱讀障礙症資料庫，從心理學的行為及認知角度研究這些兒童。

為了使各界人士更深入了解有閱讀障礙的兒童所面對的困難，黎博士所搜集的每一患閱讀障礙症的兒童個案都包括三部分：(一) 兒童、家長及學校老師對兒童學習困難的訪問資料和評估；(二) 分析兒童在學習上所犯的錯誤；(三) 兒童智力及閱讀測試的評估報告。

此外，由黎程正佳博士負責，設於理大護理及健康科學學院的兒症發展研究中心，每天都會接到很多來自學校、家長及教師的查詢，要求替個別兒童評估是否有閱讀障礙症。而黎博士會採取五個步驟，來確定兒童是否患上閱讀障礙症。首先，中心人員會親自了解兒童的學習生活，例如在學習方面是否遇上特別問題，覺得哪些科目較難等。患閱讀障礙的兒童因為不想被人視為愚笨，通常會對自己的學習困難隐瞒。比方說：「我的老師太老了，都忘記怎樣教學生」，「我心裏掛念着家中的小狗，所以腦子什麼都裝不住，學不到任何東西。」

經過第二步驟以後，中心人員會研究兒童的家庭歷史，例如兒童的父母及親戚是否有閱讀障礙。然後，研究人員會評估兒童的智力。通常有閱讀障礙的兒童會害怕任何形式的測試，所以測試的結果往往不理想。但是如果有適當的幫助，兒童的智力測試表現也會有大幅的改善。第四個步驟給予兒童一個口頭讀出的閱讀測試，用以評估兒童閱讀的進度，質素和記憶力。確定的第五步驟會評估兒童書寫和英文拼字的能力，讓教師抄寫或拼寫他所屬年級範圍的英文字。

至今為止，黎博士已搜集到超過一百五十個個案，這些資料正用作理工大學的深造課程教材，修課者包括現職社工、護士、治療師及各種鶯語護理人員。由於現存的文獻絕大部分以西方兒童為案例，而中文與英文的語言構架有很大的不同，再加上不同的華人地區有不同的方言，所以建立一套本地的個案資料庫實在刻不容緩。

現況及前景

黎程正佳博士表示，由於香港人對兒童閱讀障礙症的認識不多，而家長與學校又非常重視語言學習的成績，社會環境對患有此症狀的兒童非常不利。他希望政府能夠將此課題列為師資培訓的必修科目，讓新一代的教育工作者對處理這問題有更深認識。另一方
Helping children with learning disabilities

The word “dyslexia” may sound strange to most of the teachers and parents in Hong Kong. But in fact this learning disability problem is commonly found among 10 per cent of a normal population, according to Dr. Alice Lai, Associate Professor of PolyU’s Department of Nursing and Health Studies (NHS).

Children suffering from dyslexia have difficulty with reading because of a slight disorder in the sensory part of their brains. Contrary to common belief, dyslexic children are not dumb — they can be very creative with an IQ above average. However, they have problems decoding words and phrases. Even the great scientist Albert Einstein experienced this learning problem in his childhood.

Since 1994, Dr. Alice Lai has been building up a case bank on children with dyslexia and other special needs like Attention Deficiency or Hyperactive Disorder. So far she has collected more than 150 cases on the subject, which was introduced as a module in the University’s postgraduate programmes for social workers and health care professionals.

“In the past most of the teaching materials are based upon western sources, and these illustrations are not familiar to our students,” said Dr. Lai.

Every day the Child Development Research Laboratory housed under NHS receives eight to ten calls from parents and teachers requesting dyslexia assessment for individual child. In order to promote the concept, Dr. Lai is applying for funding to develop a dyslexia screening test that would help school teachers identify dyslexic pupils. In the long run, Dr. Lai hopes that the subject can be made mandatory in curriculum for local teachers training.

“Hong Kong people know too little about dyslexia, but the local examination system put a heavy strain on dyslexic children who are generally weak in languages,” she said. To help children lead a fruitful life, she strongly urges parents to recognize their children’s strength and potential in areas other than language.

(Animations by dyslexic children)
Innovative method produces torque free single yarns

Single yarns prepared by traditional methods are easily deformed and can cause trouble in subsequential processing as well as fabric appearance. Supported by the University’s Industry-Guided Applied Research and Development (IGARD) Fund, a team of researchers from the Institute of Textiles and Clothing has successfully developed a mechanical method for mass production of single yarns that have significant market potential. The following is a report contributed by the Principal Researcher Dr. Tao Xiaoming.

A lot of the clothing we wear are made of fabrics, and knitted fabrics in fact are made from yarns formed by twisting short fibres together. During twisting, the constituent fibres are deformed, and a torque is generated and stored in the yarn. The torque stored, also known as “yarn residual torque”, is the major cause of fabric spirality, a defect in weft-knitted fabrics. Fabric spirality is a distortion of a circular knitted fabric in which the wales follow a spiral path around the axis of the knitted fabric tube. This kind of distortion affects both aesthetics and functional performance of the knitted material and the garments produced.

The residual torque in twisted yarns, contributed by fibre bending, torsion and tension as well as inter-fibre friction, is directly related to the yarn structure. The traditional ring spun yarns have a predominant coaxial helical geometry, in which most fibres are arranged in concentric helix forms. Thus all fibres will contribute positively to the generation of the residual torque. If the fibres are orientated in a different way so that the effects of fibre deformation are balanced within the yarn, a torque free yarn as well as zero fabric spirality can be achieved.

Based on this principle, a new processing technique has been recently developed by a research team at the Institute of Textiles and Clothing (ITC). This technique modifies the yarn structures, in either continuous or batch process, and reduce the residual torque of single yarns to such an extent that the modified single yarns can be used for knitting single jersey fabrics without spirality. Laboratory trials have produced 100 per cent cotton single jersey fabrics, knitted from the modified yarns, which have zero spirality and a soft handle.

The novel technique will possibly create a new market area for single rotor yarns, as presently two-plied yarns or ring spun yarns are used. The current annual yarn production in Hong Kong is nearly 370 million pounds, 99 per cent being pure cotton yarns. According to the estimation by one of the largest textile companies in Hong Kong, potential saving on yarn cost by adopting the ITC technique is $3.3 per pound of yarn. Even if the market penetration of this technique reaches just five per cent, a substantial amount of $61,000,000 per year can be saved for the industry.

This newly developed technique is purely mechanical, not involving any chemical, wet or heating treatment. The batch process configuration can be implemented on most industrial machinery with minimum alteration. Therefore, comparing to other existing methods, it has a number of advantages in terms of environment, capital investment and energy.

Furthermore, this technique can be used to produce 100 per cent cotton single knitting yarns with zero residual torque, while the other existing...
technologies are only applicable to cotton or polyester blends. In addition, this yarn modification technique is applicable to most unconventional spinning processes including friction, air-jet and rotor-jet spinning. In a global perspective, the potential market is very large and far-reaching.

The ITC torque free yarn technique has many advantages comparing to existing methods. The existing methods adopted by industry can be divided into two main categories: (a) setting of single yarn to reduce its residual torque; and (b) balancing the yarn torque by various means.

Setting is an effective way to reduce the residual torque in yarns and normally requires heat or chemical treatment. Heat setting has been used successfully for certain blend yarns like cotton or polyester rotor yarns. However, natural fibres like cotton cannot be set by heating and have to be prepared by chemical setting process. Even so, the chemical setting cannot achieve 100 per cent reduction in the yarn residual torque while the ITC technique is capable to achieve torque free status.

To balance the torque, industry personnel normally use two single yarns with the same twist direction which are twisted together in the opposite direction; or knit two single yarns with opposite twist directions by feeding them into one feeder on the knitting machine. Two single yarns have to be produced and then twisted, by using these two balancing methods, thus leading to a high production cost. The third approach is to knit alternative course with single yarns of opposite twist, which produces an undesirable zigzag pattern on the fabric surface. The fourth balancing method is to vary the fabric structure such as using double jersey instead of single jersey structure. However, in most situations, the fabric structure is dictated by the end use and one may not have the choice. In stark contrast, the ITC technique only produces one single yarn which can be knitted into any knit structures.

The research team at ITC has successfully produced zero-spirality knitted fabrics made from the modified single rotor yarns. Based on the technology developed in ITC laboratory, a large-scale project is currently funded by IGARD. The project is mainly concerned with further development of the yarn modification method and optimization of the whole textile processes, including dyeing and finishing. In collaboration with the local industry, the research team is optimizing the technique for modification of rotor spun single yarns in real life circumstances. Hopefully the team will develop a set of design criteria, quality control tools as well as guidelines on the engineering design and quality control of the knitted fabrics in commercial environment.
SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Highlights of major academic activities

Academic exchange in Hotel and Tourism

Fifteen delegates from various mainland universities offering degree programmes in hotel and tourism attended the First Academic Exchange Meeting of China Hotel and Tourism Schools hosted by the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management (HTM) from April 28 to May 1.

The major objectives of this event were to establish strategic alliances between HTM and selected institutions, and to identify key issues and demands for tourism and hospitality programmes at tertiary level. Some of those issues identified and discussed in the area of education in hotel and tourism in China included: staff development and practical experiences; teaching directions, construction of courses, and teaching methods; and the combination of theoretical and practical issues in teaching and research.

Conference on midwifery practice

About 200 academics and practitioners in midwifery care from Hong Kong and the US gathered at the PolyU on April 24 to present their latest research findings at a conference on “Contemporary Midwifery Practice: Steps into the 21st Century”.

Jointly organized by the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences (NHS) and Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), the Conference aimed to provide an opportunity for practitioners to share their experience in contemporary practice; to disseminate research findings; and to explore current issues and future developments of the subject.

Prof. Ida Martinson, Chair of Nursing and Head of NHS, further disclosed that the PolyU and QEH were working closely to develop a programme that would move midwifery training from the hospital to the University.

Conference on Pacific Basin Business, Economics and Finance

More than 200 academics and practitioners from the financial, banking, securities investment and accounting fields from all over the world gathered in Hong Kong from May 28 to 29 to present the latest development of their respective fields and their research findings in the Sixth Conference on Pacific Basin Business, Economics and Finance.

Jointly organized by the PolyU and the Rutgers University in the US, the Conference focused on the impact of the Asian financial crisis on the region’s financial services industry. The two-day event featured many keynote presentations by prominent speakers from the Securities and Futures Commission, Hong Kong Society of Accountants, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Futures Exchange Ltd, the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Ltd and many other major financial institutions in Hong Kong and the Region.
New Vice-President (Planning) appointed

Prof. Edwin John Hearn officially assumed duty as Vice-President (Planning) on May 1.

A highly respected academic with extensive university management experience, Prof. Hearn first joined the Institution in March 1989 as Associate Director (Industrial Liaison and External Relations) — equivalent rank to the current Vice-President. During his service with the former Polytechnic, he represented the Institution on numerous government, business and local tertiary institutions’ committees. He left Hong Kong in late 1993 and became Director of International Programmes at the University of Warwick Manufacturing Group, UK.

Having started his career as Graduate Apprentice and then as Control Engineer with the Gloster Aircraft Co. in the late 1950s, Prof. Hearn obtained his bachelor’s degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of London in 1960. From 1962 to 1973, he taught at the South Birmingham Technical College, first as Lecturer and then as Senior Lecturer. Prof. Hearn was conferred a PhD in Mechanical Engineering by the University of Surrey in 1974.

Prior to coming to Hong Kong in 1989, Prof. Hearn had 16 years’ experience working at the City of Birmingham Polytechnic. When he first joined the Polytechnic, he was appointed as Principal Lecturer in Stress Analysis. He became Deputy Head of the Department of Mechanical and Production Engineering as well as Staff Tutor in 1981, and took up Headship of the Department in 1985. Two years later, he was appointed as GKN Technology industrially sponsored Professor of Mechanical Engineering.

Meanwhile, Prof. Hearn was the Director of a Design Analysis Consultancy Group in UK.

Prof. Hearn is a Chartered Engineer, Fellow of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, and a Fellow of the UK Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Institution of Electrical Engineers and Institute of Diagnostic Engineers. He is also a Life Fellow of the British Society for Strain Measurement.

He has extensive consultancy experience in the field of stress and design analysis. During his career as an academic, Prof. Hearn has published 11 textbooks and numerous papers in professional journals.

Staff show off physical prowess

After weeks and months of preliminary rounds and events, the 1997/98 Staff Sports Competition reached a climax on May 23 when all the award-winning departments/units were honoured at the Prize Presentation Ceremony held at the Shaw Sports Complex.

Officiated at by the PolyU’s Vice-Presidents, Prof. T.P. Leung and Prof. Edwin Cheng, the ceremony saw the presentation of the awards for the President’s Cup Soccer Competition, the Deputy President’s Cup Basketball Competition and the Vice-Presidents’ Cup Racket Games Competition which were all played on an inter-departmental or inter-faculty basis.

The President’s Cup went to the Industrial Centre, while the Estates Office and the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management became the first and second runners-up respectively. The Estates Office scored its victory at the Basketball Competition, and the first and second runners-up went to the Student Affairs Office and the Department of Electrical Engineering respectively.

Players from the Administration Departments (Group A) seized the Vice-Presidents’ Cup after scoring the highest aggregate in tennis, badminton, squash and table tennis to edge out their opponents.
A recent survey revealed that the first-year students selected their present course of study primarily because they were interested in the subject, and more than 70 per cent of them also considered “interest in job nature” a very important factor affecting their future career choice.

When asked about the reasons for choosing their course of study, 44 per cent of the respondents said interest in the subject was most significant. Nearly a quarter of them chose their course of study with an intention to obtain professional qualifications relevant to their desired careers (26 per cent).

As regards the factors affecting their future career choice, a majority of the freshmen considered “interest in job nature” (77 per cent) and “good salary and fringe benefits” (62 per cent) very important, followed by working environment, sense of achievement, and prospect for advancement.

With respect to their expectation of university education, the students, in general, place most emphasis on “acquiring professional qualifications relevant to one’s career”, followed by “acquiring a good general education” and “studying an interesting subject”.

The freshmen survey also showed that apart from the nine per cent who expected to cover half or more of their study/living expenses with income from part-time work as their major source of financial support, another 56 per cent also expected to earn income from part-time work.

In fact, 39 per cent of the first-year students were from families earning less than $15,000 per month and 20 per cent between $15,000 and $19,999, with the median monthly household income recorded at $17,839. For the academic year 1997/98, the tuition fees for degree and sub-degree programmes were $42,100 and $31,575 respectively, which represented approximately 20 per cent and 15 per cent of the respondents’ median household income.

Furthermore, the home study environment of the respondents seems unfavourable in general. About 64 per cent did not have a room of their own while 35 per cent did not have a desk for their own use. The PolyU’s Director of Student Affairs, Mr. Paul Lee, said: “The survey results do suggest that there is indeed the need to provide students with hostels and more quiet rooms and reading space on campus to facilitate their learning.”

The findings of the survey disclosed that nearly half, or 46 per cent, of the respondents lived in public housing estates while 14 per cent lived in flats under Home Ownership Schemes.

Conducted annually by the Student Affairs Office, the survey aims at collecting information on new full-time, first-year students for the purpose of planning future services and facilities. Of the total 4,191 newly registered full-time first-year undergraduate and sub-degree students (as of November 15, 1997), 3,561 responded, representing a response rate of 85 per cent.
Two-out-of-two for victorious student debaters

Following the triumph of PolyU’s Chinese Debate Team at the Inter-university Debating Challenge 1998 in March, the University’s English Debate Team outsmarted their counterparts of the Chinese University of Hong Kong at the final of the 1998 Joint Universities Debating Championship to score the second victory.

Held on March 28, 1998 at the Hong Kong Space Museum, the final was judged by a panel of five professors and lecturers invited from local universities. The motion debated was: “Freedom of Speech is a Myth in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”, with PolyU standing against the motion. The stage speakers of the winning team included Kelly Ma and Harsha P. Harjani of the Department of Business Studies, Eddie Lee of the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, and Kenny Fong of the Department of Accountancy. They were supported by a number of team members as floor speakers.

On receiving the award trophy for the Championship, the team members remarked: “This has indeed been a great achievement for us, as the victory has long been aspired for over the years. We will keep up with our hard work and strong team spirit, and hopefully we could score more victories in the years to come.”

Formed under the Speech and Debate Society of the Students’ Union, the PolyU English Debate Team is wholly run by the students. According to the team members, they usually spend a whole week prior to each match collecting information, discussing and exchanging views, and finally arriving at a line of argument for the match. The team also received advice from PolyU academics.
Cultural exchange is all fun

The PolyU Japanese Club, which was set up by students majoring in Japanese in the degree programme in Languages with Business at the Department of English, has recently organized a series of activities to achieve its key objective of promoting cultural exchange with the Japanese community in Hong Kong.

In December 1997, the Club held a barbecue gathering at Repulse Bay, which was attended by more than 70 participants, including both PolyU students and Japanese working and living in Hong Kong. Another successful event was the “Lantau Trip” in February, which also provided a valuable opportunity for the students to learn more about the Japanese culture and to polish their spoken Japanese.

Besides, the Club members paid a visit to the Cantonese Club at the Hong Kong Japanese School in Tai Po on May 19, during which the school kids learned from the PolyU students more about Cantonese and the Chinese culture.

Outstanding Service Awards for outreaching duo

Au Ching, a second-year student in civil engineering, and Ha Chow-ming, another second-year student in real estate, have been honoured with the 1997/98 Outstanding Service Awards for their commitment and dedication to community services.

Both winners have more than five years’ experience in community services, and they expressed that they were really flattered by the awards. “It undoubtedly gives me a great sense of achievement, and encourages me to continue my efforts in community services,” said Ha Chow-ming. Au Ching said that the rewarding experience he had gained from his involvement in community services was equally valuable as the award itself.

They revealed that participation in community services had actually afforded them ample opportunities to widen their exposure, to develop their own potential and inter-personal skills, and, more importantly, to enhance their sense of social responsibility. Both opined that “what they have learned from participating in the community services is the same important as what they have studied at the PolyU”.

Organized annually by the Hong Kong Student Services Association, the Outstanding Service Awards aim to encourage tertiary students to contribute their efforts towards community services and to show their concern for society and the needy.

A day of fun for the Japanese Club in Lantau.
Dinner Talks are eye-openers for students

More than 260 students were attracted to two Dinner Talks held in March and April to share the insights of two prominent guest speakers — renowned economist and President of Lingnan College, Prof. Edward Chen, and famous novelist and former newspaper publisher, Prof. Louis Cha.

Organized annually by the Student Affairs Office (SAO), the Dinner Talks Programme aims at broadening the students’ horizons and sharpening their communication skills. And for the very first time, this year’s dinner talks were held in hotel settings — the Grand Stanford Harbour View Hotel — to provide students with an excellent opportunity to groom their social skills. No wonder both sessions attracted a full-house audience shortly after its announcement.

On March 24, Prof. Edward Chen shared with the students his views on “The Asian Economy after the Financial Turmoil”, while Prof. Louis Cha spoke on “Novel and Life” on April 20. Senior staff members of the University were also invited to participate in the dinner talks as table-leaders to facilitate discussions and interaction among the student participants.

To familiarize all student participants with social etiquette and to build up their confidence in public speaking, two workshops were specially organized by SAO prior to the talks. Besides, two students were selected via public recruitment to act as convenors for both sessions.

Since its launch more than 10 years ago, the Dinner Talks Programme has been widely received by students as it provides great opportunities for them to gain valuable insights from eminent figures and leaders from various fields. Through taking part in the dinner talks, students can enhance their critical thinking ability and social awareness, broaden their interests, and improve their interpersonal skills.

Prof. Edward Chen speaks on the Asian economy.

Senior staff exchange views with students at the gathering.
Building Alumni pay tribute to five distinguished practitioners

The Building and Real Estate Departmental Alumni Association (BREDAA) paid tribute to five renowned practitioners in Hong Kong’s building and construction industries by presenting to them the honour of the Association’s “Honorary Member” at a special ceremony held on the PolyU campus on March 31.

The recipients (in alphabetical order) are: Dr. Chow Yei-ching, Chairman of Chevalier Group; Mr. H. K. Chung, Chief Building Surveyor at Buildings Department of HKSAR Government; Dr. Simon Kwan, Chairman of Simon Kwan & Associates Ltd.; Mr. Leung Chun-ying, Managing Director of C. Y. Leung & Co. Ltd.; and Mr. Macro Wu, Deputy Director at Housing Department of HKSAR Government.

During the ceremony, each of the awardees was presented with a certificate by the Guest-of-Honour, Mr. Chu Zhi-nong, Head of the Department of Education, Science and Technology of Xinhua News Agency (Hong Kong Branch).

Speaking at the ceremony, President of BREDAA, Mr. Jimmy Wong, said: “We are greatly honoured to present the awards to these distinguished experts in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the profession and significant contributions to the community. With their continuous support and advice, the Association would be able to further expand its alumni network and strengthen the relationships with other professional organizations.”

Established in September 1995, BREDAA aims at networking the PolyU’s building alumni and encouraging the exchange of professional and managerial knowledge and experience among its members.

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Rehab Graduates to set up Alumni Association

Physiotherapy and occupational therapy graduates from the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences (RS) are actively planning to set up their own alumni association. An Organizing Committee has recently been formed, with an aim to formally establish the association within this year.

With the tremendous support from Prof. Christina Hui-Chan, Chair of Rehabilitation Sciences and Head of RS, a number of physiotherapy and occupational therapy graduates and the department’s Alumni Liaison Officer, Dr. Hector Tsang, met in early 1998 to start planning for their alumni association.

The Organizing Committee has already sent out invitation letters to all graduates of the department to encourage them to join the association. It is expected that the constitutions and other details of the association will be finalized in the next few months and, hopefully, the association can be officially inaugurated in December.

Those physiotherapy and occupational therapy graduates who wish to join this new alumni association may contact Dr. Tsang at tel. 2766-6750 or via e-mail rshtsang@polyu.edu.hk.
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