

Special Edition Impact

Touching lives, making an impact

Special Edition

RS Head's
Strategic Goals for the
Next Three Years

COVER STORY

Forging Ahead Together for a Brighter Future (Part 2 of 2)



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"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you will land among the stars." This is one of the famous quotes by Les Brown, a renowned American motivational speaker and author. As HoD, I consider it very important to set high and realistic goals, and to pursue them with determination and the unremitting support of my colleagues. To start with and to align with my vision talk four years ago, I want to lay out my strategic goals for the coming three years in six main areas:

1. Professional Education
2. Research and Scholarship

3. Research Degree Education
4. Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Development
5. Infrastructure and Environment
6. Community and Professional Services

In this article I will elaborate these six types of strategic goals so as to kick off the discussion in the department. The overall target is still **"Building strengths, striving for excellence in science and practices"**.

Professional Education



PolyU Education Info Day 2018

To develop and deliver the preferred and highest-quality undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes in OT and PT is still the overarching target in this aspect.

Maintain and enhance our leadership in the provision of professional OT and PT education. In face of the keen competition in the offering of professional OT and PT training by other local and overseas institutions, we will make strenuous efforts to develop and deliver the most preferred and highest-quality undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes. Apart from admitting the best students and offering the best programmes so as to produce the best graduates, we will elevate our publicity efforts to promote proactively our undergraduate programmes in secondary schools on the

one hand, and to make better use of the existing platforms (e.g., the annual Info Day) to disseminate programme information to the public on the other hand. I will also try to secure donations and provide scholarships for secondary-school students who score very high in DSE and other public examinations, so as to attract these high-flying students into our two flagship programmes.

Conduct curriculum review. Due to various concerns, the plan of conducting a curriculum review has been shelved for three years. To resume the work, we will soon set up a task force with faculty members and other stakeholders for this mission. In view of the recent explosion of information on the two professional disciplines, it will not be feasible to include all relevant knowledge in our undergraduate curriculum alone. One strategy will be to draw a clear boundary between what to learn separately at the undergraduate and master's entry levels, and what to explore in greater depth in postgraduate taught programmes. In the process, we can incorporate into the curriculum more recent developments, especially the application of new technologies (i.e., artificial intelligence, neuroimaging, etc.) to rehabilitation, while eliminating those obsolete, outdated knowledge inherited

from the past but no longer valid. Our department has been criticised for “overteaching” by offering too many subjects. As a general principle, some discipline-specific content has to be reduced or offered as elective subjects, so as to match the current trend in university education of allowing students greater freedom in deciding for themselves what to learn, as well as greater exposure to extra-curricular activities.

Moreover, we will strive to make our curriculum compatible with that of comparable universities in other parts of the world, as a means to facilitate credit transfer and semester-based bi-directional exchange of students between RS and these universities. We also plan to enhance further the elements of service development in the curriculum. The new Persons with Disabilities and Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP) released by the HKSAR Government in July 2020 sets out the strategic directions and measures to address the service needs of persons with disabilities in the next decade. In this respect, we need to modify our curriculum in accordance with the initiatives and future rehabilitation developments as laid out in the new RPP, so as to prepare our graduates for the new challenges in the non-hospital-based contexts.



2018/19 Dean's Honours List Awardees

Develop unique core characteristics. We need to develop unique core characteristics in our OT/PT students and graduates, to make them distinguishable from other students and graduates of similar programmes offered by other local institutions. First of all, we will make sure that our students are academically superior, as shown by their high scores in public examinations, and that they have a good command of the Chinese and English languages as well as excellent presentation skills. Second, they have gone through a unique undergraduate experience that combines classroom learning on science with real-world learning on practice. Third, they are outstanding critical thinkers and are prepared for evidence-based practice. This is based on and fostered by a team of world-class faculty members, who have obtained at least a PhD degree as well as rich clinical experience and/or postdoctoral experience

in Hong Kong or overseas countries. Fourth, they are highly aware of the state-of-the-art technological advancements and applications, such as the application of neuroscience and robotics in rehabilitation context. These desirable qualities typical of PolyU PT/OT students set them apart from their peers in student activities and events.



Prof. Hector Tsang, RS academic members and award recipients at the Inauguration Ceremony 2020/21



President Teng met with RS OT students who won Gold and Bronze awards at i-CREAtE 2019.

Strengthen online teaching and international connection/collaboration.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, we have shifted our mode of teaching from face-to-face classroom practice to online teaching. This is, fortunately to our relief, a blessing in disguise as we now realise how beneficial and powerful online classes and conferences can be. To keep up the momentum, we hope to introduce these online teaching and learning activities to a broader and more international context in the future, in which our students will attend classes and discussions together with overseas OT/PT students, through our closer collaboration with their universities. This will also form part of our new directions for curriculum development.

Recognise and support excellence in teaching and learning.

We will continue to provide seed funds for teaching and learning projects and encourage the faculty, especially Clinical Associates, to make use of these seed grants to develop new pedagogies, attend international conferences on teaching, and publish more high-quality, high-impact papers in educational journals. We will also continue to nominate well-performing faculty members and CAs for teaching awards.

Encourage students to win local and international awards. We arrange to provide more guidance to undergraduate students for taking part in different types of academic competitions (e.g., design and innovation competitions, community service awards) and for applying for scholarships, so that they will become an all-round,



Prof. Kenneth Fong's teaching team was awarded the Faculty Team Award for Outstanding Performance/Achievement in Teaching (2018/19).

successful learner throughout their university life, instead of just devoting their time to studying or reading. We believe that our students, who were admitted to RS with outstanding academic results, will be able to leave RS with even better results upon graduation four years later.

Explore and establish new academic programmes in rehabilitation. We have been providing well-recognised professional programmes in PT and OT for several decades. In fact, there are other potential rehabilitation programmes not being provided currently by any UGC-funded universities. We will explore and assess the feasibility of offering one more entry-level professional programme in rehabilitation on a self-financing basis in the coming few years. One possibility will be a master's degree in audiology. The provision of more academic programmes will help to strengthen our coverage in rehabilitation education.

Research and Scholarship

We aim to improve our research productivity and quality of knowledge creation and transfer, and make a greater impact to society.

Pursue more external funding support for research. To achieve this goal, we plan to seek more external funding support for our research through existing channels (e.g., RGC General Research Fund [GRF], RGC Early Career Scheme [ECS], Health and Medical Research Fund [HMRF], etc.) and new channels (e.g., funding support from the Greater Bay Area). We will liaise with Faculty Dean and Vice President (Research and Innovation) to improve our representation in

such grant bodies as the Research Grants Council (RGC) by nominating more overseas experts with OT/PT background to their panels. It is to be hoped that this way our submitted proposals will be assessed more validly, which will in turn help to increase our funding rate. On the other hand, to ensure a high quality of our research proposals, we will enlist the help of our senior faculty members and overseas experts to conduct a more stringent internal vetting of research proposals before their submission. Also, colleagues will be encouraged more positively to seize the opportunities for funding and collaboration offered on the mainland, especially in the Greater Bay Area.



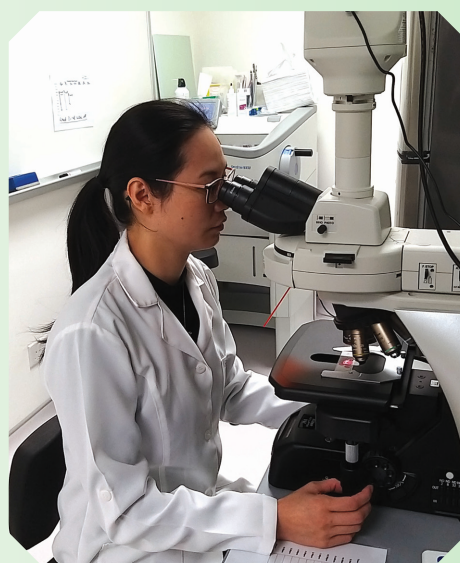
Prof. Kenneth Fong demonstrates the transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) system, which is equipped with the most advanced brain stimulation accessories for brain modulation in human research studies in Hong Kong.

Strengthen internal support for research. We will continue to provide seed funds to colleagues at the rank of Associate Professor or above, to enable them to line up local and international experts on certain niche areas of research to support their application for large-scale research grants (e.g., Collaborative Research Fund [CRF], Theme-based Research Scheme, etc.). This will help to increase their chance of obtaining external grant support and getting their work published in influential journals.

Improve publicity, visibility and impact of our research outcomes. Our effective collaboration with PolyU Communications and Public Affairs Office (CPA) will be maintained and press conferences will be held on a regular basis to introduce our research outcomes to the media and the public. We will also work closely with RS Marketing Team and step up our publicity efforts to make our research outputs better known.



Prof. Marco Pang introduced dual-task exercises for stroke patients at an online press conference held on 17 September 2020.



Dr Sonata Yau examines mouse brain slices stained with microglial cell markers (Iba-1), a marker for neuroinflammatory response in the brain.

Research Degree Education

To deliver highly competitive, rigorous, and research-intensive PhD/MPhil programmes that produce young researchers who are in the top tier of the next generation of rehabilitation scientists is our primary goal in postgraduate education.

Attract more scholarships for research students. There are a number of research scholarships and awards offered by PolyU, the HKSAR Government, other public or private organisations to research students studying in Hong Kong (e.g., Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme, Belt and Road Scholarship, etc.). We will strive to seek more of these scholarships for the purpose of attracting high-quality research degree students from Hong Kong, China and overseas to pursue their PhD study at RS, PolyU.

Strengthen postgraduate experience from commencement to completion. To be in line with the University's plan of establishing and developing the PolyU Graduate School, we

will do our best to increase our postgraduate students' sense of belonging to PolyU and help non-local postgraduates adapt more quickly to the culture of Hong Kong. These aims can be achieved through the improvement of adjustment and settling-down programmes for new non-local research students on the one hand, and the development of more academic and social support programmes for all research students on the other.



Ms Melody Chan was awarded Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme 2018/19.

Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Development

We will recruit, develop, and retain faculty and staff with educational, training, and mentoring opportunities needed to achieve Department, Faculty, and University goals.

Recruit and develop RAPs. We have recruited so far eight highly qualified, talented Research Assistant Professors (RAP) with diverse academic backgrounds. We plan to



Mini Departmental Workshop held on 22 January 2020

strengthen our strategies to make the best use of their expertise to support our translational research. It is expected that, with our existing human resource and professional knowledge, we will be able to achieve even better performance in a wide range of research areas. Moreover, in accelerating our efforts to recruit more faculty members, especially for the PT programmes, we hope to lower our staff-to-student ratio in accordance with the requirement of the Physiotherapists Board, most preferably from the current ratio of 1:17 to 1:15 or below.

Develop retention strategies for CA faculty.

To conform to the University's initiative, we will establish a better promotion ladder for teaching-track staff such as Clinical Associates and Senior Clinical Associates, in the hope of retaining our high-performing

teaching staff by increasing their opportunity for upward mobility. On the other hand, we will look for more scholars and experts with teaching expertise and excellence in OT and PT to join our team, so that we can attain even better achievements in teaching and learning.



President Jin-Guang Teng met with RS's faculty and SMG members on 27 November 2020.

Infrastructure and Environment

To develop and ensure an infrastructure of human and physical resources that promotes an efficient, effective, progressive, and cutting-edge work and learning environment will be an important goal of the department.

Conduct Phase III renovation. To further improve our research and teaching infrastructure, we start carrying out Phase III renovation following the extensive construction and renovation work in Phases I and II¹. Phase I had already come to an end in Spring 2020, while the basic renovation in Phase II was also completed in September 2020. We will endeavour to solicit a donation for supporting the installation of more state-of-the-art equipment in the renovated laboratories of Phase II to facilitate teaching and research activities. The renovation in Phase III mainly

includes the further improvement of facilities in our meeting room (ST523) and seminar room (ST522), which will allow us to use cutting-edge technology to conduct online seminars and international conferences in these rooms, in addition to their basic function as an ordinary venue for meetings. This phase will also include the revamping of our existing space for developing new academic programmes.



Three laboratories in Phase I are in full operation—Assistive Technology Laboratory, Basic Science Research in Rehabilitation Laboratory, and East Meets West and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Laboratory.

¹ For details about the construction and renovation work conducted in Phases I and II, please refer to the Summer 2020 issue of Impact via this link: https://www8.rs.polyu.edu.hk/rsmain/filemanager/Newsletter/en/upload/87/IMPACT_2020_summer_Special_v3.4_Final_20200629.pdf

Plan ahead for the new Homantin campus. The campus expansion of PolyU at Homantin Slope will provide over 10,000 m² net floor area of academic space. As endorsed by the University's senior management, we will be the main user of the new Homantin campus. In this regard, we need to plan

ahead for the layout of this new campus in order to use it for teaching, research and service purposes in the most cost-effective way, so that we can accommodate the pressing need of increasing our student intakes considerably in the near future.



The new Homantin campus model

Expand the Rehabilitation Centres. Thanks to a generous donation from Mr Tam Wing Fan and his family, we have established the Tam Wing Fan Rehabilitation Service Centre (Occupational Therapy) in W210 & W211, which focuses on the provision of OT service to the public. We will also substantially upgrade our Rehabilitation Centre on the AG

ground floor, with a view to providing higher-quality service to the public while at the same time offering better facilities for the clinical education. That means with the expansion of the Centres, we will advance the roles in knowledge transfer and education.



Mrs May Tam (in the middle), Dr Lawrence Li (3rd left, Deputy Chairman of Council, PolyU), President Jin-Guang Teng (4th left), Dr Katherine Ngan (4th right, Chairman of University Court, PolyU, and Chairman of PolyU Foundation), guests and other University's management at the plaque unveiling ceremony of Tam Wing Fan Rehabilitation Service Centre (Occupational Therapy).

Community and Professional Services

We will continue to maintain and further develop our collaborative partnership with stakeholders in the community to maximise our visibility and impact.

Collaborate with OUHK in teaching and research. We plan to strengthen our collaboration with The Open University of Hong Kong in diverse aspects of teaching and scientific research, for the purpose of reciprocally achieving better performance in these important aspects.

Establish research institutes at Homantin campus. With the opening of our new Homantin campus tentatively in 2026, we will align the department with the University's initiative to devote new space to setting up research institutes for conducting interdisciplinary and/or interuniversity research on selected niche areas, such as assistive technologies for rehabilitation, science and sports rehabilitation, and so on. These research institutes can help to line up local and overseas professionals with outstanding research expertise and experience, as well as to build a more stable collaborative partnership with other institutions.

Develop professional education and research at Foshan campus.

To be in line with the University's development plan for the new Foshan campus in Guangdong province, we will endeavour to develop our MOT and MPT programmes there to provide high-quality training to the physiotherapists and occupational therapists on the mainland. In addition, we will propose to the University to set up a Research Institute on rehabilitation sciences at Foshan campus for conducting cutting-edge research on our niche areas, as well as for recruiting a critical mass of PhD candidates and postdoc fellows, so as to meet the ultimate purpose of nurturing research talents for the rehabilitation sector in mainland China.

Conduct high-impact knowledge transfer activities. We will keep making an effort to conduct high-impact knowledge transfer activities and support mutually beneficial collaborations with the public and private sectors. A good exemplar of such activities is the territory-wide consultancy project commissioned by the Labour and Welfare Bureau of the HKSAR Government—the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP). We will also strive to work towards the ultimate goal of getting the product of our collaborative research commercialised.



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVE
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康復治療科學系
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為有長者、殘疾人家庭而設
照顧者支援服務



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2020年10月19日



Prof. Hector Tsang delivered a talk on “Caregiver support services for families with the elderly, health patients and children with special educational needs” on 19 October 2020.

Concluding Remarks

I originally plan to compile the above strategies using a bottom-up approach by collecting opinions from our staff in the summer retreat. However, the retreat was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To avoid delaying the important task of formulating a strategic plan for my second term of headship, I have outlined my thoughts as above, hoping that this will stimulate more thoughts from

our staff members and stakeholders. In that regard, please send me your comments if any after reading this article, so that the above plan can be refined and can cater for the needs of more people. After all, the big task of “Touching lives, making an impact” has to be a team effort. Let us join hands together to accomplish it in a better way and with better outcomes.