



PRESS RELEASE

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PolyU wins overseas honour for advancing hospitality and tourism education

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)'s School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) was this year's recipient of the McCool Breakthrough Award from the International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE), the world's largest organisation of hospitality and tourism educators. The SHTM's breakthrough has been realised in the form of its teaching and research hotel – Hotel ICON – the heart of its innovative approach to hospitality and tourism education.

The McCool Breakthrough Award is given annually to an individual, group, programme, school, college, association or corporation that has made a significant breakthrough or introduced a unique approach in the spirit of I-CHRIE's mission. The award recognises an event, activity or programme in memory of Willie McCool, a dedicated and successful astronaut and son of Audrey and Barry McCool, faculty members at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

Since its earliest establishment as a diploma-conferring department in 1979, the SHTM has risen to become one of the largest hospitality schools in Asia and amongst the top such schools worldwide. Ranked No. 2 in the world, the SHTM has been playing a key role in leading hospitality and tourism education and research.

With Asia emerging as the global centre of excellence in hospitality and tourism business, the SHTM saw the need to advance both education and research in the field and sought to refine a distinctive vision of hospitality and tourism education. That vision, unlike any other, led to the creation of a new education approach with Hotel ICON at its centre.

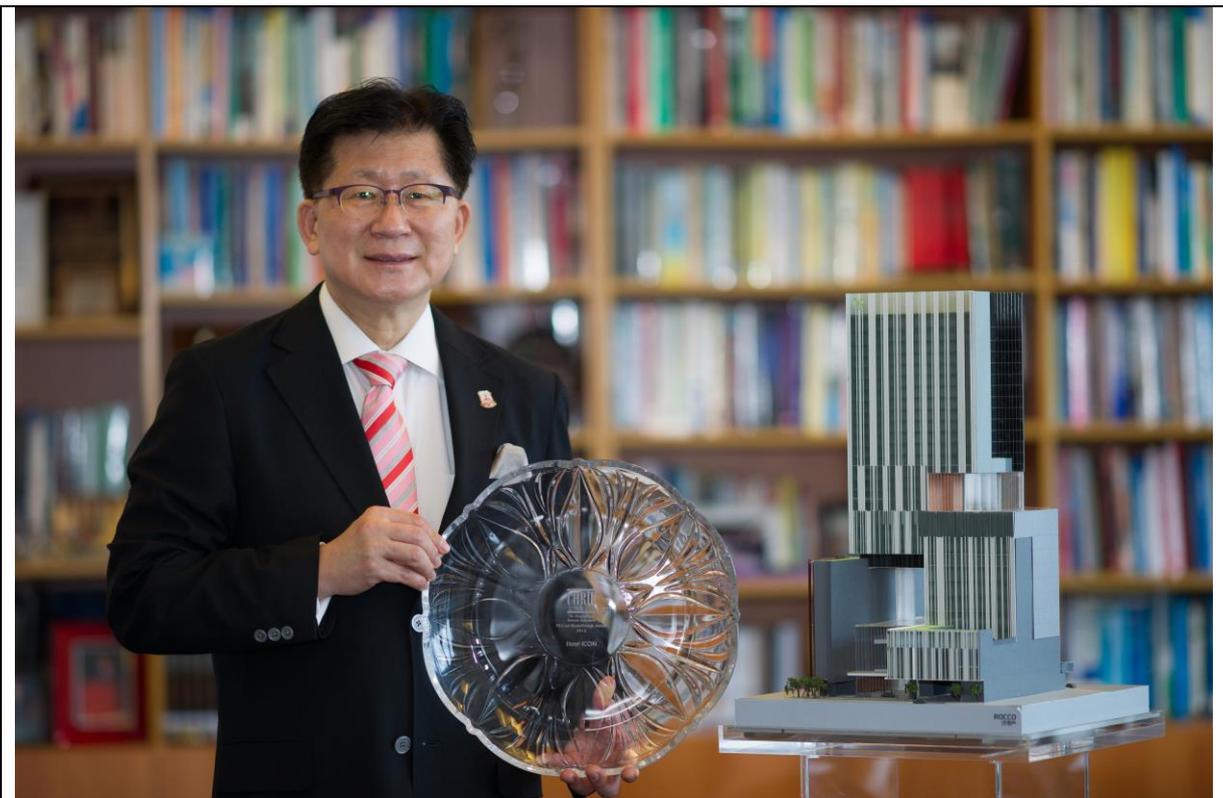
Wholly owned by PolyU and an extension of the SHTM, Hotel ICON is the world's first teaching and research hotel of its kind. A purpose-built hotel that fully integrates teaching, learning and research in a full service environment, Hotel ICON is committed to providing interactive and dynamic teaching, learning and research environments as well as state-of-the-art educational facilities.

Commenting on the award, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean and Chair Professor, said, "It recognises the School's intense effort with Hotel ICON and our unique approach in integrating the hotel in teaching and research." "This," he said, "is a major breakthrough in hospitality and tourism education."

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PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management is a world-leading provider of hospitality and tourism education. It was ranked No. 2 internationally among hotel and tourism schools based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* in November 2009.

With 60 academic staff drawing from 18 countries, the School offers programmes at levels ranging from Higher Diploma to Ph.D. It was awarded the 2003 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Institutional Achievement Award in recognition of its significant contribution to tourism education, and is currently a member of the UNWTO Knowledge Network.



Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean and Chair Professor, believes that the award recognises the School's intense effort with Hotel ICON and the School's unique approach in integrating the hotel in teaching and research.

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