

Press Release

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PolyU further advances hospitality education with upgraded facilities and launch of Hotel ICON

The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) has strengthened its efforts in nurturing hospitality graduates to address the growing demands of the hospitality and tourism industry in Hong Kong and the region. The SHTM has recently moved into its new premises in Tsim Sha Tsui East and revamped more than 30 subjects within its undergraduate curriculum to tie in with the soft opening of its teaching and research hotel (Hotel ICON) by phases in this year's second quarter.

The SHTM has consistently grown and adapted with the needs of the industry since its inception in 1979. The School has refined a distinctive vision of hospitality and tourism education and become a symbol of excellence in the industry. The SHTM's new education approach, with Hotel ICON at its centre, will help to improve hospitality and tourism education locally, regionally and internationally.

“With Asia emerging as the global centre of excellence in hospitality and tourism business, we see the need to advance both education and research in hotel and tourism management,” said Professor Kaye Chon, Dean and Chair Professor of SHTM. He added that PolyU targets to make Hotel ICON an internationally recognized brand and the best teaching and research hotel in the world.

As a unique teaching and research hotel with a pioneering fully-integrated education approach, Hotel ICON offers a learning platform that fosters entrepreneurial spirit, creativity and innovation. Wholly-owned by the University and an extension of the SHTM, Hotel ICON is an embodiment of the university's credo “Where Innovation Meets Application”, bringing together the SHTM's longstanding excellence in hospitality education and PolyU's continued commitment to supporting Hong Kong's hospitality and tourism industry.

“As a purpose-driven School,” said Professor Kaye Chon, “we are constantly pushing into new areas. We are confident that the international status of the School as a world-class institution will be further strengthened through the success of Hotel ICON.”

Hotel ICON is located in a building complex that also houses the SHTM campus, university staff quarters, research, resource centres as well as faculty and administration offices and has become an impressive part of the Tsim Sha Tsui East skyline. The new complex is also home to a wide range of teaching and research facilities, including Che-woo Lui Hotel and Tourism Resource Centre, Samsung Digital Lab for Hospitality Technology, Bistro 1979 (SHTM training restaurant), and the Vinoteca Lab (wine lab).

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 designated by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as one of its global Education and Training Centres.

Professor Chon added that China would become the top destination for tourists around the world by 2020. Citing recent statistics from the UNWTO forecast report, he estimated China to attract 130 million inbound tourists in 2020 and with an average growth rate of 7.8 per cent from now until 2020.

Professor Chon believes that Hong Kong is ideally positioned to benefit from this industry growth. The unique new education approach offered by the SHTM will offer a balance of practical, conceptual and analytical skills that will benefit from the integration of cultural elements in services management. He added that this new wave of hospitality and tourism education has come to be known as the "Asian Paradigm", leading the way for the SHTM to become known as a global centre of excellence in hotel and tourism management education.



PolyU Executive Vice President Mr Nicholas W. Yang (right) and SHTM Dean and Chair Professor Kaye Chon introducing the new SHTM Campus and facilities to press members.



Professor Chon said that with Asia emerging as the global centre of excellence in hospitality and tourism business, there is a need to advance both education and research in hotel and tourism management.



Che-woo Lui Hotel and Tourism Resource Centre



Wine tasting at Vinoteca Lab

Press Contact : Mr Wilfred Lai
Division Head (Media and Community Relations)
Telephone : (852) 2766 5218
E-mail : pawilfred@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Press Contact : Ms Pauline Ngan, Marketing Manager
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
Telephone : (852) 3400 2634
E-mail : hmpn@polyu.edu.hk