

2006.02.11

PolyU takes steps to advance world-class hospitality education

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) yesterday (10 February) hosted a Spring Reception in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre to celebrate with industry partners and friends the latest achievements and developments of its School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM).

The Reception was jointly hosted by Mr Victor Lo Chung-wing, PolyU Council Chairman; and Prof. Poon Chung-kwong, PolyU President. Dr Henry Tang, Financial Secretary of the SAR Government, was the Guest-of-Honour.

Speaking at the function, Prof. Poon said PolyU was taking steps to further enhance its world leadership position in hospitality and tourism education. He said PolyU was planning to build dedicated premises for SHTM, incorporating a teaching hotel, on the site of its former staff quarters Pak Sui Yuen in Tsimshatsui East. Part of the new premises is expected to be ready for occupation in the 2008/09 academic year.

Prof. Poon also proudly reported that SHTM has soared to rank fourth in world-ranking based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (August 2005 issue). It is also acknowledged as "the only non-US based institution in the top five" list.

Prof. Kaye Chon, Head of SHTM, is optimistic about the future development of the School. He said: "Our mission is to be recognised globally as Asia's leader in providing high quality education, research and scholarship in hospitality and tourism. We believe that having dedicated premises for SHTM and a quality teaching hotel is in line with the practice of top hotel and tourism schools in the world."

Prof. Poon stressed that the teaching hotel plan was much more than a university project. Apart from helping to propel SHTM to an even higher position in the world, it will help PolyU to better meet industry demand for quality manpower and expertise and thus to boost the economies of Hong Kong and the region.

Estimated to cost about \$600 million, the project will be financed by PolyU's non-Government funds, and supplemented by external sponsorships and bank loans. In addition to the teaching hotel, the premises will house conference facilities, teaching restaurants, research centres, classrooms, offices and new staff quarters. The School area will accommodate student population of 2,000 by the year 2020.

"The new premises will help enhance work-integrated education and research in hospitality management and help us attract high quality students and the best teaching staff from around the world. On top of the training offered in the premises, we will continue to arrange placements with hotels at home and abroad to ensure the broad exposure of our students." Prof. Chon added.

SHTM is well known as the pioneer of hotel and tourism education in Hong Kong. Since its inception in 1979, more than 10,000 students have graduated from the School. Its recent achievements include:

2005

Top ranking among Asian institutions of its kind and fourth in world-ranking based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the August issue of the Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research

2003

Institutional Achievement Award from International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) for innovation and contribution to the field of tourism education

2002

Designation as World Headquarters and Secretariat for the International Academy for the Study of Tourism (IAST)

2000

TedQual (Tourism Education Quality) Certification from World Tourism Organization (WTO)

1999

Designation as Asia's only university among the 16-member WTO Education and Training Network

The School has a faculty of 45 academic staff drawn from 17 countries. It now offers programmes at levels ranging from Higher Diploma and Bachelor's through to Master's degree and PhD by research.



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