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HK's world-class tourism school unveils teaching hotel plan

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University has unveiled a plan to develop dedicated premises for its School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) to further enhance its world leadership position in hospitality and tourism education and to embrace the strong demand for its further contribution to the HKSAR and the region.

To be built on the site of the staff quarters Pak Sui Yuen after its demolition, the planned premises will consist of a teaching hotel, conference facilities, teaching restaurants, research centres, classrooms, offices and new staff quarters. The hotel will offer quality service at a High Tariff B level, according to the Hong Kong Tourism Board's classification. The School area will accommodate student population growth up to 2020.

The news came after PolyU's announcement that STHM has recently been ranked 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, which is one of the most prestigious journals in the field.

According to PolyU President Prof. Poon Chung-kwong, a taskforce, comprising industry leaders and PolyU Council members, was appointed in November 2004 to study the need for and feasibility of the development project. Upon the recommendation of the taskforce, the University Council approved the plan at its meeting last week.

Prof. Poon said: "We believe that having dedicated premises for SHTM is in line with the practice of top hotel and tourism schools in the world. The School is widely recognized as a leader in the region and was recently ranked number four in the world in terms of hotel & tourism research. But the challenge for Hong Kong ahead is huge and we are determined to do even better. The planned teaching hotel complex will give the visibility of a world-class institution which SHTM deserves.

"It 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. Having a teaching hotel near our conveniently-located campus will also facilitate partnership with industry and educational institutions in the Chinese mainland."

Prof. Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Head of SHTM, said the new facility will be a great boost to the School's long-term development. "Apart from the advantage of having various teaching and research facilities, offices, conference facilities and teaching hotel and restaurants under one roof in an excellent location, we look forward to having new research laboratories to experiment with such areas as design, infrastructure and services in a hotel including, for example, hotel room design, wiring and ducting, room service, business centre service, etc."

"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.

Estimated to incur a total redevelopment cost of about \$500 million, the project will be financed by external sponsorships and bank loans. Subject to approval by the University Grants Committee, the Government's Education and Manpower Bureau and the Lands Department, the premises for

the School are expected to be ready for occupation at the start of the 2008/09 academic year, and the teaching hotel and staff residence at a later stage.

Meanwhile, the University Management has been closely communicating with staff residents of Pak Sui Yuen regarding vacating arrangements. Pak Sui Yuen was constructed in 1981 and located at 17 Science Museum Road next to PolyU's main campus.

SHTM is well known as the pioneer of hotel and tourism education in Hong Kong. Since 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 & 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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