

Letter to Lingnanians



Our **President**

Professor S. Joe Qin

President and Wai Kee Kau Chair Professor of Data Science

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Dear Lingnanians,

I hope you all had a wonderful and refreshing summer. As we begin this new academic year, I am excited to see our vibrant campus filled with the energy and passion of our students,

our community.

With the new academic year upon us, our dedicated faculty members have diligently prepared to guide and support our students, ensuring a rewarding experience for all. I am also thrilled to share some of the latest achievements and developments at Lingnan University, reflecting our commitment to excellence and innovation.

Emphasising Quality Education through Enriching Experiences

This summer, the Office of Student Affairs organised various enriching internship and exchange programmes in Mainland China, including the **Shanghai-Hong Kong Student Internship Programme** and the **Lingnan University Seeding's Young Talent Global Career Exploration Internship Scheme** in Beijing. Our students explored fields ranging from media and cultural creativity to marketing, finance, IT, and logistics. We also arranged five internship programmes in the Greater Bay Area, deepening students' understanding of this promising region.

Additionally, about 40 student-athletes and staff members visited the Lingnan College of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou for the Lingnan Board of Directors' Cup. Over 30 students participated in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Camp and STEM Competition organised as the Lingnan-Yuanpei STEM Summer Academy (LYSSA) in collaboration with Yuanpei College of Peking University. Another group joined the Future Stars: Greater Bay Area Dongguan Internship Programme.

It is pleasing to see our students eagerly embracing these opportunities to connect with our friends and partners on the Mainland, learning more about their lives and our nation.



Reimagining Well-rounded Education in the Digital Age

Lingnan continues to reimagine well-rounded education in the digital age, striving to become a comprehensive university in arts and sciences with impactful research and innovations. We celebrated the official opening of the **Lingnan University Institute for Advanced Study (LUIAS)** in March and the **School of Data Science (SDS)** in May. These establishments bring unique perspectives and approaches to enhancing Lingnan's existing strengths, propelling us forward innovatively.

Lingnan University Institute for Advanced Study (LUIAS)

We are honoured to have world-renowned researchers, scholars, and educators join us at LUIAS. Our first cohort of Lingnan Fellows includes esteemed individuals such as Prof Tao Tang, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; Prof Dongxiao Zhang, a member of the US National Academy of Engineering; Prof Min Zhou, a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Prof Alain Bensoussan, a member of the French Academy of Sciences.

Most excitingly, Nobel Laureate and our 2023 Honorary Doctorate, Prof Samuel C.C. Ting, is serving as Honorary Director of LUIAS. Those of you who attended the University Assembly and Honorary Doctorate Conferment Ceremony last November will surely remember how inspiring his words were and the lasting resonance they continue to have. His influence, along with that of all other Fellows and Senior Lingnan Scholars, will significantly benefit our research networks, international and interdisciplinary collaborations, and teaching and learning activities.



School of Data Science (SDS)

In a separate but equally significant development, the inauguration of the SDS in May marks another milestone in our journey. The opening ceremony saw senior government officials, industry leaders, legislative council members, the media, alumni, and other stakeholders in attendance, demonstrating comprehensive support from all levels of society.

As Prof Dong Sun, Secretary for Innovation, Technology, and Industry, stated at the ceremony, "With the objective to seamlessly integrate arts, humanities, and sciences, the new School of Data Science is the best illustration of what higher education looks like today and tomorrow." His endorsement confirms our commitment to making real breakthroughs that address the needs of students, society, the country, and humanity.

New Common Core Course on Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Furthermore, as part of our ongoing commitment to providing cutting-edge education, we have made generative AI a common core course for all first-year students starting this academic year. This course will cover topics such as fundamental concepts of generative AI, methods for evaluation, and ethical considerations. Our primary goal is to enable students without prior AI knowledge to develop practical skills in implementing, critiquing, and refining generative models.



Welcoming New Leadership and Building a Stronger Community

Over the past several months, we have warmly welcomed key senior management who bring fresh energy and charisma to Lingnan. AI expert **Prof Xin Yao**, Vice-President (Research and Innovation) and Tong Tin Sun Chair Professor of Machine Learning, joined us in January. Since then, he has been working closely with the team, overseeing and steering the development of research, innovation, and knowledge transfer, as well as providing leadership for our research institutes and centres.

In June, we were delighted to welcome a world-renowned scientific computing scholar, **Prof Raymond Chan Hon-fu**, as our new Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost and Lam Man Tsan Chair Professor of Scientific Computing. In addition, **Mr Ernest Chan Chi-man** will join Lingnan in October as Vice President (Administration), putting Lingnan on the fast track to the next new height.

I want to thank all our faculties, schools, departments, and administrative offices for their hard work and commitment. The partnerships and collaborations within our university community are central to our development and success. It is through this collective effort that we continue to thrive.



Strengthening Global Partnerships and Academic Collaboration

Celebrating Recent Milestones in Global Collaboration

I am excited to share some of our recent milestones in international collaboration. Earlier this year, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South China Agricultural University to enhance postgraduate programmes, student exchanges, scientific research, and training. Additionally, we have entered into strategic cooperation MOUs with Rizhao City, Shandong Hi-Speed Group, and other organisations to promote research, innovation, and the commercialisation of technological achievements. These strategic partnerships are opening up new avenues for groundbreaking research and fostering an environment of entrepreneurial spirit.

Strengthening Relationships with Leading Institutes

During my visits to Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenyang, I had productive discussions with senior officials and educators at leading institutions, including Peking University and Tsinghua University. These outreach efforts have strengthened our relationships and paved the way for future research cooperation and exchange programmes.



Engaging with Government and Educational Bodies

As a member of a delegation from Hong Kong higher education institutions, I visited the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Science and Technology in Beijing in May. During the visit, I discussed the integration of arts and sciences to cultivate a generation of young people who sincerely appreciate our country and city.

Highlighting Research Excellence During the RGC Visit

Even during the semester break, our campus was buzzing with activity. For the Research Grants Council (RGC) Visit on June 6, we welcomed around 100 guests, including senior officials from the University Grants Committee and RGC panel members worldwide. We showcased our latest research and achievements and offered interactive sessions for them to engage with our students and faculty members.

The afternoon RGC forum saw active participation from members of local universities, who learned from the panel representatives about tips for grant applications and other important issues, drawing approximately 400 attendees. The RGC Visit genuinely showcased Lingnan's recent rapid progress towards a comprehensive arts and science institution, and the constructive feedback will undoubtedly help us make our research and innovations even more impactful and dynamic.



Celebrating Academic and Innovation Achievements

Recognising World Class Scholars

Over the past academic year, Lingnan's scholars have received unprecedented global recognition, including elections to a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (myself), a Fellow to the U.S. National Academy of Inventors (Prof Sam Kwong, Associate Vice-President (Strategic Research), Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Acting Dean of SDS, and J.K. Lee Chair Professor of Computational Intelligence), and Fellows to the Hong Kong Academy of Engineering Sciences (Prof Sam Kwong and myself). Profs. Xin Yao and Sam Kwong have also been awarded the world's most cited researchers by Clarivate.

Furthermore, four Lingnan scholars, including myself, Prof Xin Yao, Prof Sam Kwong, and Prof Haoran Xie (Acting Associate Dean of the School of Data Science and Professor of the Division of Artificial Intelligence), were honoured in the **2024 Ranking of Best Computer Science Scientists** conducted by Research.com in May. This recognition demonstrates Lingnan's dedication to integrating AI technology into diverse research fields, elevating our university to new heights.

In addition to these accolades, more than 25 Lingnan colleagues are ranked as the **World's top 2% scientists by Stanford University**, representing a three-fold growth over the last academic year.



Award-winning Innovation by the Entrepreneurship Initiative Team

I would also like to highlight the award won by the **Lingnan Entrepreneurship Initiative** team for their invention, PureAura, a mini air purifier that received the **2024 iF Design Gold Award (Product - Building Technology)**, widely regarded as the Oscars of the design industry.

Lingnan University is the sole Hong Kong institution and one of only eight universities worldwide to have received this honour since the Gold Awards' inception in 1954. Indeed, PureAura's excellent design also garnered a Gold Medal at the 49th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva.

These achievements underscore Lingnan's diverse capacities in innovation and technology, our continuous pursuit of excellence, and our contributions to humanitarian inventions with social impact. We continue collaborating with various partners, including NGOs and partners from different sectors, to popularise and distribute the device to those in need.



Celebrating Research Funding and Generous Donations

Record-Breaking RGC Funding Success

I am delighted to announce our remarkable success in the latest Research Grants Council (RGC) funding round for the General Research Fund (GRF), Early Career Scheme (ECS), and Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS). We have received HK\$24.4 million in grants for 39 projects, marking the highest funding amount in our history and an impressive 17 percent increase from last year's HK\$20.8 million. Seven of these projects will receive funding exceeding or nearing HK\$1 million. In addition, Lingnan was awarded seven postdoc fellows in the Hong Kong RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme this year, representing a success rate of 78%.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to our brilliant researchers whose dedication and hard work have resulted in this remarkable achievement!

Generous Donations for University Development

We were overjoyed to hold an agreement signing ceremony this June to mark a donation of HK\$100 million by Hopson Education Charitable Funds. This generous contribution will support Lingnan's goal of attracting and nurturing global talents. Additionally, we are grateful to receive a generous donation from the Lingnan Education Organization to expand teaching facilities and establish a Lingnan history museum and archives.

Looking Ahead

As we begin this new academic year, the energy and enthusiasm from our entire community bring a refreshing vibrancy. We are a global leader in charting the future of digitally integrated higher education. We will equip every Lingnan graduate with AI literacy as we

Until next time, when I shall share more exciting and noteworthy news—thank you!

Warmest Regards,

Joe Qin

President and Wai Kee Kau Chair Professor of Data Science