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TO NEWS EDITOR
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CU APPOINTS NEW DEAN OF SCIENCE

Dr. Lau Oi Wah, Reader in the Department of Chemistry, was elected Dean of the Faculty of Science recently by her fellow teachers at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, becoming the first woman to assume Deanship. Her appointment will be for three years, the University announces.

"Excellence in teaching is one of the major goals I set for the Faculty," said Dr. Lau. The Faculty of Science has long embraced the concept of "Teaching Quality Assurance" and started to assess teachers' performance in teaching two years ago. A Staff Handbook on Teaching Quality Assurance was compiled and distributed among staff early this year to set out clearly how the assessment mechanism works. "Much had been achieved by my predecessors, and I would like to see that our Faculty stays in the forefront," she said.

Dr. Lau said she would also be encouraging multi-disciplinary research to gather expertise from different disciplines to tackle the increasingly complex problems the human society is facing.

With the University adopting a new funding model under which the Deans will assume a greater role in allocating funds, Dr. Lau said she will try, with the cooperation of departments, to come up with a system which guarantees the most effective and efficient use of resources.

Dr. Lau joined the Faculty 25 years ago when it was relatively young. "We have come a long way since then. Our infrastructure is now very well-developed. All the departments are very strong in both teaching and research," she said.

Founded in 1965, the Faculty of Science has six departments – Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and Statistics – which offer altogether eight undergraduate major programmes.

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"Other than the traditional programmes, which are more academic in nature, we also have programmes which stress application, such as Applied Physics and Human Biology.

"New programmes tailored to the manpower needs of the community as well as students' interest are being offered," said Dr. Lau, quoting as examples the Food Science and Environmental Science programmes which admit their first batches of students this year.

The Food Science programme is jointly provided by the departments of Biochemistry and Biology; and the Environmental Science Programme has the input of the two, and the department of Chemistry as well.

Currently, there are 1,480 undergraduate and 180 postgraduate students in the Faculty. Those studying for the master's degrees make up two-thirds of the postgraduate enrolment, and the rest are for doctoral degrees.

Dr. Lau graduated from the University of Hong Kong and obtained her Bachelor of Science; Bachelor of Science (Special); and Doctor of Philosophy in 1964, 1965 and 1970 respectively. She also holds a Master of Science degree, from the University of London. She is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and a Chartered Chemist.

Dr. Lau joined the University as Assistant Lecturer in Chemistry in 1968, and was promoted to Reader in 1993.

She is an active member of the University, currently serving on the Chung Chi College Board of Trustees and various committees at the University, Faculty and department levels. She had also been President and Chief Editor of the Newsletter of the Chinese University Teachers' Association.

Note to Editors:

Photo of Dr. Lau sent through Government Information Services press boxes.

For press enquiries, please contact Mrs. Shirley Kwok of the Information and Public Relations Office at 609-8897.