

Innovation and Technology Scholarship Award Scheme fuels students to dream big while innovating the world

Twenty-five aspiring students were recognised at the award presentation ceremony of this year's Innovation and Technology Scholarship Award Scheme. These students, as a new force, are ready to embark on the journey to join hands with the Scheme's 150 alumni to make contribution to the I&T development of the community.

At the award presentation ceremony held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, there were again 25 high-achieving students whose brilliant academic results matched their distinctive individualities. Some wore dazzling smiles, others demonstrated a sense of calmness. Many were appreciative of the cheers of fellow students and the recognition of their university teachers.

"The Innovation and Technology Bureau and the Scheme share the same mission - to nurture young talents and to pave a good career path for them. I am proud of their achievements, and I am glad to learn that the majority of past awardees are now pursuing a career in innovation and technology fields," Mr Nicholas W Yang, the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, noted in the opening of the award presentation ceremony.

Yang hoped the success of the past awardees and their career choice would inspire more young people to join the exciting and rewarding field of innovation and technology. In addition, through the collaboration of the Government and stakeholders in the community, he also looked forward to the cultivation of a culture in which the local talents would gain respects from their peers, family and the community for their passion and dedication to pursue their dreams in innovation and technology.

The Innovation and Technology Scholarship Award Scheme is an annual programme nurturing Hong Kong's young talent. Marking its seventh edition this year, the Scheme is open to non-final year students studying science, engineering and other related disciplines at local universities. So far, a wealth of 175 outstanding young people has been recognised since the beginning of the Scheme.

Like the alumni, the 2017 awardees will each be given

a scholarship of up to HK\$150,000 to cover the expenses of overseas/Mainland attachment programmes. The awardees will also be assigned to a celebrated academic or professional mentor in a mentorship programme. And, if their study plan allows, they will also take part in a local internship in a reputable company in Hong Kong, a technology centre or a government office. There are also opportunities to serve as an innovation and technology ambassador in a variety of community service activities.

Organised by The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG), the Scheme is jointly supported by the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC). Nominations are submitted by respective universities to the organiser.

The nominated students are then invited to show their skills in front of a selection committee of acclaimed professionals and academics, chaired by Mr Bernard Chan. Despite having been in this position for six years, Chan was still much pleased by this year's outstanding students.

"What fascinated me most about this year's nominated students was their knowledge and comprehension of the latest government policies, such as the implications of developing the Lok Ma Chau Loop. They also demonstrated their care and commitment towards Hong Kong, including the issues of conservation and the prospect of local agriculture with the use of cutting-edge technology."

For awardees who are committed to working for a better Hong Kong, the Scheme's mentorship programme will be a fruitful opportunity to gain insights from reputable scholars, entrepreneurs and professionals from different sectors.

Ms Annie Choi, the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, is among the mentors responsible for the



The awardees are photographed on stage with top academics, industry leaders and government officials.

enlightenment of the awardees. "As a mentor, I believe guidance and opinions are essential for the students to learn to put ideas into practice in their daily life and their future career," she said.

Choi expected students to make the most of the Scheme by cultivating critical thinking, perseverance in the pursuit of science and research as well as "the attitude and hunger for facts and truth".

This Scheme is not merely an award-presentation event; it also requires awardees to organise Service Projects to promote innovation and technology in service to the public.

"This is a critical aspect of the Award, as it nurtures the participants to always see how best they can give back to the community," said the Executive Director of the HKFYG, the Scheme's organiser, Dr Rosanna Wong.

"By giving back," she continued, "the awardees come to

understand that this is a community award and they have a responsibility to repay that trust and privilege." She hoped that whatever innovations the students had made would be put to good use in Hong Kong, for the sustainability of the city as well as for the building up of an ever-stronger innovation and technology community in Hong Kong by "encouraging awardees to become role models for other students".

One of the officiating guests, Mr Raymond Cheng, Group General Manager and Chief Operating Officer, Asia Pacific of HSBC, said that nurturing talents in innovation and technology was the key for the future of Hong Kong, which best explained HSBC's continued support for the Scheme for the seventh consecutive year.

Cheng shared how the awardees could contribute to the development of innovation and technology in future.

"They can bring back ideas from their Mainland/overseas experience; they can facilitate innovation and technology interaction and collaboration between various industries and fields, locally and globally."

The list went on. He said the awardees can also establish their own businesses, providing further learning and working opportunities for younger generation; or apply innovation and technology to tackle Hong Kong's pressing economic and social situations.

Thanks to the organiser HKFYG, the supporter ITC and the sponsor of the Scheme HSBC, as well as the support of various mentors and benefactors, these young creative minds have been paving the way for a better future of innovation and technology development. Below are three previous awardees who shared with us what their personal experience was like.

Nicole Luk Sui-man



Nicole Luk Sui-man made use of the exchange opportunity to see more in San Francisco.

"I have always wanted to further my studies, and the InnoTech Scholarship has helped me to confirm where and what I should aim for," remarked Nicole Luk Sui-man, a 2015 awardee. The recent CUHK Physics graduate will begin her doctoral studies in biophysics at the University of California, Berkeley this fall — the very campus where she spent eight months last year as an exchange student.

During her stay in California financially supported by the Scholarship, Luk took courses and conducted research on campus, joining the lab of Professor Ahmet Yildiz to study single-molecule imaging and manipulation methods to study fundamental biological processes inside the cell.

Noted Luk: "Watching the carrier molecules on the screen is itself a pleasurable activity." The lab student was fascinated by the splendid visualisation of what is happening inside the basic unit of all living things.

Luk also spent three months at the University of Chicago for a summer research. Concluding her two exchanges, Luk found that apart from scientific and technical knowledge, she also acquired so-called "soft skills" like social communications, and organisation techniques, as well as an understanding of the importance of work-life balance.

Taking to heart the importance of balancing work with leisure time, Luk took up the hobby of rock climbing, introduced to her by her lab-mates in Berkeley. "I guess this is a bonus from my exchange!" she said.

Jacky Goh Zhen-hao



Jacky Goh Zhen-hao applied his knowledge of food safety and technology during the internship at the Hong Kong Productivity Council.

Jacky Goh Zhen-hao is also pursuing a new route in life; but unlike Luk, he opted for a further study in Pharmacy at the CUHK in the coming academic year. Awarded in 2014, the then Food Safety and Technology student in the PolyU believed that the experience that he had gained from the InnoTech Scholarship Scheme prepared him for this change of track.

For two months in 2014, Goh studied Organic Chemistry at Stanford University, which he said had further cultivated his interest in medicinal chemistry. Goh especially remembered Dr Stephen Kahl, a professional in the pharmaceutical chemistry field and one of his lecturers at Stanford who had opened the doors of pharmacy for him, "Dr Kahl related most knowledge to daily examples and introduced different organic compounds, as well as reactions in drug synthesis. This intrigued me to probe deeper into medicinal chemistry."

In addition to these educational exchanges, the Scheme also offered Goh an internship at the Materials and Manufacturing Technology Division at the Hong Kong Productivity Council. This internship focused on food industry related work, a perfect match to his capability. Seeing local designs and technology developing and applying the knowledge he had learned from school to assist clients were both gratifying to Goh.

Zoe Lee Hei-yen



Zoe Lee Hei-yen (second from the right) said without Mr Brooke's (second from the left) encouragement, she would have hesitated to work towards her dream.

Zoe Lee Hei-yen appreciated all the components of the InnoTech Scholarship Scheme, for they created an interlaced effect on her personal growth.

The CityU Energy Science and Engineering student first completed a two-month internship at the Development Bureau in 2014. Understanding how large projects

such as the Kai Tak area development and the Kwun Tong Promenade were planned and carried out, her passion to be an engineer grew even stronger.

Lee then studied at the University of California, Berkeley for one semester in 2015. During the exchange she was encouraged by her mentor, chairman of Professional Property Services Limited Mr Nicholas Brooke and made a bold and successful application for a one-year placement at a renowned engineering consulting company, so as to obtain a taste of the commercial world.

Soon to graduate this year, Lee will start her career in the same company, where she will be able to work on sustainable building and renewable energy designs. Concluding her experiences, she realises the importance of seizing every opportunity that comes her way. "People say that opportunities are only for those who are prepared, but I prefer to think I will never be fully prepared. So I would rather try and always go after whatever career goals I want to achieve."