



CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

External Review of the Master of Public Policy (MPP) Program

On 10 and 11 August 2023, our MPP program underwent its first external review. The panel members consisted of Prof. So Young Kim, Professor of the Graduate School of Science and Technology at Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST); Dr. Sean McMinn, Director of Centre for Education Innovation, HKUST; and Mr. Justin Hin Ching Ng, ESG Strategy and Sustainability Consultant and alumnus of PPOL's MPP program in 2021. Professor Huamin Qu, Dean of the Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies, Prof. Masaru Yarime, and Prof. Pengyu Zhu, co-directors of the MPP program, attended the external review.

The review panel recognized the achievements of the MPP program and gave constructive comments about the program; the scope of the review covered curricula and syllabi management, the program's linkage with science and technology, technical knowledge and expertise, gradings and assessment, career advising and development, and students' achievements relative to international benchmarking. The result of the review indicates strong evidence that the program has grown and adapted since its launch in 2018-19, and being the only 2-year taught master's program in Hong Kong, it has positioned its niche very well, as shown by an increase in applications for almost 6 folds (141 to 808 across 5 years). Benchmarking was conducted effectively to ensure the quality



of the program relative to similar courses offered by other universities. The program has successfully recruited internationally competitive faculty members by identifying the best talents across various backgrounds and diversified student populations (the dominant share of Chinese mainland students has changed from 97% to 88% over 5 years). The courses offered by the MPP program are marked with a clear set of grading criteria and rubrics and an effective and prompt feedback mechanism; the courses also make effective use of the case-based approach that connects principles and theories to relevant real-world initiatives.

Looking ahead, the MPP program will continue to offer students of diverse backgrounds with interdisciplinary learning and thinking skills by creating more systematic linkage with science and technology programs making use of the strong S&T education and research of HKUST. And for reputational and feedback reasons, the MPP program will carefully monitor the careers and performance of its graduates. With the rise of ChatGPT and generative AI, professors of PPOL will need to state clearly their preference in allocating ChatGPT use within their respective syllabi and, at the same time, there will be more emphasis on students' conceptual, procedural, metacognitive knowledge and higher-order thinking in courses and assessments.



Professor Naubahar Sharif and Professor Donald Low

Shared Policy Insights on the World Economic Forum’s Young Global Leaders Development Program

Professor Naubahar Sharif, Acting Head and Professor of PPOL, and Professor Donald Low, Director of Leadership and Public Policy Executive Education, Professor of Practice of PPOL shared their insight and thoughts on issues concerning policy and regulatory framework arising out of the rapid evolution of AI technology in this year’s Young Global Leaders (YGL) Development Program of the World Economic Forum (WEF), a five-day Education Module held from 18 to 22 September, hosted by HKUST, under the theme “Our AI-Driven Future: Prospects and Pitfalls”. Both Prof. Sharif and Prof. Low are co-lead faculty of the YGL program.

During the Program, Prof. Sharif steered young global leaders on a journey to uncover the region’s vision for the next decade and discussed the national and local policies driving technocentric growth, he remarked in his speech “Technology Development and Leapfrogging in the GBA” that AI, with its transformative potential, is redefining public policy problem-solving and decision-making. However, it also presents challenges that require considered policymaking, from ethical considerations to societal impacts. As difficult as it may be, policymakers must stay ahead, understanding AI’s nuances to craft responsive, effective policies for a balanced AI-driven future.

In his speech “Will Fintech Make the World a Better Place?”, Prof. Donald Low remarked, that the program encourages YGLs to delve into the ethical nuances of AI’s influence on human society. They are urged to think critically about policy-making strategies within an innovation-driven economy, drawing inspiration from real-world examples in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

It is the first time HKUST has hosted the World Economic Forum’s Young Global Leaders Development Program. Around 40 influential individuals from the WEF’s YGL leadership development program gathered at HKUST.

For more information about the WEF’s YGL program at HKUST, please read



The program has also been reported in local media HK01:



Professor Naubahar Sharif
Acting Head and Professor of PPOL and
Co-lead Faculty of the YGL Program



Professor Donald Low
Director of Leadership and Public Policy
Executive Education,
Professor of Practice of PPOL and
Co-lead Faculty of the YGL Program

International Aviation and Business Conference

On 12 and 13 October 2023, the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) hosted the International Aviation and Business Conference (IABC) at the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), HKUST, with Prof. Pengyu Zhu, Associate Professor of PPOL and Director of the Center for Applied Social and Economic Research (CASER), as the Conference Executive Chair. This conference was co-organized with CASER, Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Commission (HKITC), Hong Kong Aviation Industry Association (HKAIA), and Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA). Over these two days, scholars, stakeholders and representatives from various sectors and different parts of the world gathered at the beautiful campus of HKUST to join this important platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange in aviation technology and business.

In the opening session on the first day of the conference, Prof. WANG Yang, Vice-President for Institutional Advancement, Chair Professor of the Department of IEDA and of Mathematics, Director of the Big Data for Bio Intelligence Laboratory, Associate Director of HKUST BDI, HKUST gave a warm welcome to all the participants, emphasizing that Hong Kong is at a critical juncture to reconnect with the world and HKUST has put great effort and plenty of resources into space technology and sustainability, he foresaw more collaboration through the conference. Mr. LAM Sai-hung GBS, JP, Secretary for Transport and Logistics, HKSAR Government, introduced the role of HKIA, the cutting-edge technology and innovation that the HKIA has implemented by the Airport Authority and Civil Aviation Department, and wished the conference every success. Mrs. Stefanie Seedig, Deputy Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, introduced to the audience the achievement and commitment to green aviation initiated by the German government, especially in zero-emission aircraft, R&D regulations, and its efforts in establishing collaboration with China in the field, and wished all a thought-provoking, inspiring and fruitful conference that would serve as an impetus for new ideas and innovations.



In the keynote speech session, Mr. Duncan Chiu, LegCo Member and President of the Hong Kong Information Technology Joint Council, shared with the audience the topic, “Is Hong Kong’s Aviation Industry Hovering on the Runway to Recovery?” about Hong Kong’s aviation recovery in the post-pandemic era, the future development of Hong Kong’s aviation industry and net zero, indicating that there is an overall recovery of air traffic and cargo business remained strong after the pandemic as Hong Kong ranked number 1 in cargo traffic. He demonstrated how Covid-19 affected the profitability of the world’s most valuable airline companies and introduced the airport-city development strategy and the efficient cross-GBA sea-air cargo transshipment pilot scheme that Hong Kong is building. Prof. Xi Liang, Professor of Sustainable Transitions in Construction and Infrastructure, Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction, UCL, delivered the speech “Carbon Market and Net Zero Transition of Aviation Industry” from the angle of carbon pricing and market and its transition to the aviation industry. He gave an overview of CO₂ emission and per-capita consumption-based CO₂ emission worldwide; and introduced the carbon emission trading system and global carbon pricing and its linkage to energy and

climate policy; he also showcased aviation in the EU emission trading system, the new laws and opportunities to decarbonize and lower carbon emission in the aviation industry by international civil aviation organizations and shared critical issues about carbon offsetting in aviation and potential collaboration opportunities in the GBA.

In the opening session of the second day of the conference, Prof. Huamin Qu, Dean of AIS, Head and Program Director of EMIA, Chair Professor of BDI and CSE, HKUST introduced the background of PPOL and its interdisciplinary positioning to the audience and welcomed conference participants to Hong Kong and HKUST and wished the conference success. Ir. Dr. Angus Cheung, Dean of HKAIA, President and CEO of AeroVision Technology Ltd, introduced HKAIA; he remarked on the business opportunities despite challenges brought by Covid-19 and wished the conference a successful event. Mr. Chris Au Young, General Manager of Innovation and Data Insights, HKIA welcomed the participants and introduced HKIA and its capacity, such as air traffic before the pandemic and its recovery after the pandemic

and the challenges it faces, the new development plan for HKIA under the topic “Redefining Airport Experience with Innovation.”

Prof. Daniel Delahaye, Head of Optimization and Machine Learning Team of the ENAC Research Laboratory, in his keynote speech “An Insight of Machine Learning Algorithms in Optimization-Simulation for Air Traffic Management Operations”, introduced the theoretical background of optimization algorithm, the method of deterministic, stochastic and RRT approaches for evaluating decisions, the role of machine learning and why it works for airport operation and flight control such as predicting taxiway and terminal occupancy. He elaborated on large-scale trajectory planning and how 4D weather, airspace configuration, and other realistic features can be inserted into the simulation process. He shared with the audience the automatic emergency trajectory design, automatic SID-STAR design, airbus, and helicopter noise propagation model; he also remarked on new challenges in simulation in predicting CO₂ emission reduction potential cruise altitude and speed optimization.



Prof. Anming Zhang, Professor of Saunder School of Business, University of British Columbia, in his keynote speech, “Global Airport Connectivity Index: Impact of COVID-19, New Route Assessment, and Future Research”, introduced the connectivity index and its application, he pointed out the susceptible nature of aviation industry to shocks with simultaneous resilience. He demonstrated the application of the connectivity index in classifying airports at the global level, trading, and benchmarking.

Mr. Benjamin Wong, Vice President of Advanced Manufacturing and New Energy Technology, OASES, in his keynote speech “The Tech-enabled Aviation Industry: the 360 Perspectives”, introduced the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES), its role, mission, and collaborators, its policies and schemes to support innovation and research in local universities, research institutes, and industries. He also shared the progress and advancement of aircraft and airport facilities.

There were six focus topics in the Parallel Forum sessions: 1) Airport Technology Evolution, 2) Technology Sharing with Other Industries, 3) Web 3.0 Technology in the Aviation Industry and its Business Opportunities, 4) Technology Adoption and Efficiency Enhancement and Intelligent Logistics, 5) Sustainable Aviation, and 6) Sustainable Fuel and Decarbonization.

Presenters and participants were from local, mainland, and overseas companies including ADP Ingénierie, AFSC Operations, CASL, Cathay Pacific, HACTL, HAECO, HKEX, OpenAirlines, VERESE-AI; local and mainland organizations and governmental departments, including China Communications and Transportation Association, HK International Airport, HKCAD, HKITJC, OASES; and from local, mainland and overseas universities, including Beihang University, ENAC LAB, HKU, HKUST, HKPolyU, HKBU, Tongji University, Tsinghua University, UCL, USTC, Zhejiang University. The two-day conference has proven to be a successful and fruitful knowledge exchange event for all participants.



Integrating Health and Social Care Services for the Elderly in Asia Conference

On 30 October 2023, scholars, practitioners, and policymakers gathered at the Institute of Advanced Studies, HKUST to join this dynamic platform and address the issues and policy challenges faced by our aging populations under the topic “Integrating Health and Social Care Services for Elderly in Asia: A Scholar-Practitioner-Policymaker Dialogue” Prof. Alex Jingwei He, Associate Professor of PPOL, Acting Director of IPP, HKUST served as the conference chair. Professor Tim K. T Cheng, Vice President (R&D) of HKUST, delivered the welcome speech; the Director of the Asia-Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies of WHO, Dr. Nima Asgari-Jirhandeh, and Prof. Alex Jingwei He delivered the opening speeches. Prof. He extended a warm welcome to all the participating scholars, practitioners, and policymakers and introduced the theme of the conference.



Prof. Kim K. T. Cheng delivered the welcome speech

Policy scholars and experts from universities and government agencies, all over the world, including countries and regions including mainland China, HKSAR, India, Korea, Japan, Singapore,

Integrating Health and Social Care Services for the Elderly in Asia: A Scholar-Practitioner-Policymaker Dialogue





Dr. Nima Asgari-Jirhandeh (upper)
Prof. Alex Jingwei He (lower)
delivered the opening speech



Taiwan, the UK, the US, the Western Pacific Region, and from local, mainland and overseas universities and organizations, including Peking University, CUHK, HKU, HKUST, Jawaharlal Hehru University, King's College Lindon, Ministry of Health (Singapore), National Health Group (Singapore), Seoul National University, Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research, University of Birmingham, University of Georgia, WHO, and in various disciplines approached the topic, shared their expertise and provided insights in their presentations from angles and perspectives such as health policy, long-term care system, public health service, geriatrics, and social work with elderly in four sessions, and engaged in panel discussions after the individual presentations.

The conference concluded with evident success and proven to be an excellent knowledge exchange event.



PPOL, HKUST Signs MoU with HKIAAC, ICAC

On 21 February 2024, the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) entered a significant partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption (HKIAAC) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). The primary objective of this collaboration is to propel anti-corruption-related academic research and provide personnel training, thus contributing to the national and global endeavours against corruption.



During the ICAC's 50th Anniversary Reception and Establishment Ceremony of the Academy, Acting Head of the Division of PPOL, Professor Naubahar Sharif signed the MoU with Deputy Commissioner and Head of Operations, Mr. Yau Shu-chun. The signing was witnessed by Chief Executive Mr. John Lee, Commissioner of the ICAC Mr. Woo Ying-ming, President of HKUST Professor Nancy Ip, and Provost of HKUST Professor Guo Yike.

According to the MoU, HKIAAC and PPOL will consolidate and enhance cooperation in graft fighting by joint research, organizing academic forums and seminars to exchange data, information and materials related to anti-corruption, sharing experiences, and providing anti-corruption personnel training courses.



His Excellency Ambassador Khali Hashmi of Pakistan to China Visited PPOL

On 22 February 2024, the Division of PPOL was honoured to welcome His Excellency Ambassador Khali Hashmi of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, along with His Excellency Consul General of Pakistan in Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR Bilil Ahmad Butt Consul, Deputy Consul General Mr Muhammad Amjiad Ahmad, Second Secretary Ms Rabbia Nasir, and Trade Development Officer Mr Ali Awan visiting our division. Professor Naubahar Sharif, Acting Head and Professor of PPOL, and Professor Emily Nason, Associate Professor of Business Education and Director of Undergraduate Recruitment and Admission Office warmly received our distinguished guests.

During the visit, Professor Sharif introduced HKUST and the Division of PPOL to His Excellency, while Professor Nason provided an overview of HKUST's student profile, particularly highlighting opportunities for international students and employment prospects after graduation. Professor Sharif emphasized the Division of PPOL's commitment to deepening links with Pakistani institutions and engaging in collaborative research projects.

Ambassador Khali Hashmi acknowledged the importance of educational opportunities in Hong Kong for Pakistani students and shared Pakistan's experiences in collaboration with other institutions. The discussion also touched upon the unique appeal of Hong Kong as a study



destination and the potential for educational collaboration between Pakistan and international peers.

On behalf of HKUST and the Division of PPOL, Professor Sharif expressed gratitude to His Excellency Ambassador Khali Hashmi for his visit and presented him with souvenirs. His Excellency Ambassador presented Professor Sharif with a dual language atlas about Pakistani history and geography.

Following the meeting, a visit to the Shaw Auditorium was conducted, accompanied by HKUST's Pakistani students, and guided by representatives from the Global Engagement and Greater China Affairs Office, culminating in a successful conclusion to the visit.

