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## HKU, CUHK and HKUST Collaborate to Establish the Joint Centre for Advanced Study

The University of Hong Kong (HKU), The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) have agreed to work together to develop greater cooperation and deeper collaboration with the explicit intention of developing their capability to compete at highest international levels. As a concrete step to develop greater cooperation and deeper collaboration, the Heads of the three Universities signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Joint Centre for Advanced Study today.

Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, Vice-Chancellor of HKU, Professor Lawrence J Lau, Vice-Chancellor of CUHK, and Professor Paul Chu, President of HKUST, participated in the Signing Ceremony, and Dr Alice K Y Lam, Chairman of the University Grants Committee, attended as the guest of honour.

In its January 2004 publication: *Hong Kong Higher Education - To Make a Difference - To Move with the Times*, the University Grants Committee (UGC) states that it values a '...deeply collaborative system of higher education where each institution has its own role and purpose, while at the same time being committed to extensive collaboration with other institutions in order that the system can sustain a greater variety of offerings at a high level of quality and with improving efficiency'. In particular, the UGC supports the development of strategic alliances and deep collaboration.



From left: Profs Lap-Chee Tsui, Lawrence J Lau and Paul Chu

At the Signing Ceremony, Professor Lawrence J Lau, Vice-Chancellor of CUHK, spoke of how the three Universities' collaboration came into being. Professor Lau said the initiative "marks a new chapter in the collaboration among the three universities that share a common vision for advanced scholarship and research."

"In this spirit, the HKU, CUHK and HKUST have agreed to collaborate - to develop our joint capability to compete at highest international levels. To put it simply, together we hope to do even better than we already do individually," Professor Lau said.

Professor Paul Chu, President of HKUST, is confident that the collaboration will be a great success, in respect of the individual strengths and qualities that each of the sister institutions bring to this partnership. At the ceremony, he said, "By pooling our resources, it is our explicit intention that the Centre should enhance Hong Kong's capacity to provide some of the finest educational opportunities in the world."

"Clearly academic efficiency, academic quality and academic dynamism all stand to benefit from this forward looking initiative, whose primary objectives, I cannot reiterate enough, are to provide the best possible education to our students, and to make Hong Kong even more renowned as a global centre for excellence," Professor Chu added.

As introduced by Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, Vice-Chancellor of HKU, the Joint Centre for Advanced Study will develop in three phases. In the first phase, the Centre will run as a virtual centre concept and offer joint courses for research postgraduate students of the three partner universities. In the second phase, the Centre will organize colloquia and workshops, and invite distinguished visiting scholars to deliver lectures for the joint courses. The long term goal under this plan would be to find a suitable site to act as permanent home for the Centre after a review of operations.

"We hope students and staff will welcome this initiative that ultimately aims at contributing to making our system of higher education one of the best in the region. We think a project of deep collaboration such as this Joint Centre will create a 'All Win' situation: For students, faculty members, our three-partner universities, and for Hong Kong," said Professor Tsui.