Fortune Has Smiled On Departing Dean

When Kam Louie took up the reins as Dean of Arts in November 2005, he couldn’t have come at a better time. The Faculty was putting finishing touches to a painful restructuring and change and opportunity were in the air. As he recalls it, the seeds were already being planted for his successful run as Dean of the Faculty, which ends on December 31, 2013.

“I was extremely lucky to come in at the end of the restructuring when most of the work had already been done. And I was luckier still that the 3-3-4 system was coming in and the University was putting a lot of money into hiring new people.

“And it was unlucky for the world but lucky for me that there was an economic crisis – universities in the US and Europe weren’t hiring so we really got the best people,” he said.

“The most important part of my job is to get the right people in place so I was very lucky to have the money and resources at the right time.”

The luck has travelled both ways. Professor Louie came to HKU from ANU and brought a fresh perspective on the Faculty’s and University’s role, drawing on his long experience at the crossroads of Chinese and Western cultures.

He left Guangdong in 1957 and emigrated to Australia via Hong Kong to join his family there, and throughout his life and his career he has been teaching Chinese about Western culture and vice versa at universities in both China and Australia.

“Even as a child, my parents couldn’t speak very much English so in my daily life I was always interpreting one world to another. Luckily the world situation has favoured what I want to do,” he said.

He saw that bridging potential in the Faculty, too – it was a key reason why he joined HKU – and so he introduced the “China-West” research focus which aims to interpret these cultures to each other.

“The one sure way for HKU to excel above others is for it to conduct research on China and how it interacts with the rest of the world. It’s right for the international situation now and it’s right for the University now,” he said.

With this sharper focus and new hires in place, Professor Louie leaves the Faculty in great shape – and still in the luck cycle. “The timing is just right and the place still has sufficient money to pay good people to come. Better to catch this moment before it’s gone.”

Professor Louie will retire to Australia but he hopes to maintain a connection with HKU. He has a couple of books to be written on Chinese masculinity, a field he is helping to pioneer. But first, he hopes to act on his biggest regret at HKU: “I regret not relaxing a bit more,” he laughs. “I say I’ll be doing research but in practice, hopefully I’ll be lying on the beach and growing vegetables in my garden in Australia.” Presumably, of both Chinese and Western varieties.
**New Staff Appointments**

The Faculty was pleased to welcome the following academic and academic-related staff who took up new full-time and fixed-term appointments between April 1, 2013 and October 31, 2013.

**School of Chinese**

Professor Shih Shu-mei, Professor  
Dr Lucas Klein, Assistant Professor  
Dr Tang Pui Ling, Assistant Professor  
Dr Felix Wong Ching Him, Assistant Professor  
Ms Sze Chi Wing, Lecturer

**School of Humanities**

Professor Diana Archangeli, Professor (Linguistics)  
Dr Cathryn Donohue, Assistant Professor (Linguistics)  
Dr Kathryn Blair, Assistant Professor (Fine Arts)

**School of Modern Languages and Cultures**

Professor Stephen Chu Yiu Wai, Professor (Hong Kong Studies)  
Dr Stefan Auer, Associate Professor (European Studies)  
Dr James Fichter, Associate Professor (European Studies)

**Centre for Applied English Studies**

Dr Cynthia Lee Fong King, Associate Professor

**Centre of Buddhist Studies**

Dr Georgios Halkias, Assistant Professor

**Existing Staff**

The following existing members of staff took up new full-time and fixed-term positions during the same period of April 1, 2013 and October 31, 2013.

**School of English**

Dr Janny Leung Hiu Chi, Associate Professor

**School of Humanities**

Professor Stephen Matthews, Professor (Linguistics)  
Dr Koon Yee Wan, Associate Professor (Fine Arts)

**School of Modern Languages and Cultures**

Dr John D Wong, Assistant Professor (Hong Kong Studies)  
Dr Miho Yorozu, Senior Lecturer

**Centre for Applied English Studies**

Miss Jane Stokes, Senior Lecturer  
Miss Law Yuen Yi, Lecturer

Professor Douglas Kerr has been appointed interim Dean of Arts from January 1, 2014 until the arrival of the next Dean. Professor Kerr has served the University for 34 years and is currently Professor in the School of English and Chairman of the Board of the Faculty of Arts. Four Faculty and student members have been elected to serve on the Search Committee for the Dean of Arts and an international search will start soon.

Professor Charles Schencking of the Department of History has been elected to succeed Professor Kerr as Chairman of the Faculty Board with effect from January 1, 2014.

Dr Dirk Noël has taken up the Headship of the School of English from September 1, 2013. He succeeds Dr Otto Heim who stepped down after three years as School Head.

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**Obituary – Ms Lara Lam**

Ms Lara Lam, a valued and beloved colleague in the Centre for Applied English Studies, passed away peacefully on August 22, 2013. Lara spent her early years in Hong Kong and Canada. She studied at the University of Toronto, and completed her postgraduate studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and the University of Reading in the UK. Joining the Centre in 1993, she brought with her a strong background in English language teaching with experience from Canada and Hong Kong, and expertise in phonology, cross-cultural linguistics and fine art. She made contributions to many areas of the Centre’s work, as coordinator and course developer, as researcher on language education projects, and as teacher on postgraduate courses ranging from English phonology to academic writing. A dedicated teacher, Lara always thought first of her students. She is greatly missed by all who knew her.
Frances Wong does not settle for the easy option, as exemplified by her place of residence. She could live in Hong Kong, where she spent her happiest days in the 1920s and 1930s, or the US, where she spent 14 years in comfortable retirement. But no, she has chosen to live where she has experienced the greatest heartbreak: Mainland China.

The former Faculty of Arts student, whose studies were cut short in 1941 by the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong, twice turned her back on comfort to take up residence on the Mainland. The first time was in September 1949 when she and her husband, filled with idealistic enthusiasm, decided to swim against the tide of refugees and join New China. They ended up working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 12 years.

“I wanted freedom and happiness and I thought I could have that if I followed the Communists. But the longer I lived here, the further from that goal I found myself. It was a very naive way of thinking,” she said.

“And the life was alien to me. For example, in the Foreign Ministry most people were Communists or prepared to become Communists, but I couldn’t make myself accept their requirements. A Communist must be an obedient tool. Well, I can’t be that.”

Her husband was more compliant but even he was branded a rightist during the Cultural Revolution and the family was split up and sent to labour camps. One daughter continues to suffer poor health as a result. Things eased when the Cultural Revolution ended and in 1986, Frances and her husband had the opportunity to go to the US on a cultural exchange, where one of their daughters had settled. Frances stayed, enjoying a comfortable home, opportunities to travel and active involvement with their church.

It seemed to be a case of good riddance to China, but in 2000 Frances decided to return to the country. She even tried to get back her Chinese citizenship although the authorities made that impossible.

She explained: “I don’t live for ease and comfort. I live where I have the most interest in and where I can still do a little bit of work. So here I am in China.”

Her work entails writing down the stories of those who have survived the country’s tumultuous century – ordinary people she has met in seniors’ homes. “They want to forget,” she said, “but there’s so much to write about.”

Frances, who is a sprightly 90-year-old, has also penned three books about her own experiences: China Bound, China Unbound and China Rebound. The books are written in English, the language of her education and one that does not interest the censors.

“I don’t have the ability nor the means to make a comprehensive study of China, but in my modest and small way I can put down my experiences into words without exaggeration or belittlement,” she said. “Just reviewing the past is not enough. I have to try to set things right, in my mind at least.”
Last spring Hong Kong flashed across news screens worldwide for a landmark decision that was far removed from the political and finance stories usually associated with the city. The Court of Final Appeal had upheld the right of a transgender woman, W, to marry her boyfriend.

To lawyers and activists, the case had legal and social repercussions. To Chair Professor of English Chris Hutton, though, it raised a crucial question touching on deeper cultural and intellectual issues: how do you define “man” and “woman”?

“Most laws and legal jurisdictions don’t provide a definition – they assume the ‘ordinary meaning’ of the word prevails,” he said. “But how do you find out what is the ordinary meaning? It struck me as an intriguing problem.

“One thing judges often do is they look in dictionaries, but the dictionary definitions are often quite conservative. And especially in these areas where things are changing so quickly, I don’t think dictionaries can keep up.”

It is from this starting point that Professor Hutton, who also trained in law, has launched a research project supported with GRF funding, on “Transgender jurisprudence: self-classification and the law.” The focus is on the wider cultural meanings of the text rather than purely the legal arguments of cases.

Medical advances have made the nature of gender classification increasingly complex, he said, although it has probably never been straightforward. “There is an argument that the classification of man and woman is a combination of traditional Christian ideas and modern science, which says chromosomes define the two sexes – although, in fact, there are lots of chromosomal variations.”

Courts’ reliance on this classification has led to confusion over the issue. In the US different courts have handed down different rulings on the employment rights of transgender people. In the UK the marriage and inheritance rights of transgender people had been challenged and the country now follows the lead of the European Court of Human Rights, which recognizes affirmed gender. Questions of name changes and legal identities also come into play, as does same-sex marriage. If a person marries after they transition, but they refuse to divorce, they could then be in a same-sex marriage.

“There is a whole post-humanistic element of this which is, what rights do people have over their own bodies? Do you own your own classification of yourself?” Professor Hutton said.

All this from asking the seemingly simple question of how to define a man and a woman.

Professor Hutton, who previously did similar investigations into the definitions of race in law and will teach on these issues in the BA-LLB programme, is careful to avoid offering any definitive statements himself.

“The more I read, the more I realize the pitfalls and many personal narratives involved. I’m trying to understand what the law thinks about these kinds of issues and compare it with the way people outside law think of them. And to point to some of the complexities at work,” he said.

Professor Hutton will complete his study within the next two to three years.

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**The RGC General Research Fund Recipients 2013-2014 are (Cont.):**

**School of English**
Professor Douglas Kerr – *Orwell and Asia*
Dr Julia Kuehn – *The German Influence on Victorian Fiction: Idea, Form, Genre*
Dr Dirk Noël – *Constructional attrition in a (contrastive) diachronic construction grammar perspective*

**School of Humanities**
Professor Diana Archangeli (Linguistics) – *An Ultrasound Investigation of the Acquisition of Speech Articulation in Cantonese, Putonghua, and English*
Dr Janet Borland (History) – *Showcases of New Tokyo: Modern Architecture, Space, and Social Management in the Reconstructed Capital, 1923-1930*
Dr David Pomfret (History) – *'Empire Generations': Youth, Colonialism and Imperial Networks* 
Professor Charles Schencking (History) – *America’s Tsunami of Aid: Compassion, Opportunism and Delusion Following Japan’s 1923 Earthquake Calamity*
Professor Xu Guoqi (History) – *Asia and the First World War*

**School of Modern Languages and Cultures**
Dr Dixon Wong – *The Cultural Policies in Taiwan in the 20th Century and their Relationships to the Formation of Modern Taiwanese Consciousness*
When speakers of two languages come into contact, they can either accommodate each other or compete. But if they compete, who is likely to win?

Linguists have been studying language competition for years but a new study by Dr Tao Gong, Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics, and Menghan Zhang of Shanghai Normal University, brings an unusual perspective to the subject.

Dr Gong has a PhD in electrical engineering, but is also trained in linguistics, more particularly evolutionary linguistics. He and Zhang applied evolutionary biology to develop a model that explains language competition in a new way. Their research was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

“Some linguists are interested in describing particular features in particular languages. I’m trained in engineering and physics, so I focus on universal features,” Dr Gong said. “I’ve tried to propose a universal model to describe different language competition cases and find common characteristics among them.”

The model looks at two measurable parameters – inheritance rates and the impacts of competing languages. The selection of these parameters is partly in response to a landmark study that used “prestige,” or socioeconomic status, to determine the dynamics in language competitions. Prestige works best if there is a sufficient set of historical data, which in most cases there is not. It also neglects population size and geographical factors. The model by Dr Gong and Dr Zhang overcomes these problems.

For inheritance rates, they draw on the principle that a genotype of a species will remain unchanged across generations if it is not disturbed. Their model can calculate population changes in language in a particular place – for example, the number of monolingual and bilingual speakers – using language choice data from linguists’ field studies.

For the impact of competing languages, the model applies the heat diffusion principle to calculate the population density of a language in a specified place based on its geographical distance from the centre of that language.

To illustrate how these ideas work, the model was tested on four cases. One was the competition between English and Welsh in Wales, for which there is a sufficient set of historical data on monolingual and bilingual populations. The results of Dr Gong’s model were comparable to those based on the prestige parameter.

Another test case was in Singapore, where English and Mandarin are in competition and where historical data are sketchy. In this case, London was treated as the centre for English, and Guangdong and Fujian, China, for Mandarin since most Chinese immigrants originally came from there. The model predicted Mandarin would have an edge in the competition, based on the inheritance rate and geographical and population factors.

“A lot of linguistic scholars tend to describe linguistic theories about language competition and other linguistic phenomena verbally or qualitatively. Physicists and mathematicians can look at the phenomena quantitatively over many years, and predict what will happen in future. You need both humanities and natural sciences to study questions such as how many users will shift to one language, or stay with another language,” Dr Gong said.

**Recent Conferences**

**Transnational Currents of US-China Relations**
November 15-17, 2013
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

**Security Communities and Security Risk Management in Europe & East Asia**
November 28-29, 2013
School of Modern Languages and Cultures

**Chinese Masculinities on the Move: Time, Space and Cultures**
November 28-30, 2013
Faculty of Arts

**The First International Conference on Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language**
December 4-6, 2013
School of Chinese

**Viral Imaginaries: Infections Disease and Society in Contemporary China**
December 5-6, 2013
Centre for the Humanities and Medicine

**Art and Emotion: An International Postgraduate Conference**
December 12-13, 2013
Department of Philosophy

http://www.pnas.org/
Two Universities, Three Continents:
PhD Student Finds A Perfect Fit

Sino-European relations in Africa is the topic of
Benjamin Barton’s PhD thesis and he found the ideal
programme to pursue this ambitious, three-continent
project. The HKU-King’s College London programme
lets him spend half his time in London and half his time
here, sourcing information and insights from both sides
of the world.

“I knew I would have to come to Asia at some point to
do fieldwork and this joint programme was ideal,” he
said. “I’m looking at this from a European perspective
[b]ut being based here means I’ve been able to take
advantage of the greater knowledge of the Chinese
side of things. I’ve been able to speak with people who
have worked both in China and Africa, and to Chinese
academics and people in the shipping industry in Hong
Kong.”

The aim of his research is to describe the state of the
relationship between China and Europe through the
filter of Africa.

“How China acts in Africa gives the biggest insight to
what kind of actor China is internationally. And how
others react to China in Africa gives great insight
into how they perceive China. When countries have
bilateral relations, it’s easy for them to sugarcoat
things, and if things go wrong there are always ways to
improve the relationship. But here we’re dealing with
a third party – African states. For Europe it’s a very
sensitive area because of the colonial relationship and
also because Europe has lots of interests there.”

China seems to be doing what Europe aimed for
but has not achieved in more than 50 years of
development aid: it has triggered economic growth by
investing in the continent. But this has led to criticism
of China because it has “done the dirty work” and gone
into places like Sudan that are otherwise abandoned by
the West. Barton pointed out that often the criticism
was misplaced because the business is done by private
Chinese companies not directly controlled by the state.
“China is often portrayed as a homogeneous actor
with a strategy when it’s just acting like most other
international actors. Western oil companies also do
deals with dodgy regimes,” he said.

Barton’s thesis focuses specifically on Sino-European
interactions in Sudan as well as its flip-side, the horn of
Africa, where there has been far more trust and China,
Europe and the U.S. have cooperated to reduce piracy
attacks. He hopes his findings will reflect on the larger
ramifications of the interactions of China and the West
in Africa and the attitudes of the West to China.

For now, though, his head is down as he ploughs
through his material with the goal of completing his
thesis by September. Barton says he is very fortunate
to have Dr Roland Vogt of European Studies as his
supervisor, and to be working in such comfortable
surroundings. “It’s like a five-star hotel,” he said of his
offices on the eighth floor of Run Run Shaw Building.
“Everything is brand new, modern, very clean and the
space is much appreciated.”

On May 3, 2013, the Faculty’s Department of
Comparative Literature and the Department of Film
Studies at King’s College London co-organized the first
King’s College-HKU Film Research Video Conference.
This initiative is aimed at providing students and staff
from the two institutions with an informal platform to
meet, share, and ask questions about the projects that
they are currently working on.

Postgraduate Student News

Mr Jeremy Collins (MPhil, Linguistics) and Dr Selina
Lai (PhD, American Studies) were presented with
the Li Ka Shing Prizes (2011-2012) at the Graduate
School Award Presentation Ceremony on December
9, 2013. The Prizes are awarded annually on the basis
of academic excellence, four for PhD theses and two
for MPhil theses. Dr Lee Wing Kin (PhD, Chinese) was
conferred the Outstanding Research Postgraduate
Student Award (2011-2012) at the same ceremony.

Mr Wilson Chan Wai Shing, who completed both his
BA and MPhil at the University of Hong Kong, has
been awarded a Dean’s Fellowship by the Graduate
School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University.
Mr Chan, who completed his MPhil thesis entitled
“Scholarship and Statecraft: Chen Li 陳澧
(1810-1882) and his Dongshu dushiji 東塾讀書記” under
the supervision of Dr KW Fung of the School of
Chinese, is a PhD candidate in the Department of
East Asian Languages and Cultures. As a Dean’s
Fellow he will receive a comprehensive five-year
funding package that includes full tuition and
accommodation.

http://arts.hku.hk/prospective-students/research-postgraduate
Hong Kong is a unique place that has straddled imperial, colonial and communist rules and Eastern and Western cultures, while maintaining a distinct identity on the global stage. These circumstances have offered a rich source of study to researchers for years, but always within the contexts of various disciplines. Now, these strands are being pulled together to make the city a subject of disciplinary study in itself.

The Hong Kong Studies major was launched by the Faculty in September 2012, the first Hong Kong-focused programme globally. It draws together Hong Kong-focused courses currently offered at HKU on everything from language, culture and history to politics, tourism and urban planning, and supplements these with four core courses that provide a framework for considering “Hong Kong.”

Professor Stephen Chu, who specialises in Hong Kong culture, especially Cantopop, and Dr John Wong, a business historian who is also interested in food culture in Hong Kong, are implementing the programme, which was conceived by Professor Louise Edwards of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures.

“We are trying to get students to challenge the assumptions about Hong Kong that they might have built up over the years and to question some of the standard narratives of the city – for example, whether Hong Kong still has a role as the main port of China and, on the culture side, how to define ‘Cantonese’ food,” Dr Wong said.

The four core courses provide an interdisciplinary perspective on key issues in Hong Kong’s development. The first, titled “Hong Kong’s Long Twentieth Century,” asks students to consider the symbolic significance of sites such as the Peninsula Hotel, public housing estates, Victoria Harbour, street markets and the MTR, and their meaning to Hong Kong’s identity.

The second course, “Speaking of Hong Kong: Global Voices,” considers the diversity of voices in Hong Kong and how to analyse various texts. The third course, “Hong Kong Identities in Local, National and Global Contexts,” looks at the roles of language, race, immigration, class and global identity in creating a unique Hong Kong identity. And the fourth course will be a capstone research project undertaken by students.

Supplementing these courses are more than two dozen Hong Kong-related electives currently offered in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, as well as electives developed by Professor Chu and Dr Wong on such things as religion and belief in Hong Kong, shopping, and the city’s physical “space premium.”

More than 40 students are enrolled in the gateway course this semester, including several international students who want to learn more about Hong Kong. “We want to empower students to see that there is more than one way of looking at Hong Kong. I hope international students will also be empowered to be more reflective about their own home towns,” Dr Wong said.

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Recent Publications by Members of The Arts Faculty

Lost in Transition: Hong Kong Culture in the Age of China, State University of New York Press.
By Yiu-Wai Chu

《篳路藍縷 以啟山林 ── 香港工程發展130年》 (Upon the Plinth of A Fisherman Port: 130 Years of Engineering Development in Hong Kong) (Co-authored), Chung Hwa Book Co.
By KW Fung

Conan Doyle: Writing, Profession, and Practice, Oxford University Press.
By Douglas Kerr

The Great Kantō Earthquake and the Chimera of National Reconstruction in Japan, Columbia University Press.
By J Charles Schencking

Lucas Klein’s translation of Notes on the Mosquito: Selected Poems by Xi Chuan (New Directions, 2012) has been awarded the Lucien Stryk Prize for Translation from Asian Languages by the American Literary Translators Association.

Earlier this year, the Education Bureau of Hong Kong published the second of two bilingual books on western art history written by Greg Thomas, professor in the Department of Fine Arts. These books are part of a series distributed to art teachers in secondary schools to help them introduce an art history component into the new Visual Arts curriculum. He has also conducted teacher training seminars to accompany the books.
Erica Fong Yee-pui refers fondly to her BA classmates as dreamers – “they are not very realistic and I like this,” she said. In Erica’s universe, dreamers are grounded enough to make their visions come true.

Erica is a gifted runner who competed in the 2012 London Olympics, representing Hong Kong in the 100-metre sprint. She is now preparing for the Asian Games and World Indoor Championships in the autumn, with an eye on the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

All of this has been done with barely a blip in her studies. She took three months off from training to do her A-levels, and in 2012 she was allowed to defer her studies for one semester as she prepared for the Olympics.

Her days consist of training, classes and study, and she is driven by nothing but a love of running.

“I didn’t start professional training until I was 16 and I think this was an advantage,” she said. “My teammates started training when they were young, six or seven years old, and I think they were tired and wanted to try something new. But for me, sprinting was new.”

Her enthusiasm has not diminished despite her punishing schedule these past six years. When she was taken on by her coach at the Hong Kong Sports Institute in Sha Tin, she would attend eight hours of secondary school classes then head to Sha Tin for three or four hours of training. She was home by 9pm, when she would do her homework.

The schedule eased somewhat at HKU because there have been fewer classes but she has sometimes trained twice a day, revising her studies on the journey to Sha Tin.

“Balancing studies and training has trained me to be disciplined,” she said. “I can’t do too many things at once, I have to rest more and use my time efficiently.”

The training paid off with her wild-card qualification for the London Olympics, where she made it through the preliminary rounds to the first heats. She ran the 100 metres in 11.98 seconds and now hopes to do it in 11.6 seconds by the Asian Games, one of the stepping stones to the Olympics.

“The Olympics is like an addiction, once you’ve been there and you’ve had 80,000 people surrounding the track watching you, you want to do it again,” she said. To keep herself on track, Erica has adopted a couple of mottoes that reveal the large rewards and tough competitive spirit of Olympic athletes.

“In London there were two T-shirts, One read ‘Pain is temporary, glory is forever’, the other, ‘If you think training is hard, try losing’. This is the motivation for me. If I can’t do this hard thing of training, I can’t achieve a good result,” she said.

Erica recently completed her studies with the Faculty, majoring in translation, and hopes to pursue a Master’s degree so she can continue to enjoy the life of a studious sprinter.

**Anissa Gan Scholarships For Arts Students Worldwide Exchange**

Ms Wendy Gan, an Arts alumna, has generously donated the sum of HK$200,000 in response to the University’s “Turn $1 into Five” Campaign. The donation has been used to set up scholarships in support of international student exchange in memory of the late Ms Anissa Gan Kim Guat, Ms Gan’s sister. The scholarship’s first recipient is Mr Dixon Fung, a 2nd year BA student majoring in English Studies and Translation, who is currently on exchange for a full academic year at Durham University in the UK.

**One Asia Foundation Grant**

Dr HL Zhan, Associate Professor in the School of Chinese, has been awarded a JPY5,000,000 grant by the One Asia Foundation in support of his seminar-based course “CHIN2160 Traditional Literary Relationship between China, Japan and Korea.” The newly-developed course, which will be offered in the second semester of the 2013-2014 academic year, consists of a series of public lectures by scholars from different disciplines that provide students with comprehensive and cross disciplinary approaches to the study of literary tradition in East Asia.
Two pregnant women in their late 30s are at a higher risk of having a Down’s Syndrome baby. The healthcare professional who counsels them is steering them towards taking a test for Down’s Syndrome. But the clients have very different priorities.

One client, a nurse, is interested in the medical evidence and agrees with the healthcare professional. But the other, a Filipina domestic worker, has strong cultural and religious beliefs: she would never take the test because she would never terminate the pregnancy, whatever the test result.

How the options and risks are presented to these clients is a concern not just for healthcare professionals and clients but also linguists. Researchers at HKU have found the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of both clients and professionals may affect the ways in which counselling is done and they are working with healthcare professionals to help them understand this.

Dr Olga Zayts, Assistant Professor in the School of English, has been instrumental in bringing together linguists from Hong Kong, the UK and the US and healthcare professionals from the Hospital Authority and Tsan Yuk and Queen Mary Hospitals over the past six years.

She and her team focus on genetic counselling for prenatal (Down’s Syndrome), postnatal (G6PD deficiency) and adolescent and adult (Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome) conditions. They have worked with patients’ and caregivers’ associations to update information resources using language that is relevant to them and covers their concerns.

Dr Zayts has also organised local and international workshops, and the Winter School on Health Communication to raise the awareness of healthcare professionals, educators and researchers of the role of communication in healthcare. Additionally, HKU has launched the MMedSc specialized module of studies in Genetic Counselling to train counsellors to a high level.

“The focus on Asia is particularly important because most previous research on communication in genetic counselling has been done in the UK, the US and Australia.

Dr Brian Chung Hon-yin, Clinical Associate Professor at HKU’s Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine and the lead clinical geneticist on the projects, said the work of Dr Zayts and her team has been influential in the development of professional standards and best practices for genetic counselling in Hong Kong and South-East Asia.

“Understanding how healthcare professionals can better communicate with clients is the key to good healthcare practice, particularly in genetic counselling,” he said.

Dr Olga Zayts received the Faculty Knowledge Exchange Award 2013 of the Faculty of Arts for the ‘Language and Communication in Genetic Counselling Settings in Hong Kong and South Asia’ project. The 3rd Winter School on Health Communication is scheduled for December 7 to 8, 2013.

Ms Phoebe Tang Yin-hang, an MPhil Candidate in the Department of History, was the People’s Choice and 1st Runner-Up winner at the Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) Competition held on June 11, 2013. Ms Tang, whose MPhil supervisor is Professor Charles Schencking, won for her impassioned presentation on NASA’s efforts in the 1960s to secure popular support for its ambitious space exploration plan, Skylab. 3MT is an academic competition co-organized by the Graduate School and Knowledge Exchange Office that challenges RPg students to explain their research within three minutes to a general audience.

The Faculty of Arts welcomed the first of four Arts Engaged Fellows from the University of Leeds in the UK who will be visiting the University during the 2013-2014 academic year. Dr James Stark, who specialises in the history of science and medicine, gave a series of talks and workshops both on and off campus during his two-week stay in Hong Kong. The visit was organised by the Knowledge Exchange Office and Dr Stark was hosted by Dr Robert Peckham, Co-Director of the Faculty’s Centre for the Humanities and Medicine. Arts Engaged is a flagship project based at Leeds that has been designed to foster a culture of collaboration and engagement in its Faculty of Arts, developing innovative approaches to the Faculty’s work with external organisations and individuals.

http://winterschoolhku.blogspot.hk/
When it comes to having an impact in the community, arts and humanities can struggle against disciplines such as medicine, law and social work. Dr Mirana Szeto in the Department of Comparative Literature has been leading efforts to change that around.

Dr Szeto has led two high-profile projects that have had tangible effects on local communities. In Wan Chai, she and her partners came up with a plan for the Blue House heritage building that allowed residents to stay put and opened up creative spaces for artists, writers, social enterprises and the community to keep the culture of the area alive.

And in Pat Heung, they helped non-indigenous villagers displaced by the express rail line to Guangzhou to find a new home in another village and build community cohesion through a newspaper and website.

“We want to prove that humanities has a role in knowledge exchange and that we’re far more interdisciplinary than other projects because we’re people oriented and cultural oriented,” Dr Szeto said.

Pat Heung is a case in point. Working with her group, Community Cultural Concern (CCC), which also includes an HKU architect and an urban planner from Baptist University, she and her team helped displaced villagers pool their resources, buy land and build an eco-village. CCC also acted as the secretariat for negotiations with government departments, the Heung Yee Kuk and the railway, and sourced legal and technical advice, too.

For this project to really succeed, though, it needed the support of the other people who also live in the place these villagers now called home, including longstanding residents, Africans who have recently arrived in Hong Kong and found it affordable to live there, and residents in a nearby gated community.

To build that support, a Facebook page was established and a monthly newspaper was launched through which people could report on their history and cultural life, advertise their businesses and shops, report on school events and so on. The newspaper also followed up on issues of concern, such as a well that had dried up and complaints about odour from a pig farm.

Five thousand copies of the newspaper were distributed each month over six months, funded by the University’s Knowledge Exchange Fund. When that support ended last summer, the community took over the paper, funding it through donations and advertisements.

“The community there is segregated racially, culturally and economically. So we bridged the gaps between government and the communities, we dealt with what politics couldn’t deal with, and we integrated,” Dr Szeto said.

Similarly in the Blue House, they have pursued a solution that has brought people together and allowed a community to survive. The residents and buildings are intact, and a “House of Stories” will open in 2016 to promote art, cinema, crafts and a host of other programmes related to the local community. “We want to preserve the vernacular culture that is part of the way of life there. We call it ‘living heritage preservation’,” Dr Szeto added.

Funded KE Impact Projects 2013-2014

Five Knowledge Exchange Impact projects put forward by members of the Faculty were funded this year, totalling over HK$350,000.

Second Century Lecture Series
Project Coordinator: Professor John Carroll

LinguisticMinorities.HK: Connecting with the Communities
Project Coordinator: Dr Lisa Lim

The Transit of Venus
Project Coordinator: Dr Opher Mansour

Catastrophe and Rebirth: A Visual and Interactive History of the 1923 Tokyo Earthquake
Project Coordinator: Professor Charles Schencking

Language in Healthcare (LiH)
Project Coordinator: Dr Olga Zayts
SUMMER INSTITUTE 2013
The fifth Summer Institute in the Arts and Humanities was held from July 2 to August 24, 2013. The Faculty welcomed over 200 visiting and exchange students to its eleven credit-bearing courses, including a joint programme offered with Hertford College, University of Oxford. Over 150 secondary school students participated in the five non-credit-bearing courses on offer. This year’s cultural events featured musical performances by Yat Po Singers, open rehearsals of the newly established HKNME Chamber Voices led by Dr John Winzenburg, as well as a Writers’ Forum with acclaimed authors Erica Jong, Jung Chang and William Shawcross in conversation with Sir David Tang. The sixth Summer Institute will take place from June 30 to August 23, 2014.

HKU-TODAI JOINT SUMMER PROGRAMME
From August 2-12, 2013, twenty students from the University of Tokyo (Todai) joined seven HKU students for a new experiential learning programme in Hong Kong. The first part of the programme included seminars given by HKU and guest speakers, including one by Mr David Mong, Vice Chairman of the Shun Hing Group, as well as field trips to city’super and Yakult. The second part required students to work on group presentations. The programme was co-organized by Dr Yoshiko Nakano of the Department of Japanese Studies, and Professor Shigeto Sonoda of the University of Tokyo. It was part of the official launch of an exchange agreement between HKU and Todai signed earlier this year. The programme will be offered again in 2014 as a credit-bearing course.

FOLKLORE AND MODERN CHINESE CULTURE
Dr Song Gang of the School of Chinese has initiated a new credit-bearing summer course in collaboration with Peking University’s Department of Chinese Language and Literature. The two-week course introduces major theories in folklore, literature, and cultural criticism with the aim of encouraging students to reflect on the essential features of Chinese folk culture and its persistence through the upheavals of 20th century China. All seminars and site visits are conducted in Beijing. The first course ran from July 28 to August 12, 2013.

LINGUISTIC RESEARCH SUMMER SCHOOL
The Department of Linguistics is launching a new summer course targeted at postgraduates and senior undergraduates in linguistics to be held from July 7 to 18, 2014 under the theme of “Linguistic Diversity in Asia: Theories and Methods.” During the first week, students can choose from a selection of courses taught by members of the Department and a guest lecturer from ANU. The second week features an intensive course on documentation led by Visiting Professor Peter Austin from the School of Oriental and African Studies.

SECOND CENTURY LECTURE SERIES
Professor Jonathan Spence, who has long been regarded as one of the most influential historians of Chinese history and currently holds the title of Sterling Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University, gave the inaugural Second Century Lecture: “Below the State: The Many Lives of Those Contesting Authority in Eighteenth Century China” to a full and appreciative audience in Rayson Huang Theatre on May 14, 2013. The Second Century Lecture Series aims to bring the most distinguished scholars in their field to share their world-class expertise with the University and the public. The event was supported by the Faculty of Social Sciences and The Hong Kong International Literary Festival.

PUBLIC EVENTS
The Faculty’s Schools and Departments hosted several public events during the first semester of the 2013-2014 academic year – here are just a few of the highlights:

Korean Director Kang Je-gyu discussed his latest film and career during an event co-organized by the Department of Comparative Literature and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, and supported by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Hong Kong.

October 28, 2013 - Book Sharing Session by James Hong
Arts alumnus James Hong shared his passion for travel and insights into the over 90 countries he has visited.

October 31, 2013 - On Family and Gender in Korea: Man Asian Literary Prize Winner Shin Kyung-sook
This event was hosted by the Korean Studies Programme, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, with the support of the Literature Translation Institute of Korea.

November 1, 2013 - Overturning Conventions: A Dialogue with Jung Chang
Pioneering author Jung Chang discussed her new biography of the Empress Dowager Cixi in an event co-organized by Swindon Book Co Ltd.

Korean Director Kang Je-gyu discussed his latest film and career during an event co-organized by the Department of Comparative Literature and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, and supported by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Hong Kong.

November 9, 2013 - Hong Kong Lecture: Professor Peter Austin
Professor Peter Austin from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of Oxford, gave a public lecture on “Linguistic Diversity in Asia: Theories and Methods”.

November 1, 2013 - Overturning Conventions: A Dialogue with Jung Chang
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