

Dear colleagues and students,

Moving Forward with Confidence

It is with great honour that I assume the presidency of Saint Francis University (SFU) today. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Board of Governors and the Council for their trust placed in me, and credits must go to the concerted efforts of all faculty members and staff, students, alumni and supporters of the University. With much humility, it is indeed my privilege to pay tribute to the vision of the founders of this remarkable institution and all my predecessors for having made SFU what it is today.

I am particularly pleased to join the SFU community at a time when we are ready to move forward and make greater contributions to the professional sectors and the community at large, through programme offerings, research, knowledge transfer and collaborations with different stakeholders. This is built upon our unique role in the higher and professional education sector, as evidenced by our recent attainment of the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) status, in the strategic development of quality talents with applied knowledge and skills.

Students are always at the core of everything we do. For me, what differentiates SFU from other local universities is our special emphasis on the holistic student development, which covers not only the transmission of professional knowledge and skills but also the cultivation of positive values including love, care, integrity, and perseverance as well as professional and social ethics. I am pleased to note that our graduates are well sought after in the market, and I have every confidence that the SFU students will continue to carry the torch and make an impact in Hong Kong and beyond, in line with the University's core mission and values.

Throughout my career in higher education, I have attached great importance to communication and engagement. To help me formulate the future initiatives for SFU, I have met with colleagues before coming on board. I sincerely thank them for their ideas and suggestions, which I hope can be consolidated and incorporated into the University's directions and strategies. Since the commencement of the new academic year, I have also started meeting student representatives, and I look forward to seeing and meeting more students in different formats and at different corners of the campus in the days ahead.

As the new President, I am keenly aware of the many priorities I have to set together with the senior management team. Among them is the introduction of "AI-plus" in teaching, learning and research, given its growing importance in the increasingly dynamic world. It is not just about AI literacy; it is also about how to ensure the responsible and ethical deployment of the new technology for the benefit of society. Equally important is our enhanced collaboration with the University's stakeholders and industry partners, especially in curriculum designs and the provision of internship places.

Grounded on our academic strengths and expertise, there is much potential for SFU's further growth and expansion. This can be done through collaborations with mainland and overseas universities and institutions in the forms of joint programme offerings, research, and student exchanges. Both on-campus and off-campus internationalisation can help facilitate a more vibrant learning environment conducive to the promotion of multicultural and multilingual understanding, benefiting our students with local, national and global perspectives.

Before closing, I wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to SFU's four-character motto “自強不息”, which will guide us through moving forward and scaling new heights with your proactive participation and unfailing support.

Prof Stephen Y.L. Cheung, SBS, JP, Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques

President of Saint Francis University