

A Year of Strategic Transformation

The College of Business has experienced a year of significant strategic advancement focused on innovation, international collaboration, and societal impact. City Business Magazine Editor Eric Collins talked with the Dean, **Professor Kalok Chan** to find out more.

城大商學院
College of Business



Embracing the AI Revolution

The first year of Dean Kalok Chan's tenure coincided with the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence. The College of Business (CB) is actively embracing AI in education, allowing students to utilise tools like ChatGPT for information gathering, while emphasising the crucial role of critical analysis and independent thought.

"AI is a tool, not a replacement for critical thinking," says Dean Chan. "We would rather embrace it allowing our students to gather information, but it is not a substitute for intelligent selection, analysis, and crafting of argument on the part of students."

This shift reflects a broader understanding that future professionals will need to collaborate effectively with AI, rather than being replaced by it. CB plans to bolster this approach with the launch of a new master's programme in AI in Business, focusing on the practical application of AI across various business disciplines.

Meanwhile, the evaluation of students' written work remains an area in progress. Whilst acknowledging the challenges posed by AI to traditional assessment methods, the Dean highlights the need for a diversified approach that includes in-class discussions, independent assessments, and appropriate examinations.

"We need to develop assessment methods that go beyond AI's capabilities, focusing on analytical and communication skills."

This kind of proactive adaptation positions CB at the forefront of business education in the age of AI.

Redefining Business Models and Cultivating a Culture of Creativity

Dean Chan stresses the importance of fostering innovation within the business school, recognising that innovation extends beyond product design to encompass the creation of entirely new business models.

"Our students need to develop a creative and critical mindset, capable of analysing complex information generating practical solutions and working with business models," he says.

To cultivate this innovative spirit, CB is creating opportunities for students to engage with real-world business problems, interact with industry leaders, and collaborate in team settings. This includes participation in open competitions, which broaden perspectives and encourage innovative thinking. The College is also exploring the implementation of shorter, more applied courses, particularly within the realm of Executive Education, including the recently established Business Innovation Education hub, to provide agile responses to the rapidly evolving needs of the corporate sector. This approach reflects a commitment to providing relevant and timely skills development for both students and working professionals.

Global Reach for Diversity of Thought

International collaboration forms a cornerstone of CB's strategic vision. The recent signing of an MOU with Cambridge University's Department of Land Economy and Judge Business School represents a significant step in this direction. This collaboration aims to facilitate student exchanges, faculty collaborations, and joint research initiatives, providing students with exposure to diverse perspectives and broadening their global outlook.

“We envision further collaborations and joint research initiatives to create a truly global learning environment,” says Professor Chan.

This international focus extends to student recruitment, with CB actively seeking to attract students from various international backgrounds, including hitherto untapped Asian markets, further enhancing the diversity of thought within the College. The existing strong alumni network, comprising over 60,000 graduates, is also viewed as a crucial asset in expanding international partnerships and providing mentorship opportunities for current students.

Strengthening the Alumni Network

The College of Business recognises the immense value of its extensive alumni network, spanning Hong Kong, Mainland China, and various international locations. Dean Chan emphasises the importance of strengthening these connections, not only for mentorship and networking opportunities but also for fostering collaborations in research and thought leadership.

“Alumni engagement is crucial for maintaining a strong link between the academic world and business practice,” he says.

The College is actively engaging with alumni, particularly those from its EMBA and DBA programmes, to leverage their expertise and experience in contributing to teaching, research, and societal impact initiatives. A particular goal is to ensure that the College’s curriculum remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of industry.

Research and Collaboration

Dean Chan firmly believes in the importance of societal impact for business schools. He highlights the College’s commitment to engaging with the business community, NGOs, and the government

to address pressing societal challenges. This engagement is facilitated through research collaborations, such as the planned establishment of Gen AI for Business Lab, which aims to tackle essential business problems with industry partners. The College’s research extends to other areas of societal impact, notably sustainability, where faculty members are conducting research and collaborating with various stakeholders to address environmental and social issues. Amongst these are some of Hong Kong’s leading financial institutions.

“The university has recently signed an MOU with the Hang Seng Bank, and we are going to co-offer an MBA course sustainable finance with the Hang Seng Bank as part of the deal.”

The partnership with Hang Seng Bank, further illustrates CB’s commitment to collaborating with industry to address real-world challenges whilst contributing to societal progress.

Data-Driven Approach Balanced with Conceptual Thinking

While acknowledging the growing importance of data-driven and evidence-based approaches in business, particularly with the rise of AI, Dean Chan stresses the continued relevance of conceptual thinking.

“Students need a strong conceptual framework to guide their inquiries, enabling them to formulate insightful questions and effectively utilise AI tools to gather and analyse relevant data,” he says.

“So, the students definitely need to have a general framework of understanding, and then to be able to really to ask sensible questions.”

The ability to discern meaningful information from the vast amount of available data remains a crucial skill, requiring a balance between data analysis and critical thinking. This balanced

College of Business Alumni Homecoming

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approach ensures that CB graduates are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern business world.

Work-Life Balance

Dean Chan readily recognises the importance of work-life balance, particularly for younger generations.

“I enjoy doing the work and sometimes I find myself thinking about a piece of work, even during weekends. As long as you enjoy doing it, you don’t really find that it is real stress.”

“Still, I’d emphasise the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. People need peaceful weekends!”

This commitment reflects a broader understanding of the importance of well-being in fostering a productive and fulfilling academic environment.

Vision into Practice

Professor Chan’s first year as Dean has been marked by a focus on innovation, international collaboration, societal impact, and strengthening the relevance of the business curriculum in the College environment. This proactive embrace of new knowledge, the strengthening of alumni relations, and the commitment to impactful research all contribute to a College of Business which is well positioned to help shape the future of business leadership in these transformative times.