

# TEACHING & LEARNING

## Newsletter for EF Students, Alumni, Teachers, and Friends

Department of Economics and Finance (EF), City University of Hong Kong

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### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Welcome to this exciting edition of our newsletter! We're glad to spotlight four remarkable students from the EF department as they open up about their journeys. Two graduates from our joint degree program will reveal what it's like to thrive at Columbia University in the U.S. First, meet Hanchen, a distinguished member of Columbia's honor society, who will talk about her path to academic excellence. Next, Tianzi invites you into her life at Columbia University, offering a glimpse into her transformative moments. Meanwhile, Haoxuan, a third-year student in the joint degree program, will unveil the fresh perspectives he has gained in the evolving academic world. Finally, Wai Ying takes us abroad to Montreal, Canada, sharing her adventures and insights from the exchange program. We hope these stories will inspire you to explore new horizons in your own studies. Enjoy!

## *Stories from graduates in the Joint Bachelor's Degree Program between CityUHK and Columbia University*

### Story from LI Hanchen:

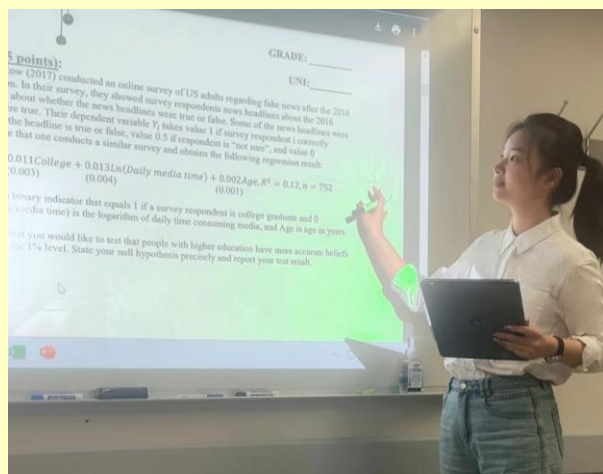
Reflecting my journey at both City University of Hong Kong and Columbia University, I would always be grateful for CityUHK to provide me with such a brilliant opportunity of this joint bachelor's degree program. While CityU helped me build the foundations in the learning and research skills of economics, Columbia University enabled me to experience life and realize a deeper achievement in academy.

Here, at Columbia University, I participated in exuberant literature and humanity courses, accumulated two political economic research experiences, became a teaching assistant in the econometric course,



I am the honor society member at Columbia University General Studies

and was admitted as a legal intern in an immigration law firm, rendering a better



**Being a teaching assistant in Econometrics**

### Story from Gao Tianzi:

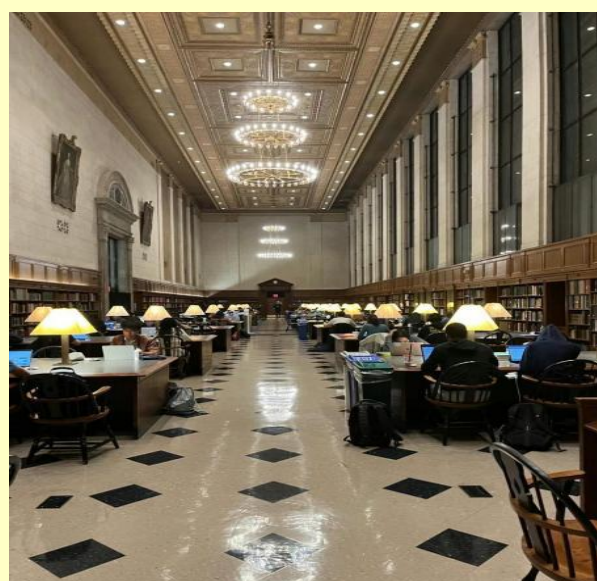
I came to Columbia University in the fall of 2022 as a junior. I was extremely excited when I first arrived, and everything in New York felt so fresh to me. Now, two years have passed in the blink of an eye, and graduation is just around the corner. During these two years, I have experienced a wide range of emotions, and every day has been fulfilling and exciting.

Firstly, I would like to talk about my academic journey at Columbia. In my first semester here, I spent much time adjusting to Columbia's rigorous academics. I was busy with assignments, often staying in the library until midnight during midterms or finals. I really love the library's architecture, which exudes a strong historical ambiance, almost transporting me back in time to see the people who once studied here. Even in the early hours, the library is brightly lit, with many students still hard at work. In the conference rooms, you can often hear intense discussions among students from various countries on various issues. In winters, the trees lining the college walk are adorned with lights. On those cold nights, despite the heavy workload and low temperatures, standing under the warm orange glow from these lights will always make you feel warm. In these fleeting moments, I can't

preparation for my next journey in law, as I have received the JD program offer in the University of Hong Kong.

As an honor society member at Columbia University General Studies, I will always appreciate the cultivation of CityUHK and the dual BA program, and I will pursue integrity and wisdom to better contribute to the society in the coming future.

**LI Hanchen, Graduate in the Joint Bachelor's Degree Program between CityUHK and Columbia University (US) in 2024**



**Lots of students studying in the midnight in the library**

help but think how much I genuinely love my university life.

Another thing that brings me lasting happiness at Columbia is the Chinese a cappella group. I have loved singing since I was very young, and I believe singing will accompany me throughout my life. The Columbia Chinese a cappella group is primarily composed of undergraduate students. Most undergraduates who speak Chinese at Columbia have either received international

education or have been living in the United States for several years, so their lifestyle habits lean towards American norms. This has greatly helped me integrate into life in New York and cushioned the discomfort brought by culture shock.

Before this, my English communication was limited to academic fields, but in the group, we can casually and naturally discuss singers, careers, entertainment, and more in English. As English integrates into my daily life as a language, it has become a part of me rather than just a subject. In addition, every person in the group is exceptionally talented in multiple dimensions. I am often amazed by everyone's all-round abilities. It is not just academic excellence that impresses me, but also their outstanding communication and social skills, excellent rehearsal organization, and resilience under pressure. What astonishes me is not excellence in a single dimension, such as academic performance, but rather the accumulation of many outstanding qualities in each individual. I believe that not only in this group but also in many other places of Columbia,

there are diverse and all-rounded individuals like this. Inspired by them, I have also become aware of the imbalance between my learning abilities and other aspects of my abilities, prompting me to deliberately balance my overall development.

I sincerely thank the joint degree program between CityUHK and Columbia University for giving me the opportunity to experience such a rich life journey. It shines like a gem in my life's path, inspiring me to give back to society and being a helpful person.

**Gao Tianzi, Graduate in the Joint Bachelor's Degree Program between CityUHK and Columbia University (US) in 2023**



**Columbia Chinese A Cappella. I have learnt a lot from the all-rounded fellows in the group.**

## *My Experience at Columbia University*

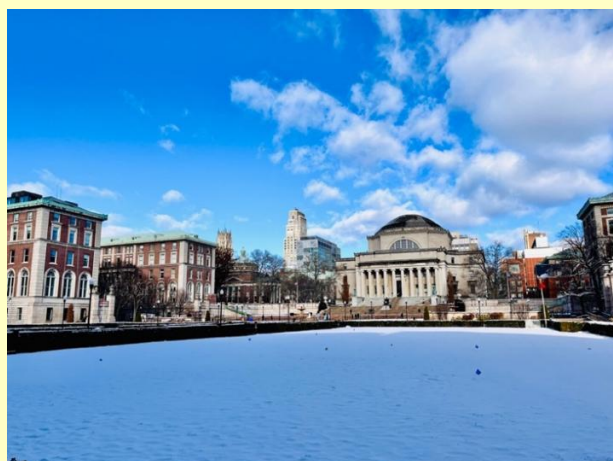
It was 3:05 a.m. when an email notification lit up my phone screen. I was half-awake but my heart still jumped as I opened it. There it was: "Congratulations...." For a moment, everything around me just stopped. The only thing that came to me was that I had been accepted into Columbia University. So just to introduce myself and my background, I spent two years studying Business Economics at City University of Hong Kong, and now I'm here, diving into Economics at Columbia. That acceptance wasn't just a moment; it was a shift,





like something opened up. A before and after. And somehow, even now it's still unfolding.

When I first arrived in New York, I was greeted with great warmth from Columbia, from the School of General Studies, and from New York City. And my first impression of campus was overwhelming. It felt grand and timeless, while every building followed a classical architectural style and had a story to tell. Everything was new to me, and I wanted to experience more. Hence during the orientation, I joined different kinds of events. From visiting the World Trade Center and Wall Street, a night cruise drifting past the glowing Manhattan skyline, to a trip to see the Statue of Liberty up close, it was a lot to take in, but somehow it all clicked. Those moments gave me the first real taste of the university and the city's spirit, its energy, its openness and helped me start forming connections with others who, like me, were just beginning their journey.



At the same time, adjusting to a new academic environment was... a lot. Columbia moved fast—faster than what I was used to at CityU and the workload hit harder than I expected. To stay on top of everything and figure out how to organize my studies without falling behind, I actively consulted with my academic advisor, and she became a lifeline during that period. We didn't meet often, but when we did, those 20-30 mins conversations really mattered. She always helped me sketch out a plan about my course registration, major, a rough timeline, even some career ideas. Her calm, thoughtful advice made things feel less

chaotic. Slowly but surely, I started to find my footing and began to enjoy whatever was new or unexpectedly interesting in my life.



As I settled into life at Columbia, one cultural difference jumped out right away, the small talk. Americans really embrace it. In the first month, it felt a little strange and unnatural because I often didn't know what to say or how to respond, whether I was buying an iced matcha at Joe Coffee or meeting someone new in class. But over time, I came to see it as a gentle and appropriate way to open doors, getting to know my classmates better while hearing different perspectives. For example, one of my friends who served in the military for several years and is now majoring in physics. Stories like his, coming from an unconventional path, really gave me a new mindset on how people can choose their own direction in life and define success on their own terms.

Furthermore, I discovered the charm of those small, discussion-heavy classes, especially the Core Curriculum. This was actually one part of Columbia I didn't expect to



enjoy as much as I did. Classes in science, literature, and art really opened me up. By reading more books and materials, visiting various museums (MET, MOMA, etc.) and learning about masterpieces in person, I had the chance to think more deeply and speak up with clarity and confidence during those open conversations. What I appreciate most is that they really pushed me to read, feel, see and think in a way I never had before.

Outside the classroom, living in New York means endless chances to explore and grow. Back in warm places like Xiamen and Hong Kong, I rarely experienced dramatic seasonal shifts. But here at New York, I've gotten to watch the leaves turn brilliant shades of orange and gold in Central Park and feel the thrill of my first real snowfall. Those different parks and natural spots around the city have become one of my favorite ways to unwind and reflect. These everyday moments have made my time in New York feel vibrant, exciting and deeply personal.

Another enriching part of my Columbia experience has been visiting different companies around New York. And the US recruitment is quite different compared to Hong Kong. People here value networking and open

conversations more. It wasn't just about resumes or online applications. It was about talking to people, listening, asking questions and being curious.

At Columbia, I joined a few clubs, went to some company visits, sat in on presentations and sometimes just reached out to people and networked with them because I was genuinely interested. And slowly, through all those moments, I started to get a feeling for what company culture actually means, what a day in the life of an analyst might look like, how people work, how they communicate. More than anything, those experiences nudged me to really think in a real way about what kind of space I want to be in, not just in theory, but in my actual life, in the next few years.

Looking back, I'm struck by how much Columbia has challenged me, shaped me and helped me grow. I'm genuinely grateful for the joint bachelor's degree program. In academy, I've become more curious, more analytical and more willing to ask questions and dig deeper. Professionally, the value of building relationships and communicating with clarity and purpose is rooted in my mind. This rare chance to study in both Hong Kong and the U.S., to experience different worlds, both culturally and academically and develop my international perspective. Besides, I've become more independent, flexible and open to new ways of thinking. Columbia for me, it's the friendships, the small moments, the hard lessons, the breakthroughs. It's a place that pushes me and supports me all at once.

**Huang Haoxuan, a student (Cohort 2022) in the Joint Bachelor's Degree Program between CityUHK and Columbia University (US)**





## *My Wonderful Journey in Montreal, Canada*

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In the Winter of 2024, I participated in the exchange program at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. This journey allowed me to meet friends from all over the world and immerse myself in completely different cultures, including economic, social, and cultural aspects. McGill University was founded in 1821, with six faculties including arts, science, medicine, education, engineering and management.



**Building a snowman with local students**

After settling into the dormitory, the first event I joined was the winter orientation. At the beginning of the event, we were invited to indicate our home university location on a world map. I was surprised to find out that Hong Kong is a popular place. The outstanding students and teachers presented a meaningful and warm introduction, followed by a local food-tasting session, which allowed us to first glance at the food culture.

Throughout the five months exchange program, I investigated how Canadian people think about the global economies especially focusing on the change in interest rates. The most interesting course I studied was “Behavioral Finance”. It discussed how psychological factors such as emotions affect decision making.

The instructor began each lesson by introducing different scenarios and asked for our responses and reasoning. The students actively shared their ideas during the discussion. Listening to their actions and rationale helped me think critically from other perspectives. It also highlighted how humans’ brains sometimes behave irrationally. The teacher then explained

the bias theories in depth to summarize the discussion. Then, he suggested some historical stories in finance that demonstrated the impacts of sentiments. Lastly, the course concluded with a new opinion - accepting human mistakes and biased decision making. Therefore, we can be more aware and try our best to minimize the influence of emotions.

Living in the dormitory provided huge opportunities for me to make friends from all over the world. On the weekend, we would gather to share our university life and try the local cuisine such as poutine and bagel. We also formed a late-night study group during the exam period. One of the most unforgettable moments was viewing the total solar eclipse in April 2024. When the moon was perfectly aligned with the sun, everyone cheered for this natural wonder regardless of nationality. It deeply impressed me how insignificant humans are under nature.



**Watching the eclipse on the school campus**

The exchange trip was an invaluable experience for me. I appreciate the time I spent in Montreal, which offered me a unique life experience and helped me overcome difficulties by myself. The natural beauty and cultural diversity taught me to slow down and enjoy nature. Those memories sharpened my financial mindset and adopted cultural differences. I believe the skills and knowledge I gained will help me to better prepare for the changing environment and globalized world.

**LOK Wai Ying, Graduate (First Class Honours) in BBA Finance. She was the recipient of CityUHK SF(MNT) Fund Exchange Scholarship and Wong To Yick Tong Exchange Scholarships in 2023**

# JOINT BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM

The following students have successfully admitted to the **Joint Bachelor's Degree Program between City University of Hong Kong and Columbia University** in 2024-25. After completing the first two years study in City University of Hong Kong, they will study in Columbia University in United States for 2 years.

Name	Cohort	Major
GONG He	2023	Business Economics
Lai Kin Kwan	2023	Business Economics

## CAREER SUPPORTS

To let our students have a better understanding of different business sectors, we have held several career experience-sharing forums and professional seminars in 2024/25. We invite alumni and professionals to share their career experiences with our students. By attending the forums and seminars, students will have a better understanding of the finance-related jobs in the business sector, the skills that professionals need to have in their respective areas of expertise and how to navigate their future career pathways.

Career Experience-Sharing Forum		
Date	Forum Host and Moderator	Speakers
September 7, 2024	Prof. K. C. LIM	Sharing by the CFA Society of Hong Kong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wallace Cheung, CFA, is the Co-Founder and CEO of Invbots.</li> <li>Ricky is currently Vice President (Equity Research) at Pictet Wealth Management.</li> <li>Janice Hon is an Associate Manager, Partnerships and Client Solutions (APNO), CFA Institute.</li> <li>Candy Wong, CFA, is a sell-side equity specialist with over 25 years of experience in the Asia and Hong Kong China markets.</li> <li>Joyce Yim is a highly experienced professional in investment banking with over 25 years of experience. She was appointed Managing Director at Morgan Stanley in 2011, where she oversaw global institutional accounts.</li> </ul>
November 16, 2024	Prof. K. C. LIM	Sharing by Professionals in the industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jerry Li, Head of Financial Product and Partnership, WeChat Pay HK</li> <li>Nicole Li, Global Strategy Lead, Lenovo Solutions and Services Group.</li> <li>Rui Wang, Investment Manager at Ikaria Group</li> <li>Miranda Zhuang, Director, Equity Research, Bank of America Securities</li> </ul>

March 1, 2025	Prof. K. C. LIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Kwan, Managing Director, Corporate Finance Odysseus Capital Asia, Hong Kong</li> <li>• Alex Li, Portfolio Manager for a hedge fund, Hong Kong</li> <li>• Kurt Wang, Director, Private Equity Investments, China Ping An Insurance Overseas (Holdings) Limited</li> <li>• Ying Wang, Portfolio Manager, Phoenix Property Investors</li> </ul>
March 8, 2025	Prof. K. C. LIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joy Chen, Director, Corporate Sales, Citic Bank International</li> <li>• Florence Chow, Director, Portfolio Analysis &amp; Solutions, BOCI-Prudential Asset Management Limited</li> <li>• Alan Lee, Managing Director, Standard Chartered Bank, Hong Kong</li> <li>• Cousin Suen, Vice President, Treasury Financial Control and Advisory OCBC, Hong Kong</li> </ul>

Professional Seminars		
Date	Forum Host and Moderator	Speaker
March 15, 2025	Prof. K. C. LIM	Mr. Chester Lui is a seasoned private banker with over 16 years of experience in the financial industry. He graduated with first class honors in Accountancy and obtained dual master's degrees in Banking (CityUHK) and Information Systems (The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)). He is a Certified Public Accountant in UK, Hong Kong and a CFA charter holder.

## INTERNSHIP

To gain industry experience before graduation, we encourage our students to participate in the Internship program. The following list shows some companies in the Internship program in 2024-25:

- Accounting and Financial Reporting Council (AFRC)
- Airport Authority Hong Kong
- All Season Property Co., Ltd subsidiary of China Resources (Holdings) Co., Ltd.
- Amber DWM Limited
- Bank of China (Hong Kong)
- Barclays Capital Asia Limited
- BNP Paribas
- BNP Paribas HK Branch
- Boardroom Corporate Services (HK) Limited
- BOCOM Financial Asset Investment Co., Ltd
- Casetagram Limited
- Change Frontier
- China CITIC Bank Co., Ltd.
- CIGP
- Citibank (Hong Kong) Limited
- Eric K.L. Ng & Co.
- Futu Securities International (Hong Kong) Limited
- Greater Bay Area Homeland Development Fund
- Halyk Bank
- Hang Seng Bank
- Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminals Limited
- Hospital Authority



- HSBC Global Services (HK) Ltd
- Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC)
- Hutchison Telecommunications Hong Kong
- iFAST e-Pension Services Limited
- Insurance Authority
- International Chamber of Sustainable Development
- Kai Shing Management Services Limited
- Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre
- LX International (HK) Limited
- Mayer Brown
- Mercer Investments (HK) Limited
- MUFG Pension and Market Services
- New World Intelligent Centre Company Limited
- Polymer Capital
- PwC HK
- Starling Labs Limited
- Telkom
- Trump Secretarial Limited
- Tung Shing Fresh Fruit Limited
- UA Global Sourcing Limited
- Wall CPA Limited

## STUDENT EXCHANGE

To broaden international horizons, our students have actively participated in the student exchange program. The following list shows some exchange institutions in our exchange program in 2024-25:

- Aarhus University, Denmark
- Audencia Business School, France
- Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain
- Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
- Cornell University, US
- Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Germany
- EDHEC Business School, France
- EMLYON Business School, France
- Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands
- Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
- HEC Montreal, Canada
- Jönköping University, Sweden
- Korea University, Korea
- La Trobe University, Australia
- Loughborough University, UK
- Lund University, Sweden
- Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, PRC
- Singapore Management University
- Texas A&M International University, USA
- The University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
- The University of Queensland, Australia
- University of Geneva, Switzerland
- Umeå University, Sweden
- Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain
- Université Paris-Dauphine, France
- University College Dublin, Ireland
- University of Aberdeen, UK
- University of Birmingham, UK
- University of Dundee, UK
- University of Lausanne, Switzerland
- University of Victoria, Canada
- University of Zagreb, Croatia
- Waseda University, Japan
- York University, Canada

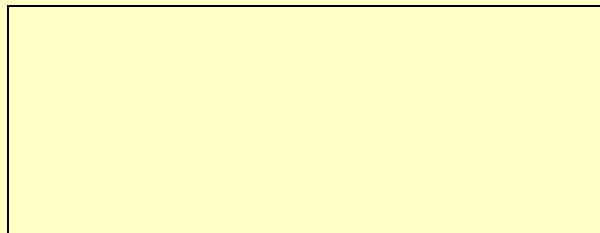
# STUDENT MENTORING AND LEARNING SUPPORT

To support our EF freshmen in adapting to university life, we have provided student mentoring programs in 2024-25. There are 48 groups, pairing small groups of freshmen with academic advisors. Academic advisors will provide advice to students' study and career planning. To welcome freshmen in 2024, we held our departmental orientation on August 29, 2024.

We also provide Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS) for the students who studied CB2400 and CB2402 in Semester A and B in 2024/25.

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