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Press Release

Education Summit 2026 Unites Global Leaders on the Future of Intelligence and Education in Hong Kong

The Faculty of Education at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) and the London Ball Foundation co-hosted the **Education Summit 2026**, themed “**Artificial Intelligence & Cross-Cultural Intelligence**”, on April 19 at Loke Yew Hall, HKU. The Summit brought together distinguished speakers and more than 400 participants, including academics, policymakers, educators, and students, for in-depth discussions on the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) for education and the importance of cross-cultural understanding.

The dynamic programme opened with welcome remarks by **Professor Xiang Zhang**, President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU. In his address, Professor Zhang highlighted the timeliness of the Summit, which convened leading experts from around the world to foster meaningful dialogue and discuss the advancement of AI in education. He remarked, “It is crucial to understand how AI will impact education. We must ensure that AI serves to bridge, rather than widen, cultural and generational divides.”

In the opening remarks, **Professor Sandy Lau**, Chairlady and Education Summit Co-Chair of the London Ball Foundation, said: “This Summit emphasised that true progress stems from both technological development and from our ability to build understanding across cultures. Education must help to draw on the wisdom of traditional Chinese education as a rigorous, holistic exercise with integrity and empathy at its core.”

Hong Kong as a Hub for Education, Culture and Innovation

The Summit was graced by the presence of **Dr Jeff Sze**, Under Secretary for Education, Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Dr Sze reaffirmed the HKSAR Government’s commitment to making Hong Kong an international post-secondary hub. “Through our ‘Study in Hong Kong’ brand, we welcome students from across the globe. With enhanced scholarships, increased enrolment opportunities, and the upcoming Northern Metropolis University Town, we want students to see Hong Kong not just as a destination, but as a launchpad for future success and a vibrant talent pool fostering synergy for aspiring individuals,” said Dr Sze.

Keynote Speeches: The Intersection of AI and Cross-cultural Collaboration

Professor Xiang Zhang delivered a keynote speech on “**Challenges for Higher Education in Artificial Intelligence Era**”, in which he stressed that education must equip students not only with technical proficiency, but also with the curiosity, creativity, and values needed to surpass the capabilities of AI. He reaffirmed the enduring role of universities as beacons of human civilisation, highlighting their responsibility to nurture students with a sense of justice, courage, and wisdom. Professor Zhang also illustrated these principles by sharing HKU’s latest initiatives and developments in AI.

Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost of University College London (UCL), discussed “**The Urgent Need for Universities to Foster Cross-Cultural Understanding**” in his keynote speech. He emphasised that, in an increasingly fragmented world, intercultural understanding is more crucial than ever. Dr Spence underscored the responsibility of universities to nurture students’ ability to listen attentively, disagree constructively, and respect diversity. He also stated that intercultural competence is essential not only on a global scale but also within diverse local communities, and outlined UCL’s work to foster inclusive dialogue both on campus and throughout the broader community.

Panel Discussions: AI's Role in Shaping Education

The Summit featured two panel discussions that offered in-depth exploration of this year's theme. The first panel, “**AI & Cross-Cultural Intelligence**”, examined the dual role of AI as both a bridge and a barrier to cultural understanding in education. Key topics included the development of culturally aware AI, cultural representation within AI systems, and the risks of cultural homogenisation. The discussion indicated the importance of designing curricula that reflect local relevance and linguistic diversity, and emphasised the integration of cultural sensitivity and ethical awareness into AI development.

Speakers:

- **Professor Li Wei** – Director and Dean, University College London Institute of Education
- **Professor Yang Rui** – Dean and Chair of Education, Faculty of Education, HKU
- **Professor Helen Meng** – Patrick Huen Wing Ming Professor of Systems Engineering & Engineering Management, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)
- **Moderator: Mr Benjamin Meunier** – Education Summit Co-Chair, London Ball Foundation and Director of University Libraries, CUHK

The second panel, “**AI & Interactive Education: Educators' Views**”, explored how AI-powered tools are transforming classroom interactions and fostering more student-centred learning experiences. The discussion addressed the evolving role of educators, the need for innovative approaches to assessment, and the importance of balancing technological advancements with human values. The panellists also highlighted the importance of cultivating students' motivation and critical thinking in an AI-enhanced educational environment. The session concluded with a lively Q&A, marked by enthusiastic engagement from attendees of various backgrounds.

Speakers:

- **Professor Jay Siegel** – Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), HKU
- **Professor Yike Guo** – Provost, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- **Professor Irwin King** – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Distinguished Professor, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, CUHK
- **Moderator: Professor Lo Yuen Yi** – Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), Faculty of Education, HKU

A Commitment to Educational Excellence

The Education Summit 2026 reflects the unwavering commitment of the HKU Faculty of Education and the London Ball Foundation to advancing education excellence and fostering cross-cultural dialogue. It also forms the intellectual cornerstone of London Ball 2026. By addressing critical issues at the intersection of technology and culture, the Summit contributes to positioning Hong Kong as a global hub for education, culture and innovation that bridges diverse perspectives and drives impactful change for future generations.

About HKU Faculty of Education

The Faculty of Education at HKU was established in 1984, with a rich history of fostering teacher development dating back to 1917. Committed to serving the community and promoting educational development, the Faculty drives pioneering, high-impact research through its members and prepares graduates to excel in a globalised, knowledge-based world. The Faculty aspires to lead the study and practice of education, to influence public policy and improve community life through education, and to nurture graduates who are passionately committed to their professions.

About London Ball Foundation

The London Ball Foundation is a Hong Kong registered charitable organisation that aims to serve society by supporting youth-focused initiatives and enabling Hong Kong's development as a global education hub. Our efforts aim to promote sustainable development for the benefit of China and the wider world.

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