

Update on the Arrangements of 2020 Congregation

Monday, Aug 31, 2020, 15:31PM

Dear Graduates of the Class of 2020,

The unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 has been sweeping across countries and posing serious health risks for our communities. In the past few months, we have been closely monitoring the situation as we started to make plans for the 2020 Congregation. After taking all the constraints and factors into account, we have made the very difficult decision to **hold the Congregation online in November this year** (see schedule appended[#]). We will further explain the reasons behind our decision.

While Hong Kong has been responding to multiple waves of pandemic outbreak, including several confirmed cases involving members of HKUST, the University is placing our responsibility for preserving campus-wide health as our utmost priority. The risks to the health of our graduates, their families and guests are too serious to ignore; many members of our community would have to engage in extended travel in order to participate, compounding the risk. Congregation is a time of gathering, bringing all members of our extended family together to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of our graduates. Holding an online Congregation will enable the participation of all of our graduates, their families and guests, regardless of where they are physically located.

We have thought about holding off this decision for as long as we can in the hope that the pandemic might be under control in months. But the time needed to organize and prepare the Congregation for over 5000 graduates providing them the necessary graduation-related services, with sufficient coordination between working units, does not allow further delay. This has required us to make the decision now so that the organizing team (consisting of, in alphabetical order, ARO, CMO, CSO, ITSC, MTPC, PAO and Schools) can start its preparations while supporting our graduates in making their own plans accordingly.

We know that graduation is a very important milestone for many of you, and understand the disappointment you may feel. It is of equal importance to us that the hard work and accomplishments of each of you be warmly celebrated and recognized. This is why we have been exploring ways to best enhance the experience for graduates even though we cannot celebrate this occasion in person. Please be assured that our team will do our best to create a memorable online celebration experience. Meanwhile, we will continue to observe the development of the situation and consider organizing an in-person celebration next year if circumstances allow.

Once again, we seek your understanding, and the Congregation organizing team will keep you all posted on the event details and next steps in around mid-September.

Should you have any enquiry or suggestion regarding the Congregation arrangements, please contact the organizing team at congregation@ust.hk. Let's work together to make a wonderful 2020 Congregation.

Best regards,

Wei SHYY, President

Lionel NI, Provost

Yang WANG, Dean of Science

Tim CHENG, Dean of Engineering

Kar Yan TAM, Dean of Business and Management

Kellee TSAI, Dean of Humanities and Social Science

Huamin QU, Director of Interdisciplinary Programs Office

King CHOW, Acting Dean of Students

=====

#Schedule of 2020 Congregation

Nov 21 (Sat)

School of Science

School of Humanities and Social Science

Interdisciplinary Programs Office

Nov 22 (Sun)

School of Engineering

Nov 28 (Sat)

School of Business and Management

Detailed schedule with session breakdown and time will be announced in due course along with other details.