CURRICULUM RENEWAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When our trail-blazing programme started in September 1999-2000, we offered a number of modules which were thought of as being "rather esoteric", among them was ICOM/009 "Voice and video over the Internet" taught by the very distinguished Professor Fouad Tobagi from Stanford University. This was what he told our students:

"With the explosive growth of the Internet, a wide spectrum of new applications is being contemplated. They relate to every aspect of modern life: communication among people, news and entertainment, education and training, shopping, publishing, commerce, banking, investment, medicine, and so on. These applications are of a "multimedia" nature, in that they combine information in all its forms (data, images, audio and video), and distributed in nature, thus involve networking. To support these new applications, a number of network related technical challenges are to be addressed and met: higher network bandwidth, new network protocols and management functions, and new applications level software."

So our first batch of graduates had a nine-year start over those of other more conventional programmes in understanding and learning about such applications, which are now the crucial corner stones of the technical foundation for many popular social and business networks and telecommunications services, for examples, YouTube, My Space, Facebook, Skype, Itunes, to name just a few.

The curriculum of our programme has always prided itself on being ahead of the times, because our Programme Management Team not only strive to invigorate the curriculum by replacing some existing modules with new ones every two years based on our reading of business and technology trends, we are also supported in this renewal efforts by our faculty who continuously update their modules based on their inside research knowledge of what will be the next cutting-edge technologies. I would like to encourage our graduates to return to enrol in some of the new and revised modules so that they can continuously develop themselves professionally, step ahead of the market and be innovative leaders in their field.

In the last semester, we have offered two new modules on "Mobile and pervasive commerce" and "Technology convergence and digital entertainment". In the next issue of this newsletter, and in the Programme Office’s email circulars to our graduates later on in the year, we will be announcing more new and revised modules. You are welcome to enrol in these at half fee. Meanwhile, for this issue of the newsletter, I have invited Associate Professor Ricky Kwok, who will revise his ICOM core on "Internet systems programming" for 2009 to include P2P, to give us a short introduction of this technology. Ricky is our foremost researcher in this field, who has been programming with students intensively in P2P systems. He is the editor for Journal of Parallel and Distributed Computing in P2P Computing.

In this issue, we also have a contribution from one of our exchange students. Some of our more recent graduates would have noticed that for the past few years, they have been joined by a couple of French-speaking students from Paris. This is because of a collaborative project started by our former Dean, Professor T.S. Ng with the Institute of Telecommunication in Paris.

Our reputation has grown through the word-of-mouth recommendation of those early exchange students who were impressed by our Programme, faculty and fellow students. Peter Looms, one of our faculty members, in return, has also been most impressed by what these students have brought to the Programme through their industry and enthusiasm. Their willingness to ask questions and volunteer information has energised the class.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to thank our immediate past president Michael Tsui of the Alumni Association and to welcome our new Alumni President, Patrick Chan, who is from the class of 2000.

Professor Paul Cheung
Programme Director

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**Modules to be offered in 2008-2009**

*The above chart does not include modules which will be offered in alternate year. Please visit the MSc(ECom&IComp) webpage for the full list.*