From “Brain Drain” to “Brain Circulation” - Rethinking the Global Knowledge Economy: Perspective From Hong Kong

Paul KH Tam
Dean of Graduate School
Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Research)
The University of Hong Kong
Changing Economic Landscape in Hong Kong

- Labour-intensive industry (past) → international financial centre (present) → knowledge-based economy (future)
- British colony → part of China: one-country, two-systems
- HK Government’s response to financial tsunami:
  - 6 economic pillars: education, medical services, environmental studies, innovation & technology, cultural and creative industries, and food-safety
Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Hong Kong (1)

• One university (HKU) → 8 public funded institutes of higher education + 2 private universities
• Admission to higher studies: < 5% school leavers → 60%
• Short history of active research (about 17 years)
• Limited research funding (0.81% GDP) ($2B block grant, $1.6 RPG, $600 m competitive grants) → ↑ competitive grants (50%), ↑ RPG (800 new places)
Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Hong Kong (2)

- Education reform: 3 year → 4 year curriculum in 2012 → staff recruitment, campus expansion in preceding years, ↑ student no., double cohorts

- Internationalization
  - Undergrad 4% (past) → 10% (now) → 20% (soon)
  - RPG – no cap

- Exchange and collaboration with Mainland China
The University of Hong Kong

- Oldest university in Hong Kong (established in 1911)
- Comprehensive (10 faculties)
- English-medium
- International (40% staff-expat)
- Research-intensive
- QS World University Ranking (2009): No. 24
HKU Statistics

- 1,934 teaching and research staff
- 11,962 undergrad (10,442 FT; 1,520 PT)
- 7,466 taught postgrad (1,818 FT, 5,648 PT)
- 2,364 RPG (1,684 PhD; 680 MPhil)
- MPhil 2 yr, PhD 4 yr, full studentship
- RPGs
  - 10% 1st class honours
  - 50% non-local, > 50 countries
- RPG alumni tracer (1986-2005) - >350 in senior academic positions, > 450 in non-academic top/senior/mid-level management position
New Landscape at HKU (1): Knowledge Exchange

• Knowledge exchange (knowledge transfer) will become one of 3 pillars of academic development (with research, teaching)

• Embracing both technology transfer and non-technology transfer with emphasis on impact on society
New Landscape at HKU (2): Global Outlook

- Research Visiting Professorship Scheme: 11 appointed in 2009
- RPG exchange scheme since 2006 (Columbia, MGH, Imperial College, Liverpool, Groningen, Institute Pasteur)
- Joint PhD framework established in 2009: Kings College, Imperial College, Universitas 21
Conclusions

Brain drain to brain circulation:
the world is flat, and round.
HKU is happy to be part of the accelerated circulation.
Thank You