STAFF AWARDS/ACTIVITIES

Awards

◆ Dr. T.S.T. Ng was awarded the Outstanding Young Researcher Award (2004-2005) at the Award Presentation Ceremony for Excellence in Teaching and Research 2005 held on November 17, 2005 in Wang Gungwu Lecture Hall, HKU.

◆ Dr. J. Yang has been awarded a grant (release of second year fund) by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC) and the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) under the Germany/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme. The project is entitled “Load Settlement Behaviour of Piles in Sandy Soils”.

Activities

◆ Professor H.H.P. Fang

  • In October 2005, Tongji University (Shanghai) became the tenth university in China to offer Professor Fang, our Department’s Chair of Environmental Engineering, a Visiting Professorship. The other nine universities which had previously offered similar Professorships to Professor Fang include Nanjing University, Tianjin University, Harbin Institute of Technology, China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), Hunan University, East China University of Science and Technology, Sun Yat-Sen (Zhongshan) University, South China University of Technology and Zhengzhou University.


  • Coordinated one of the University’s Strategic Research Sub-themes, Sustainable Water. The main objective is to develop interdisciplinary research projects related to the sustainable development of water environment with emphasis on Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta region. A total of 16 University staff have participated so far from three Faculties and six Departments, including seven other members of the Department. Its first activity was a 3-day field trip by 12 staff and 8 postgraduate students from December 11 to 13, 2005 to the West River to have preliminary investigations on its flooding control and the seawater intrusion for the water supply of Macau and Zhuhai. Its second activity was a one-day retreat on January 21, 2006 in which each of the 16 participating staff gave a brief presentation on their research interests and activities, followed by discussion of potential collaborative projects. This retreat was also attended by two additional staff (from Dentistry and Chemistry) plus 27 postdocs and postgraduate students. Another activity is to organize an international forum from January 15-16, 2007. The working group, including Professor Fang, Dr. A. Koenig and Dr. K.M. Lam, has identified four areas of interest, i.e. River Basin Ecological Status; Water Conservation and Re-use; Water Resource Management and Environmental Policy; and Advanced Treatment and Detection Technology. Each area will have one keynote and four invited speakers from overseas, Asian countries, China and Hong Kong. They will share their expertise and experience with about 100 invited participants, with compliments of the University.

Visiting Zhuhai Water Supply Company
◆ Professor J.H.W. Lee


- Gave a Plenary Lecture titled “DESA - a new approach of predicting assimilative capacity” at the Annual Conference of Chinese Hydraulic Engineering Society held in Qingdao on November 1, 2005.

◆ Dr. A.T. Yeung

- Presented the technical seminar “Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Applications of Electrokinetics” at the Korea Institute of Construction Technology in Seoul, Korea on October 6, 2005.

- Presented the keynote lecture “Slope Disaster Prevention in Hong Kong: Past, Present and Future” at the 2005 Geotechnical Engineering Joint Conference of the Korean Geotechnical Society and the Korea Association of Professional Engineers in Geotechnical Engineering in Seoul, Korea on October 7, 2005.

◆ Others

- Dr. J. Yang and Mr. P.K.K. Lee visited the Institute of Geotechnical Engineering, Technical University of Berlin (TUB) from August 18-21, 2005. They met with Professor S. Savidis, Director of the Institute and Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Applied Geosciences of TUB to exchange ideas on research and education in geotechnical engineering. Dr. Yang also gave a seminar entitled “Field Study of the Behaviour of Jacked Piles in Hong Kong” and Mr. Lee presented a seminar on “Piling System in Hong Kong: A Past History and HKU Involvements”.

- Dr. A.T. Yeung and Dr. J. Yang attended the 16th International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering in Osaka, Japan in September 2005. Two papers from the Department were presented: Yeung, A.T., Tham, L.G., Yang, J., and Li, V.K.S. “Ground Vibration Induced by Percussion Piling”; Yang, J., Tham, L.G., Lee, P.K.K. and Yu, F. “End Bearing Capacity and Tip Settlement of Piles in Sandy Soils”.

- Professor and Mrs. Y.K. Cheung, Dr. A.T. Yeung, Dr. J. Yang and Dr. A.S.K. Au visited South China University of Technology (SCUT) from November 18-19, 2005. Dr. Yeung presented a seminar on “Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Applications of Electrokinetics” and Dr. Yang presented a seminar on “Saturation Effects of Shallow Soils on Vertical Ground Motions” to an audience of more than two hundred teachers and students of SCUT. Moreover, the delegation exchanged ideas and fostered opportunities for research collaboration in geotechnical engineering with teachers of SCUT.

- Dr. A.T. Yeung and Dr. V. Li were invited to attend the Preparatory Assembly of International Press-In Association from September 9-10, 2005 at Kochi University of Technology, Kochi, Japan. The Assembly was hosted by Giken Seisakusho Co., Ltd. Other invited prominent overseas geotechnical researchers and engineers included Emeritus Professor Harry G. Poulos of the University of Sydney; Professor Thiam Soon Tan of the National University of Singapore; Professor Robert D. Holtz of the University of Washington; Professor Malcolm D. Bolton, Dr. David J. White and Mr. Andrew D. Deeks of the University of Cambridge; Professor Roger Frank of CERMES; Professor Adrian Hyde of the University of Sheffield; and Dr.-Ing Matthias Vogler of Technical University of Darmstadt.

- Professor H.H.P. Fang and Dr. T. Zhang (Research Assistant Professor) have recently identified a new bacterium, which may resist chlorine disinfection in water treatment. They have isolated this bacterium, sequenced its DNA, characterized its key biochemical properties, and given it the name of Bacillus Macauensis (after the city of Macau where it was first isolated). This bacterium has since been registered in the international database, and a technical article discussing its details appeared in the February (2006) issue of International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology, the journal to which most newly found microorganisms are reported. In addition, the journal editor has chosen an image of this bacterium for the cover of the February issue.
• Dr. Colin J. Clinton, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) of UK visited the Department on September 30, 2005. Dr. Clinton met with staff and students of the Department as well as the Dean and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Engineering.

• Dr. Za-Chieh Moh, President, Moh and Associates Group Consulting Engineers, visited the Department from September 25-28, 2005 under the auspices of the Choi Kin Chung Fellowship. His public lecture entitled “Design Considerations of the Taiwan High Speed Rail” was delivered on September 26, 2005 and a seminar entitled “Geotechnical Issues in Design and Construction of An International Airport on Soft Ground” was delivered on September 27, 2005.

• Professor John A. Cherry, Waterloo Institute for Groundwater Research, University of Waterloo, Canada, visited the Department from October 1-9, 2005 under the auspices of the Maunsell Civil Engineering Visiting Fellowship. His public lecture entitled “Role of Aquitards in Protection of Aquifers from Contamination” was delivered on October 3, 2005 and a seminar entitled “Groundwater Contamination Caused by Common Organic Industrial Liquids (DNAPLs)” was delivered on October 4, 2005.

• Professor S. Savidis, Dr. F. Rackwitz, and Mr. D. Aubram of the Technical University of Berlin visited the Department from October 30 to November 3, 2005 under the auspices of the Germany/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme. Professor Savidis delivered a public lecture entitled “Geotechnical and Environmental Considerations in Planning and Construction of the Transportation Infrastructure in the Centre of Berlin” on November 2, 2005. A workshop was also held between the German and Hong Kong researchers on November 1, 2005.

• Professor G. Lin, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a renowned expert on dam and earthquake engineering, visited the Department from November 21 to December 10, 2005, to develop collaborative research with Dr. J. Yang on seismic safety assessment of large dams as part of a long-standing cooperative research initiative. Professor Lin also presented a seminar entitled “Recent Developments of Seismic Analysis and Safety Assessment of Concrete Dams” on November 30, 2005.

• Dr. Choi Kin Chung (right) generously donated HK$500,000 in July 2005 to our Department to subsidize undergraduate students to undertake industrial training in Mainland China. Professor Y.K. Cheung (left) presented a souvenir to thank Dr. Choi on behalf of the Department on January 13, 2006.

◆ Visitors to the Department

• Name : Professor Johann-Dietrich Worner, President of the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany.
  Date : March 3, 2006
  Purpose : Discussion on an exchange programme for students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels between the two universities.

• Name : Professor N.P. Weatherill, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales Swansea, UK.
  Date : March 13, 2006
  Purpose : Exchange idea on taught MSc programme and Civil Engineering development
Staff News

◆ Professor Y.K. Cheung

- At the 10th Anniversary of the China Universities Alumni (HK) Association on January 15, 2006, was elected Specially Invited Honorary President and also named as one of the nine Distinguished Alumni in Hong Kong out of a total of 200,000 alumni.

- Has been invited to be one of the Honorary Presidents of the 7th WFEO World Congress on Engineering Education “Mobility of Engineers” to be held from March 4-8, 2006 in Budapest, Hungary.

◆ The development of the old Kai Tak Airport depends, among other factors, on the decision of how to treat the contaminated sediment in the 29 hectares of the Kai Tak Approach Channel (KTAC). Professor H.H.P. Fang has served as a consultant to the Civil Engineering and Development Department since 2003 on the biogas production potential and the odour control of KTAC sediment. He also served as a panel member in the public Topical Forum on KTAC - Kai Tak Planning Review organized by the HKSAR Government on December 8, 2005, at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

◆ Professor J.H.W. Lee

- Was elected a Council Member of IAHR during the 31st Biennial Congress of the International Association of Hydraulic Engineering and Research (IAHR) held in Seoul during September 11-16, 2005.

- Has been appointed by the Drainage Services Department, HKSAR Government, as an Independent Advisor for a 2-year study on “Hydraulics and Sedimentation of the Shenzhen River and the Deep Bay Estuary”.

◆ Dr. J. Yang was elected to be a member of the Board of Direction of ASCE Hong Kong Section 2005-2006.

◆ Dr. A.T. Yeung

- Was elected to be the President-Elect of ASCE Hong Kong Section 2005-2006.

◆ Was appointed to the Editorial Board of the new journal Geomechanics and Geomineering. The first issue of the journal is scheduled to be published in March 2006.

◆ Was appointed by the Council to be a member of the Joint Committee of the Council and the Academic Staff Association for a period of 3 years from January 17, 2006 to January 16, 2009.

6th International Conference on Tall Buildings (ICTB-VI)

The 6th International Conference on Tall Buildings co-organised by The University of Hong Kong, Tongji University, and the China Academy of Building Research was held in Hong Kong on 6-8 December 2005. The aim of the conference was to provide a forum for all stakeholders to exchange ideas on how to further advance the development and management of tall buildings so as to fulfil the needs of the society, clients, and end-users. In view of the increasing awareness of sustainability and socio-economic aspects, two mini symposia entitled Mini Symposium on Sustainable Cities; and Mini Symposium on Planning, Design and Socio-Economic Aspects of Tall Residential Living Environment, were concurrently held with the Conference.

The Conference was officiated by Professor Y.K. Cheung, Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, and opening addresses were delivered by Deputy Minister Wu Qidi of the Ministry of Education, Deputy Minister Huang Wei of the Ministry of Construction, and Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, Vice-Chancellor of HKU. The Conference attracted over 240 participants from all over the world.

SMILE-SMC Project – 3rd Dissemination Workshop – February 11, 2006

The TID sponsored SMILE-SMC project targets construction industry improvements, by helping Contractors to improve their competitiveness and performance levels, through appropriate information and knowledge management solutions (with a special focus on Small & Medium Contractors - SMCs). SMILE-SMC would also help Clients and Consultants e.g. for sourcing appropriate specialist contractors, and quick access to other useful information.

For details and applications for free Trial Membership (valid up to May 31, 2006 only; so do apply soon), please visit our website at http://smile.hku.hk or email us at smilesmc@hku.hk.
News from the Croucher Laboratory of Environmental Hydraulics

• Smithfield Road Flood Modeling Study
During the heavy storm of June 24, 2005, extensive flooding and overshoot was observed in the drainage channels on the steep man-made slopes off Smithfield Road. As the rainstorm was not of an extreme type, the exact reason for the flooding is quite puzzling. In November 2005 Professor J.H.W. Lee and his group has been commissioned by the Drainage Services Department to investigate the causes of the flooding and develop effective solutions to solve the flooding problem.

• New Postgraduate Exchange Visit by Seoul National University
On February 20-21, 2006, a group of researchers from Seoul National University (SNU) visited the Croucher Hydraulic Laboratory for an intensive 2-day workshop. The visiting team of PhD and masters students was led by Professor Il-won Seo, Director of SNU’s Environmental Hydraulics Laboratory and the Chief Editor of Journal of Civil Engineering, Korea Society of Civil Engineers. The first of its kind, this laboratory-to-laboratory intensive exchange is supported by the Brain Korea 21 programme, and aims to enhance internationalization and collaboration between leading Asian Pacific university partners.

STUDENT AWARDS/ACTIVITIES

• At The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers Prize Presentation Ceremony held in the Joint Professional Centre on January 20, 2006,
  - Mr. Chan Ning Chun, Mr. Lee Chi Lok and Mr. Wong Wai Pui (2nd row: 2nd & 3rd from left; and 2nd from right, respectively) (Year 1 BEng students) received The HKIE Prize for Potential Engineering Students 2004-05.

• Miss Leung Cheuk-wah, Jeannie (2001 graduate) was presented a souvenir by the ICE President, Dr. Colin J. Clinton on September 30, 2005 in recognition of “Young Engineers’ Achievements”. Jeannie was chartered with ICE at the age of 24. She is currently the youngest MICE worldwide and works in the Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, Government of HKSAR.

• Miss Leung Cheuk Ning, Charling (2005 graduate) was awarded The Rotary Foundation Academic-Year Ambassadorial Scholarship 2006-2007. The scholarship was awarded based on community service and would cover one academic year of study in another country up to US$25,000.

• Mr. Wong Tsang Hung (2005 graduate) (1st row far right) was awarded the Arup Best Student Award in Structural Engineering 2004-05 by the Joint Division of the HKIE Structural Division and the IStructE (Hong Kong Division), and the Best Final Year Project Award for Undergraduate Courses by the ASCE Hong Kong Section.

Mr. Chan Shu Ning, Miss Chu Mei Ling and Mr. Lincoln Lee Chung Hin (Year 2 BEng students) received The HKIE Scholarship 2004-2005.
**Activities**

◆ **Summer Industrial Training - Guangxi Project**

After about five months of construction, the new school building at Xiali village in Guangxi was completed at the end of September 2005. The building was named “Ming Tak Lau” (明德樓) in recognition of the excellent work of our students for their participation in the design and construction supervision for the building. Professor Jao Tsung-I, a renowned scholar and artist, kindly inscribed the name for the building. A group of students and tutors from the Department together with the benefactors of the building, Dr. and Mrs. Nicolas Yeung, attended the completion and handover ceremony of the new school on National Day 2005. They also sent a large number of gifts to the village school which included 80 sets of student's desk and chairs, 4 sets of teacher's desk and chairs, one set of basketball stands, two sets of table-tennis table, one set of horizontal bar and parallel bars, three sets of bookcases, about 300 books and some stationery, at a total cost of HK$25,000, which was donated by 41 teachers and students of the Department.

◆ **Scholarship Presentation Ceremony 2005-06**

The Scholarship Presentation Ceremony held on January 25, 2006 in Loke Yew Hall was attended by recipients, parents, school principals, donors and Department staff. The total amount of scholarship support received this year was HK$369,940. There were a total of 21 recipients including 7 first year, 6 second year, 6 final year B.Eng. students along with 2 M.Sc. students. A speech was delivered by the Guest of Honour, Ir Dr. the Honourable Raymond Ho Chung-tai. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui presented souvenirs to sponsors thanking them for their generosity and for their continued support to our students and our Department.

◆ **Thames Water hiring our graduates**

A team of staff from Thames Water, U.K. scoured the globe to recruit the most outstanding fresh graduates. Their search brought them to HKU on July 22, 2005 to conduct interviews. They were very impressed by the quality of our graduates and hired Messrs. Marco Cheung, Delta Hong, Avery Lam, Vincent Yuan and Miss Agnes Yiu to commence their career with Thames Water.
HKU won the grand championship in IUCEC, Korea

The 4th Inter-University Invitational Civil Engineering Competition (IUCEC) was held at Hanyang University, Ansan Campus, Ansan, Korea, from 8th to 12th February 2006. Twelve teams from 8 institutions in 6 countries/regions participated in the competition. The competition required each team to fabricate a dome model that could sustain a prescribed static and impact load with the lightest self-weight. Under very keen competition, the HKU team (which comprised of three students: Mr. To Chiu Yin, Mr. Yim Fung Chin and Miss. Lau Ching Ling, and the team leader: Dr. R.K.L. Su) defeated other teams from Tsinghua University, Tongji University, the National University of Singapore and others, and won the grand championship in the competition. The dome built by HKU was 27g which was about two-third of the weight (40g) of the 1st runner up. This championship is a proof of the success of engineering education in our Department.

Particular comments made by the student participants:

Mr. To Chiu Yin, Ernest (Year 3)
It is certainly a big surprise not only to me, but also my classmates and teachers in the department that we could win the competition. The prize however was not brought by luck, it is the tremendous efforts paid by my group-mates Franklin and Jenny and the generous support from our supervisor Dr. R.K.L. Su and other departmental staff that lead to our success. Using manual calculation, we developed a unique analytical approach to optimize the design of the dome. The prize carries special meaning to me as it is the first prize and probably the last one that I can win for HKU, as a final year student. I now wish that the HKU team can do equally well in the competition in the years to come.

Mr. Yim Fung Chin, Franklin (Year 3)
It was exciting when our model passed the loading test. As our model was the lightest among all, it was the last one to be tested. Noticing all the other teams had passed the test; it’s a breath-taking moment to drop the steel ball on the model. Finally, the model did it! We knew our strengths and weaknesses in the competition. We have developed an analytical design, improved fabrication techniques by preparing a mould to streamline the fabrication process and enhance the quality of the model. In addition, we witnessed the ingenuity of the model of other teams which inspired us on how we can improve. I would like to thank Dr. R.K.L. Su, other departmental staff and classmates for their kind support and help.

Miss Lau Ching Ling, Jenny (Year 2)
We are excited and happy to be one of the teams in this competition. It was our first time to travel to Ansan and we have met lots of friends from different Universities of different countries. We have experienced the culture of other countries and knew much more about the career of Civil Engineering in other countries. Before the competition, we have tried a few times to optimize the design of the dome. With different professors and lecturers’ advice and our hard work, we finally made a dome which can pass the loading with the lowest weight amongst all the participating teams. This competition really gave us an unforgettable experience and we have all learned lots of things which are marvellous and meaningful.
Dr. Liu Hong (2002 PhD graduate) has become the Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological and Ecological Engineering at Oregon State University, USA, since September 2005. After receiving her PhD degree studying bio-hydrogen production from wastewater under the supervision of Professor Herbert H.P. Fang at HKU, Dr. Liu spent two and half years as a postdoctoral researcher at Pennsylvania State University for the study of microbial fuel cell technology. She recently received the 2005 Popular Mechanics Breakthrough Award in the United States for the invention of a system that produces renewable energy from wastes.

Five of our staff Mr. Leung Ming Cheung, Mr. Sy Bon Taio, Mr. Tsui Sai Ho, Mr. Chau Oi Kwok and Miss Aggie Sung received the HKU Long Service Award at the Presentation Ceremony held in Loke Yew Hall on February 6, 2006. Mr. Leung, Mr. Sy and Mr. Tsui have served the University for 25 years and Mr. Chau and Miss Sung for 15 years.

The Advisory Committee Meeting of the Department was held on January 25, 2006 in Haking Wong Building. It was attended by the two overseas external members; Professor L.A. Clark of The University of Birmingham, U.K., and Professor H.Y. Ko of the University of Colorado at Boulder, U.S.A., and nine other external members from the Government and industry. It was a very fruitful meeting with discussions on the B.Eng. and MSc. programmes and future research and development.

The 4th Lumb Lecture will be delivered by Professor John A. Cherry of University of Waterloo on October 14, 2006 in Loke Yew Hall, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Further details will be available from http://www.hku.hk/civil/lumb_lecture/index.html.

The 11th International Conference of Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies (HKSTS) with a theme on Sustainable Transportation will be held from December 9-11, 2006 in Hong Kong. The Conference is jointly organized by the Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies, and the Department of Civil Engineering, School of Economics and Finance, and Department of Geography, The University of Hong Kong. For more details please visit the website: http://home.netvigator.com/~hksts/conf.htm.

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