

Gearing up for the Silver Hair Market with Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Ageing Studies

Starting from the 2012/13 academic year, SPEED offers the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Ageing Studies, which is a brand-new top-up bachelor's degree programme franchised from the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences of PolyU.

Dr Eric Tam, the Programme Leader, explained that through a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach, the programme aims to train students to meet with the challenges and opportunities arising from the ageing society. "With the demographic change of our population, the 'silver hair' market offers tremendous employment opportunities for those who are equipped with competent knowledge and good understanding on the needs and impacts of ageing related issues. The programme is especially suitable for those who have the passion in serving the ageing individuals," said he.

Miss Catherine Chan is a graduate of Associate in Health Studies of HKCC, and she recalled that she once perceived the elderly negatively as frail and dependent. However, an internship in the palliative care unit of the hospital during her study at HKCC has changed her thoughts. "Now I realise that old people can be even more energetic and proactive than the youths!" This has assured Catherine's aspiration for a career in the silver hair industry and thus she has progressed to SPEED for the top-up degree programme in applied ageing studies.

Another student of the programme, Mr Peter Pang, is a graduate of the Higher Diploma in Social Work at PolyU. He did struggle for a while in choosing between social work and applied ageing studies as his bachelor's degree study. At the end, Peter opted for the latter as he considered the programme coverage comprehensive and that the career prospect would offer more variety. Also, Peter enjoys helping the elderly in a more proactive role.

Among the classmates of the programme, Mr Nick Wong appears to be a rather "outstanding" one as he is aged 60. Nick became a civil servant after graduation from secondary school in the 1970s. In 2001, he applied for early retirement to enjoy his retirement life. Unfortunately, he felt depressed and found himself seeing things negatively due to the sudden change in life.

Nick later on devoted himself to voluntary work, which aroused his interest to pursue a degree in ageing studies. "When I work as a volunteer, I find that I need the skills to handle



Students of the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Ageing Studies, with Prof. Peter Yuen, Dean of CPCE (front row, 5th from the right), who is also their lecturer for the subject "The Economics of Health and Long Term Care".
應用老年學(榮譽)理學士課程的學生與專業及持續教育學院院長阮博文教授(前排右五)合照。阮教授亦是主講醫療及長期護理經濟學科目的講師。

the emotion of the elderly or to respond to those with dementia. This has motivated me to pursue further study. Though I take up my bachelor's degree study a bit late, I hope that this challenge will add more colours to my retired life," he said.

Substantial programme contents

Catherine has found the content of the programme substantial. There are in-depth discussions on the ageing topics which are well supported by theories and real cases. "I treasured the opportunities to visit the voluntary organisations that serve the elderly, including the Banyan Service and the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association. The visits have enriched my knowledge about the various kinds of assistance the elderly needs," she said.

Nick regards taking up study at tertiary level after retirement as no simple thing. "Apart from the difficulties to manage the complicated terms for some subjects, I have a lot to learn so as to get along with the young fellow classmates. I understand that I have to accept the differences between myself and the young generation. I believe that more active interactions among the classmates can be an incitement for our studies."

Positive prospects

Peter is now looking forward to the internship scheduled to take place in the coming summer. "We may be assigned to work at different organisations, such as transportation companies, travel

agencies and the Housing Society," he said enthusiastically. When being asked how these organisations relate to applied ageing studies, Peter explained, "We will not be working as frontline staff but to help the organisations conduct surveys and collect opinions from the elderly so as to find out the ideal ways to fulfill their needs."

Some may have the impression that graduates of a new programme may find it not easy to get a job as the reputation is yet to develop. However, Catherine viewed this differently, "With the ageing trend of its population, Hong Kong has even surpassed Japan to become the region with the highest life expectancy. From the sectors of housing, medical service, transportation, continuing education to entertainment, there is a great potential for the elderly related market to boom. I am positive about my career prospect."

應用老年學(榮譽)理學士課程 為銀髮市場籌謀

自2012/13學年起，專業進修學院獲理大醫療及社會科學院授權開辦應用老年學(榮譽)理學士學位銜接課程。該課程統籌譚永昌博士稱，這項全新的課程以全面化及跨學科領域的形式，訓練同學迎接人口老化帶來的種種機遇及挑戰。「香港人口結構漸趨老化，衍生了龐大的銀髮市場，需要相關專才加入就業市場。這些專才不但需有確實的老年學知識，亦要對長者的需要及相關社會影響有充分了解。這項應用老年學課程，特別適合對服務年長一輩抱有熱誠和使命感的同學。」

陳泳彤同學是HKCC健康學副學士畢業生，她坦言對於「老人」一詞曾有負面的感覺，認為老人就是體弱多病及倚賴的一群。直至在HKCC修讀期間，她有機會到醫院的舒緩治療科實習，才體察到不少老人原來比青年人更有幹勁。這促使了陳同學在完成副學士課程後，報讀了由SPEED開辦的應用老年學(榮譽)理學士學位銜接課程，立志投身銀髮業。

課程的另一位學生彭家榮是理大社會工作高級文憑的畢業生。他回憶在繼續升學的問題上，曾為選擇社會工作還是應用老年學掙扎過，但經審慎考慮後認為應用老年學在課程範疇和工作出路方面均較廣闊，而且他樂於主動了解老人的需要，於是毅然朝著應用老年學的方向進發。

在應用老年學(榮譽)理學士課程的同學當中，王偉港看來是很突出的一位，因他已年屆六十歲。王同學在七十年代中學畢業後投身公務員行列，至二零零一年申請了提前自願退休計劃。王同學原本計劃好好享受退休的日子，但面對生活的驟然轉變，他在退休後反而變得抑鬱，負面思緒不斷湧現。

王同學後來投入長者義工的工作，因而喚起了他修讀老人學課程的興趣。「在做義工的期間，我感到自己有很多不足之處，

例如欠缺處理長者情緒的技巧，或不懂與腦退化症的病人相處，這些問題激發了我繼續進修的念頭。雖然我較一般人遲修讀學士學位，但這挑戰將令我的退休生活更精彩。」王同學說。

課程涵蓋全面

陳泳彤同學指出，應用老年學(榮譽)理學士課程內容翔實豐富，當中對老齡的議題有深入探討，而且理論與個案研究並重。她說：「我們亦有機會探訪不同的自願機構，包括榕光社和長者安居協會等，令我們對長者所需的種種支援認識更多。」

對王同學而言，退休後再修讀學士學位並非易事。「除了有些科目的詞彙難以掌握外，我與班中年輕的同學相處時亦覺得大有學問。可是，我明白互相包容和接納是很重要的，生長於不同年代的人，行為及表達方式當然有所不同。相信在未来的日子，我們會有更多互動交流，從而激勵我們學習上做得更好。」

發展前景廣闊

彭同學正期待著來年暑期的實習工作，他熱切地說：「同學將會獲安排到不同機構實習，例如香港房屋協會、旅行社及交通營運公司等。」當被問及老年學何以跟以上機構有關連時，彭同學解釋：「我們主要不是負責前線的工作，而是協助機構進行調查，以收集長者對服務的意見，從而分析服務是否切合他們的實際需要。」

雖然有些人認為新課程的認受性一般會較低，首批畢業生可能較難找到相關工作，但陳同學卻持不同的意見。她說：「隨著本地人口日漸老化，香港已超越日本成為人均壽命最長的地區，我們社會在住屋、醫療、交通、持續教育以至娛樂等方面，均需要發展配合長者需要的各項配套，與老人有關的行業會有龐大的發展潛力，我對工作前景充滿信心。」

Dean of CPCE Elected as Chairman of Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education



Prof. Peter Yuen, Dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE), has been recently elected as Chairman of the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education. His Chairmanship took effect on 20 March 2013 for a term of two years.

The Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE), formerly known as "The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions" (FCE), was established in 1994 as a coalition amongst the self-financing arms of publicly-funded higher education institutions and major non-profit-making institutions engaged in self-financing tertiary education in Hong Kong. FSTE membership now comprises 14 institutions as Full Members. FSTE members offer programmes at degree and sub-degree levels, catering for a full-time student population of well over 60,000 in 2012-2013.

專業及持續教育學院院長當選為自資高等教育聯盟主席



專業及持續教育學院院長阮博文教授，最近當選為自資高等教育聯盟新一屆主席。阮教授的主席任期為兩年，由2013年3月20日起生效。

自資高等教育聯盟成立於1994年，前名為「高等院校持續教育聯盟」，由政府資助大學轄下的自資學院，及其他提供自資專上課程的非牟利院校組成。現時，自資高等教育聯盟共有十四所成員院校。上述院校均致力開辦學位及副學位程度的課程，在2012-13學年的全日制學生總人數逾六萬名。



(From left) Catherine Chan, Peter Pang and Nick Wong
(左起) 陳泳彤、彭家榮及王偉港