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## **Launching of Training and Placement Network**

*Address by Professor MOK Kai Meng, Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology,  
University of Macau, Macau SAR, China, 23 April 2008*

Rector, Vice Rector, Representatives of our partner organizations and government departments, students, Professors, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is both an honor and a privilege for me to be with you today to mark the inauguration of a platform that provides direct communication between our students, our faculty members, and the professional communities - our supporting partners. The successful establishment of the "Training and Placement Network" today calls for celebration and congratulations, and I am delighted to be able to share it with you.

In today's society of fast economic growth, the demand for engineers and professionals in science and technology is high. They have become a reliable source of quality personnel that our community have come to depend on. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the list of companies and government departments in our network with bases in Macau is long, and continuing to grow. I have the pleasure to let you know that the Shenzhen Youth Federation (深圳市青年联合会) has expressed their support to our network and their Secretary General and his Deputy are here today with us. We are grateful for their support and are looking forward to work closely with them and their sub-federation, the Shenzhen Federation of Young Entrepreneurs (深圳市青年企业家联合会). We are excited that the arms of our network will extend to the region of the Pearl River Delta, therefore providing more opportunities to our students from Macau and from the mainland.

Dear friends and students, taking the opportunity of our gathering here today, I would like to share with you some of our faculty's directions with emphasis particularly on those linking with today's event. On March 22nd, I sent out the vision and mission of our faculty to my colleagues and students. Please allow me time to share them also, here today, with our partners and distinguished guests.

The vision of our Faculty is to be a center for science and technology development and education within the University and in Macau, with an impact extending to the region. The aims of our Faculty are to provide international standard quality programs of undergraduate and graduate education; to be a research active unit advancing the knowledge of engineering and science; and to serve the community and industry as an agent of technological, and educational innovation and advancement.



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We plan to achieve this vision through the pursuit of the following mission:

1. To lead the University of Macau to become the leading engineering and science institution in Macau.
2. To provide high quality degree programs of international standards at undergraduate and graduate level.
3. To promote student-centered educational experience that will enable the development of leaders for our society.
4. To advance research and scholarship by promotion of excellence in education and professionalism.
5. To foster collaboration with academic institutions and professional bodies in the region and beyond so as to extend our impact to the region.
6. To increase our visibility and impact with the local and professional communities.

To achieve the stated mission of six main goals, actions leading toward our success are through the advancement of education, research and scholarship, and by improving visibility, communication and services of our faculty. One of our key mission as stated is to promote **student-centered educational experience** that will enable the development of leaders for our society. The event of today is part of the experiences that our faculty provides.

### **STUDENT-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Our concept of student-centered educational experience is more than classroom instruction even though top-quality classroom instruction remains a strong emphasis. In order to fully prepare our students to become contributing professionals in meeting the challenges of a rapidly advancing global society, we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to them, and they start on the day of our students entering the university community.

#### **Mentorship Program**

From the day of our students entering the faculty, our faculty members who act as mentors begin to develop close relationship with our first year students. Through getting together regularly in a non-classroom environment where students can freely share their concerns and Professors can provide guidance, a mentor-mentee relation is established to provide students advises on new environment adjustment, academic and career planning, and personal development throughout their tenure at the university. In year 2007, our faculty has 36 mentors providing mentoring service to 170 first year students.

#### **International and Academic Experiences**

In today's rapidly advancing global society, vision with international perspectives is definitely an advantage. Our Faculty seeks every opportunity to provide students international and academic activities to broadening their educational experience. The activities are largely categorized into two groups.



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1. *Student Exchange*: Our Faculty has academic links with several universities and academic networks world-wide. Through these links, students of our faculty and overseas universities have the opportunity for mutual student exchange. This enriching experience is not only academically beneficial but also valuable of personal development for our students. They build characters! Present exchange program that we have is with Furtwangen University at Germany, the n+i network of France (that provides access to over 70 French universities), and the IAESTE internship network (International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience) which links with organizations in 85 countries). We will continue to promote these programs and work on establishing new ones. We are committed to coordinate this effort; hence starting this year, we have appointed a “Coordinator of European Exchange Programs” to facilitate it. It is my pleasure to tell you that the next program to be formalized is with the University of Paris. The first exchange student will be coming in to our faculty for his internship this summer. My students, there are many opportunities out there, I encourage you to go abroad to experience it all for yourselves.
  
2. *Competition and Conference Participation*: To nurture the spirit in pursuit for academic excellence and competitiveness of our students, opportunities and participations to take part in international, national and regional activities are sought for and supported. Our students from various departments have been taking part in many competitions of different levels and they are being encouraged to continue to do so. Just to give you a flavor of the activities and achievements of our students, I mention here a few. In last year, our students had taken part and won awards and prizes in the following events.
  - a. Inter-University Invitational Civil Engineering Competition, January 2008, Shanghai – Third Prize
  - b. The 12th International Conference of the Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies, December 2007, Hong Kong – Outstanding Student Paper Award
  - c. Asia Pacific Information and Communication Technology Alliance (APICTA) Awards 2007, November 2007, Singapore – Special Recognition Award
  - d. Macau ICT Awards competition 2007, November 2007, Macau – Gold Award and Silver Award
  - e. The 2nd Motor Vehicle Technology, Development and Design Competition of Macau (澳門機動車輛技術研發項目設計比賽), October 2007, Macau – First Prize and Second Prize
  - f. The IEEE Project Competition 2007 Macau, September 2007, Macau – First Prize and Creativity Prize
  - g. The Third Hong Kong and Macau Youth Networking Skills Competition, May 2007, Hong Kong, Silver Prize.
  - h. The China National Joint Conference in Biomedical Engineering 2007 (2007 年中國生物醫學工程聯合學術年會), April 2007, Xi’an – Best Paper Award for Young Researcher



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We are proud of their achievements and I take the opportunity here to convey my congratulations to them and to their advisors once again.

### **Research Experience and Excellence in Scholarship**

We believe that through participating in searching for solutions of problems and truth of knowledge, students could develop their research spirit and pursuit of excellence in scholarships, which would have long term impact on their future development. We believe that the earlier this training is started the better. The tradition of promoting research as early as at the undergraduate level, with the requirement of the final year project, is well embedded in our faculty. We are committed to expand the opportunities by continuing to encourage our faculty members to involve students in their on-going research projects so that students could develop their interest and learn research teamwork early. In last year, we had 93 undergraduate students working on 62 final year projects. At the same time, our faculty had 73 active internally and externally funded research projects and most of them had undergraduate and graduate students participating. Recognition of achievement could be found from publications in professional conferences, peer-reviewed journals and awards won at competitions as we demonstrated earlier. All are activities that we encourage our students to actively pursue. I would like to mention that in the year of 2007, our faculty members published a total of 166 articles in journals, conference proceedings and books. Many of them are with contribution from students and they sure got a taste of excellence in scholarship. I here encourage our students to take initiatives and request your participation in research projects of your mentors. My students and fellow members of my faculty, together, we shall RESEARCH, LEARN and ADVANCE.

### **Leadership Development**

To succeed as leaders of the society, that is where we aim at taking our students to. To provide leadership development opportunities for them, we are instrumental in nurturing students in establishing and running of professional bodies and associations. We have successfully guided and supported students for the establishment of four units. We are planning to establish more in the coming years.

**FSTSA:** Faculty of Science and Technology Students' Association (科技學院學生會)

**IEEE:** University of Macau Student Branch of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (電機暨電子工程師學會澳門大學學生分會)

**IET:** The Institute of Engineering and Technology Hong Kong Younger Members Section Macau Student Section (工程及科技學會香港分會青年會員部澳門學生支部)

**ASCE-ISG (UMCEE):** American Society of Civil Engineers International Student Group Department of Civil and Environment Engineering at UM (美國土木工程師學會國際學生會澳門大學土木及環境工程學系學生支部)



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Through running for the offices of these professional bodies and association, and coordinating activities of them, our students gain invaluable experience on building confidence, developing leadership, and realizing directions to contribute to their professions and the larger community. All are essential quality of leaders.

### **Industrial Experience**

Last but not least, we strongly believe that earning industrial experience during university years is of significant value to our students. It provides them with a first-hand opportunity to see the technology and processes that relate to their degree programs, therefore enhancing their learning experience tremendously. Industrial training experience also generates genuine confidence on the part of the student in dealing with real world responsibilities. It facilitates the development of interpersonal skills and an understanding of industrial culture. These are fundamental to the development of a professional career.

This brings us back to the event of today, the establishment of a “Training and Placement Network”. Our faculty has always been striving to meet the demands of Macau’s industry by training professional engineers. The Network established today is to enhance the interaction between our Faculty and the professional community so that we could give students the best chances of success for their future career in a demanding and rapidly changing employment market. True to its name, our Network aims to provide both training and placement services for students .The Summer Training Program for the undergraduates in July and August every year, for instance, is one of the main activities organized by our Network. With its establishment today, our Network will serve also as the platform between our partners and the students, arranging internship positions and part-time vacancies related to the programs our students study, with the aim to enhance their learning experience. Our Network would also organize campus career talks and related activities every year with our supporting partners to create full-time job placement opportunities for our graduating students. We are now hosting these career talks starting this morning and they will continue until tomorrow. My students please do not miss these talks. There are many opportunities waiting for you to take.

Today members of my faculty together with our students are very grateful to our forward-looking partners who embrace the formation of our Network and share our vision and commitment to serve the Macau society by taking an active role in training quality personnel. My dear friends, your partnership has made the formation of our Network a success, and your enthusiasm has enriched the contents of our “**Student-Centered Educational Experience**” providing. I sincerely thank you for your support and for your presence in today’s joyful celebration.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.