



## **HKBU Honorary University Fellowship Conferment Ceremony**

### **President's Address**

Mr Chairman, Honorary University Fellows, distinguished guests, colleagues,

It is a great honour to welcome you all to this special event, as we celebrate the conferment of Honorary University Fellowships on seven distinguished individuals. Their life stories, as presented in the citations, are a great source of inspiration in the midst of this new normal under the threat of the coronavirus pandemic and the geopolitical tension.

The coronavirus has caused serious disruption around the world, from the loss of lives, income and opportunities, to our sense of security towards the future. The heightened tensions at international, regional and local levels have put many people on edge, as if a cold war in a new form is looming. This sounds gloomy, but when I look at our Honorary University Fellows, and the shining example they set for all of us with their exemplary deeds, I see a silver lining.

Hardship inspires innovation. Here with us today are seven models of excellence who are innovators, pioneers and leaders in their professions. They personify what it means to have a positive impact on society, particularly in terms of the development of youth and the creative arts. Their vision is very much aligned with ours – that creativity can be in any form and in everything we do.

Take our creativity-inspired response to the coronavirus as an example. While most people see this as a public health crisis caused by a novel virus and its solutions being prevention and vaccines plus therapeutic treatment, we bring people's attention to the cultural dimensions of the pandemic. To wear a mask or not to wear a mask, to do voluntary testing or to refuse it, to comply

with or to defy strict social distancing, these are all cultural questions. We gathered world-renowned experts to provide solutions to the pandemic from a cultural perspective by hosting an online international symposium titled “COVID-19 and Beyond, Culturally Speaking”.

Our passion for creativity and education can also be seen in how we address the great challenges brought by the pandemic to the global higher education sector. When face-to-face teaching was suspended and international exchange programmes came to a halt, we reimagined our teaching endeavours in novel ways, and launched a number of initiatives to empower the student community with knowledge.

To us, education is not just about developing young people for successful careers, it is also about nurturing them into responsible global citizens with the attributes of empathy, adaptability, resilience and innovation. Along this journey, our Honorary University Fellows will certainly have an important role to play in sharing their wisdom, and showing our students what it means to be true leaders and innovators.

The University is very blessed to be inspired by the achievements and creative talents of our Honorary University Fellows. Let me once again offer my congratulations to all the Fellowship recipients, and I would also like to extend my warmest welcome to them as they become part of the HKBU family. Thank you.