



ASPIRE Forum 2015

Overview

From July 18 to 24, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) hosted the ASPIRE Forum 2015 on the theme “Smart Green Cities.” Member universities were each represented by their vice president, as well as professors, administrators and students, totaling nearly 60 participants. This year’s Forum followed the format of previous years and was comprised of the ASPIRE Symposium, the Vice Presidents and Senior Staff (VP-SS) Meeting, and the Student Workshop.



ASPIRE Student Workshop

July 18-24, 2015

Twenty-five students from ASPIRE League member universities and three students from IDEA League member universities (two from RWTH Aachen University and one from ETH Zurich) participated in this year’s ASPIRE Student Workshop. Students were divided into groups comprised of at least one student from each member university. This grouping is a conscious effort to promote the ASPIRE League’s cross-cultural exchange objectives by providing students the opportunity to learn, communicate and work with students from other cultures.

This year’s Workshop took a slightly different approach to previous years; students were given the opportunity not only to engage in discussions, workshops, and site visits related to Smart Green Cities science and technology but also to extend their knowledge into technology transfer and commercialization. During the week-long Workshop, by way of lectures and visits to Hong Kong’s Zero Carbon Building and to the Hong Kong Science Park’s Sustainable Buildings, the students were introduced to

Smart Green Cities concepts. They also participated in HKUST's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Camp, which included mentoring sessions and group discussions. The Camp was aimed to help students grasp the concepts of integrating technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as to provide practical knowledge regarding starting up companies.

Working in groups, the students combined their knowledge of Smart Green Cities concepts with innovation and entrepreneurship concepts to identify innovative technologies under the Smart Green Cities theme. Then each group proposed a business and marketing plan to commercialize an innovative technology.

The groups presented their proposals first at the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Camp, then to the vice presidents and other participants. The judges and audience were impressed by the students' proposals; within the space of a week they had come up with interesting, innovative ideas, brilliant PowerPoint presentations, and articulate oral presentations of their respective ideas, all while bridging cultural differences. The students' proposals included a smart system for building operations, an energy-management system, a load-monitoring system for bridge management, a vertical farm building, and smart transportation technology, disaster resilience technology, and smart wheel technology.

To encourage a spirit of competition and recognize best efforts, plaques were awarded to two teams for Best Innovative Idea and Best Group Presentation. A student from Tokyo Tech and another from ETH Zurich shared the Best Presenter award.



ASPIRE Symposium

July 23, 2015 (am)

Professor Joseph Lee, 2015-2016 Chairperson of the ASPIRE League, and Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies, HKUST, opened the ASPIRE Symposium with a warm welcome to all. He also introduced this year's theme, Smart Green Cities, noting that the topic was chosen because sustainability is no longer a local problem but a global challenge.



Following the ASPIRE League custom, one professor from each member university was invited to speak about a topic relating to Smart Green Cities. Under this year's theme, Symposium attendees exchanged ideas on urban regeneration with smart green infrastructure, and discussed cost-effective ways to achieve these. They also remarked on the challenges in building smart, green and resilient cities. Structural fire safety in underground developments, namely in Singapore, and smart energy- and water-supply systems were also presented and discussed.

In addition, two Tokyo Tech professors reported on the ASPIRE League Research Grants (Type 1 and Type 2), presenting grant-funded projects for FY 2014 and 2015 that were conducted in collaboration with researchers from ASPIRE League universities.

The 28 students attending the ASPIRE Workshop also participated in the Symposium, thus increasing their exposure to Smart Green Cities technologies and challenges.

Vice Presidents and Senior Staff (VP-SS) Meeting

July 23, 2015 (pm)

Following the brief welcome by Professor Lee, Professor Hisakazu Mihara of the ASPIRE League Secretariat (Tokyo Tech) presented an overview of the League's activities during the period July 2014 to July 2015, and he recapped the proceedings of the last VP-SS Meeting. He also highlighted the issues to be discussed at this year's Meeting.



On behalf of their respective universities, each vice president reported on his university's activities and collaborations with other ASPIRE League universities. They also made suggestions for future collaboration.

Attendees also discussed and proposed tentative dates for the next ASPIRE Forum.



Visit to Happy Valley Underground Storm Water Storage Scheme (HVUSSS) July 24, 2015 (pm)

Vice presidents, senior staff, and Symposium speakers were treated to a rare opportunity to observe the construction of Hong Kong's Underground Storm Water Storage Scheme at Happy Valley. This massive facility aims to reduce the risk of flooding in Hong Kong Island. During the two-hour visit, the group received explanations of the background of the project and the technologies used in the



drainage and storage systems.

Summary

The vice presidents, senior staff, Symposium speakers and students who participated in ASPIRE Forum 2015 felt they had good and fruitful meetings and workshops, and were able to achieve their objectives. Importantly, the camaraderie, friendship and



cooperation fostered among the representatives of the member universities continues to grow and contribute to the overall strength of the ASPIRE League.