

A Joint Message from HKUST Senior Administration (25 September 2019)

Wednesday, 25 September 2019 5:58 PM

Dear Members of HKUST,

It has only been Monday since we last communicated, and yet we are saddened to see an escalation of incidents on campus involving behavior that is incompatible with our University's fundamental values and code of conduct. Over the past few days, we have seen repeated instances of such unacceptable behavior, including verbal and physical harassment, suppressing the speech of others, unauthorized disclosure and dissemination of personal data, intimidation, and bullying both on-line and in person. Such acts are expressly forbidden and cannot be tolerated.

Yesterday, another student who previously removed some posters from the Big Character Poster (BCP) Wall, was surrounded by a group of students who pressured him to apologize on camera. Not only was the student in question in great distress, a colleague who attempted to mediate the situation was also identified and ridiculed on social media. As a community, we cannot allow these actions to continue.

Our primary means of supporting our core values is through our own actions and support for one another. To handle serious violations of our code of conduct (https://acadreg.ust.hk/A_Regulations_for_Student_Conduct_20190219.pdf), HKUST has an established disciplinary process. When an HKUST member acts inappropriately, no one can take the matters into their own hands by penalizing anyone in the ways that they deem fit. The University is investigating recent violations—including improper removal of materials and subsequent bullying, coercion and physical offense—for submission to the Senate Student Disciplinary Committee. To respect the rights and privacy of those involved, any related data, videos and photos should be removed from social media immediately.

We would also like to remind everyone that there are legal implications of such behaviors. Some of these behaviors may constitute criminal offenses, such as unauthorized disclosure of personal data, intimidation, false imprisonment, and possibly other offenses. Furthermore, an unlawful behavior today may impact an individual's future. All members are urged to think carefully about their actions.

We are deeply dismayed by the anger and frustration triggered by recent conflicts on campus. All of us who have chosen to be members of HKUST have pledged to uphold respectful behavior consistent with our shared values. We recognize that this is not easy in the face of contested realities, but let's remember what brought us all to HKUST to begin with as a community, rather than reproducing the hostility that has engulfed Hong Kong over the past several months.

With warmest regards,

Wei SHYY, President

Lionel NI, Provost

Mark HODGSON, Vice-President for Administration and Business

Nancy IP, Vice-President for Research and Development

Sabrina LIN, Vice-President for Institutional Advancement

Yang WANG, Dean of Science

Tim CHENG, Dean of Engineering

Kar Yan TAM, Dean of Business and Management

Kellee TSAI, Dean of Humanities and Social Science

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Roger CHENG, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning

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Andrew G COHEN, Director of HKUST Jockey Club Institute for Advanced Study