

Ten of the best

Ten HKUST faculty members were honored by their students at the prize-giving ceremony of the Best 10 Lecturers Election 2000 on 23 February.

Now in its sixth year, this independent student initiative has become a popular fixture in the University calendar. It is organized by VERTEX, House II Students' Association to give HKUST undergraduates a chance to show their appreciation of good teaching.

Nearly 30% of the undergraduate population voted this time, casting a total of 4,107 votes (they could cast up to three votes each) for 424 out of the 503 eligible lecturers. The voting was conducted online over the Student Intranet from 27 November to 1 December 2000.

The final line-up was divided evenly between newcomers to the award and repeat favorites, three of whom were elected for the fourth time. When interviewed, the 10 shared a general consensus as to the five key qualities that contribute to their success as teachers: good communication; enthusiasm for one's subject; interesting notes and assignments; case studies relating the academic concepts to real life; and being accessible to students (through labs, tutorials, e-mail and/or individual appointments as well as in core lecture hours).



Another insight they emphasized is that teaching is very much a two-way process, with the students playing a pivotal role in the classroom dynamic:

“The secret of my success is good students! I previously taught in America where almost anyone can get into university. Here the standard is higher and HKUST students are really fun to teach,” says Prof John Hulpke.

“Firing the students' imagination is one of the joys of teaching,” says Prof Andrew Horner.

“I keep a careful eye out for students who are struggling. And I am always willing to go over concepts in greater detail and at a slower pace in my ‘surgery’ hours if there is not enough time to do so during the lecture,” says Prof Jimmy Fung.

“My students have taught me how to bring

▲ Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Prof Peter Dobson (center), with (from left to right): Profs John Hulpke (Management of Organizations); Jimmy Fung (Mathematics) (4); Mike So (Information and Systems Management) (4); Vincent Poon (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) (3); Jae Hyon Nahm (Economics); Andrew Horner (Computer Science) (2); Wei-Min Dai (Chemistry); King-Chuen Chow (Biochemistry); KP Ramaswamy (Accounting) (4); and Jong Hag Choi (Accounting). (Numbers in parenthesis indicate times elected.)

joy, imagination and optimism into the classroom along with hard work and good preparation. Mutual communication, care and encouragement are all part of the recipe,” says Prof Vincent Poon.