

The Honourable Bernard Charnwut Chan, GBS, JP

Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa*

Address

Mr Chairman Rex Auyeung, President Professor Leonard Cheng, members of the Council, the Court, distinguished guests, faculty and students,

On behalf of the honorary doctorate recipients, I express our deep appreciation to Lingnan University. We are genuinely proud and delighted to receive this very special recognition.

Personally, I am humbled to be here alongside a Nobel laureate, Professor James Heckman, and noted industrialist Dr Roy Chung Chi-ping. I am by far the least academically qualified person up here on stage!

My bachelor's degree was in studio art. I graduated around 30 years ago, and for many years I was a bit ashamed of it. I was surrounded by people in the business world with MBAs, or advanced qualifications in accounting or engineering or finance.

I was often asked "What good is a degree in art?"

It is a valid question – especially when the costs of going to college are higher than ever.

Essentially, this is a question about the value of a degree. Is it merely about the potential earnings of graduates in that discipline?

Indeed, what is the whole purpose of university education?

If it is just about future earnings, then students and institutions should best stick to vocational and professional training rather than a broad-based education; and Lingnan would not be offering degree programs in history or philosophy, cultural or visual studies, or social sciences.

But of course the essence of education is not simply about preparing young people for jobs. Lingnan, as a residential liberal-arts institution, has a fundamental aim of enabling and encouraging intellectual intimacy, sharing and interaction. Interaction among students, faculty, staff, alumni and the world beyond.

Lingnan aims to nurture essential qualities that are based on ethical and core values. These include: respect for others, acceptance of different views, an understanding of accountability for one's actions or words, the importance of shared responsibilities, and the responsibilities that come with leadership and influence.

Through its small-class teaching, off-campus activities such as service learning and international exchange programs, Lingnan also nurtures tolerance, acceptance and the appreciation of diversity.

These qualities are essential to a pluralistic, inclusive and innovative environment – in our social life, in the work place in government and politics and even international diplomacy. These qualities can only be acquired by doing, seeing, living and reflecting.

You cannot learn them, on your own, from a textbook. You will not acquire them through free

Internet channels like the Khan Academy, Coursera and the various Massive Open Online Courses. These are undoubtedly very useful tools – and it is true that you do not have to go to college to get an education, but you will not get that all-important real interaction.

I joined Lingnan University Council 15 years ago. During my association with the University, I have had the privilege of getting to know Professors Edward Chen, Chan Yuk-shee and, of course, Professor Leonard Cheng. And I have the privilege of meeting many other great academics, staff members and students. It has been an honour to work with them, and a life-changing experience for me to discuss different views and ideas in moving Lingnan University forward.

It would have been impossible for me to gain that experience from reading numerous books or attending lectures. I will always be grateful for that opportunity.

I also made friends – including people who have become lifelong friends. And my company has hired quite a few Lingnan graduates, so I have also gained some co-workers.

Lingnan has given all of us unique opportunities. For those of you graduating, no matter what your degree is in, the Lingnan experience will make a difference to your life.

Let me share my own experience, as a humble studio-art graduate.

I still draw and paint sometimes. My work will never be displayed in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, or even the Fringe Club here in Hong Kong! But that's not the point. It's not about how good the paintings are. It's about the process – the creative thinking, awareness of sensibilities, and the effort and rewards to look at things in a different way.

I didn't realise it when I was an undergraduate. But now when I look back, I realise how this has had a major and positive impact on my later life in the business world. There have been quite a few times during my career when I have benefited from seeing business issues in a new light. It has helped me think out of the box – challenge the usual way of thinking, and see things from a different perspective.

That's the reason why I stopped being bothered about having a studio-art degree.

And it's why you too should be confident about your future.

Last year, I met a student here at Lingnan who was studying Cultural Studies. She was on exchange in the United States for one year, where she had done media studies. She is now graduating – and she is with us here today.

What will she be doing in future? Maybe, like many of her 40 other classmates, she will go into the media, or arts administration. Perhaps she will go overseas to continue her studies. Or, like many new graduates, she is still making up her mind.

Whatever she decides to do, she will take with her the benefits of being a part of the Lingnan community – the maturity and tolerance acquired through interaction, discussion and debate; and the confidence and personal skills acquired through her time here and spent overseas.

You all have very good reasons to be optimistic about your future.

This is partly because specialised degrees have potential limitations. As one educator –David Oxtoby of Pomona, the liberal arts college in California – recently pointed out here in Hong Kong, colleges today are preparing young people for jobs that do not exist yet. Technology, in particular, will change industries in ways that are impossible to predict.

This means the coming generation of workers will need to be constantly exploring, broadening and adapting their skills. Therefore, more and more people in the business world and in public affairs are recognising the value of a liberal arts education.

Indeed, there has recently been a surge in the number of liberal-arts graduates being hired in Silicon Valley. Tech companies have expert, innovative engineers writing codes and developing systems and virtual platforms. But they realise they also need different skills and ideas, including communication skills, out-of-the-box thinking, marketing, HR, customer research and humanities-based input into product design and human connectivity.

The recent Forbes survey ranking American colleges described liberal-arts schools as “incubators for poets” – because of their recent achievements in producing entrepreneurs. These range from founders of tech startups to individuals driving social change through the voluntary sector. We live in a world that is exceedingly rich in data and information, but we need creative ideas about how best to use them to serve humanity.

So for all you studying at Lingnan – not only on undergraduate courses, but those on Master’s and Doctorate programs – I hope you will make the most of the experience and the qualities you have gained and developed here. With a strong liberal-arts background, there will be a valuable and exciting place for you in a changing and increasingly interconnected world.

Once again, on behalf of all three of us – now members of the Lingnanian family – I wish to convey our sincere thanks for the honour you are giving us today. With this honour comes a responsibility. We will do all we can in the future to support Lingnan. Indeed, I hope and trust that all of you graduating today will join with us in contributing in whatever ways you can to the continued success and development of this unique university. Thank you very much.

陳智思議員太平紳士 GBS

榮譽人文學博士

謝辭

校董會主席歐陽伯權先生、鄭國漢校長、各位校董會及諮議會成員、各位嘉賓、各位教職員和同學：

本人謹代表本屆獲頒授榮譽博士學位的人士，向嶺南大學表達我們深摯的謝意。大學授予我們這非凡榮耀，我們由衷的感到自豪和欣喜。

個人而言，能夠與諾貝爾得獎者詹姆斯•赫克曼教授及著名工業家鍾志平博士一同接受這榮譽，我感到無比榮幸。在這台上，恐怕我的學術資歷最淺薄！

我大約三十年前大學畢業，取得藝術學士學位。投身商界多年，接觸的人不是工商管理碩士畢業，便是在會計、工程或財務等專業界別擁有卓越的資歷，因此對於自己是藝術系畢業生，我一直感到有點忐忑。

我經常被問到：「藝術學位有什麼用？」

問得好，尤其是在大學學費越來越高昂的今天。

說到底，問題的核心是學位的價值。那麼，學位的價值是否只跟畢業生在某個領域的收入有關呢？

究竟大學教育的終極目標是什麼？

如果純然為了賺錢，學生應該只選擇職業及專業課程，大學也就只管開辦這些課程了。如此一來，嶺大相信也不會開辦歷史、哲學、文化研究、視覺研究或社會科學的課程了。

教育當然不僅僅是為了裝備學生就業。嶺大提供四年全宿的博雅教育，致力提供適切的條件並鼓勵溝通互動，包括學生、老師、職員、校友及外界之間的互動。

嶺大身為一所博雅學府，本著道德和其他核心價值，積極培養學生各種素質，包括：尊重別人、接納不同觀點、對自己的言行負責、明白共同責任的重要性；深明作為領袖和發揮影響力的同時須承擔的責任。

嶺大透過小班教學、校園以外的活動如服務研習及國際交流計劃，不斷讓學生擴闊胸襟和視野，讓他們更懂得欣賞、接納和包容不同的意見、角度和文化。

處於一個多元和日新月異的環境，無論是社交、職場甚或在社會管治、政治外交層面，以上種種特質都是必需的。更重要的是你必需要通過實踐、觀摩和體驗才可以培育出這些素質。

你不能光靠書本掌握這些特質，更休想通過免費網站，諸如可汗學院、Coursera及各種大規模開放網上課程便以為吸收到。無疑這些都是很好的工具，你也能不用上大學也可接受教育，但這樣你便錯過十分重要的體驗互動的歷程。

十五年前我加入嶺大校董會，在這段期間有幸先後認識幾位校長，包括陳坤耀教授、陳玉樹教授和鄭國漢教授。我也有機會接觸很多學者、職員和學生。能夠與他們共事是我的榮幸；與他們交流討論，從而達成共識，推動嶺大前進的經驗極具啟發性。

光靠書本或課堂是不可能獲得這些歷練的。能夠獲此寶貴機會，我一直很感恩。

我在嶺大結交了不少朋友，其中有些更是莫逆之交。我公司也聘請了一些嶺大畢業生，可以與他們共事更是另一種收穫。

嶺大給予我們獨特的機會。對於今天畢業的你們來說，無論取的是什麼學位，在嶺大渡過的歲月也將會對你們的人生有重大影響。

且讓我這個藝術系畢業生分享一下經驗。

我偶爾也會繪畫，作品肯定不可能在紐約現代藝術博物館展出，甚至在香港藝穗會展出的機會也相當渺茫！但這不重要，關鍵不在於那些畫作的水平有多高，重要的是作畫過程中所運用的創意思考，以及從不同角度觀察事物的訓練。

當我還是本科生時，未能體會到這一點。現在回望過去，我知道這對我後來在商界發展有重大的影響。我在工作上不時以新的角度處理問題，實得力於藝術的訓練；我也學會了跳出框框作多方面分析，挑戰既定思維。

因此，我體會到藝術這學位其實沒有什麼好讓我忐忑的。

所以，你們也應該對自己的未來充滿信心。

去年我在嶺大認識一位文化研究系學生，她到美國交流了一年，修讀傳媒研究。今天她也畢業了。

她未來將會做什麼？或許，跟她四十位同學一樣，大概也會投身傳媒，或加入藝術行政工作的行列，或到海外進修，也可能像很多畢業生一樣還沒決定。

無論她有何決定，身為嶺南大學的一分子，在校園通過互動、討論和辯論，她已變得既成熟又有氣度。在嶺大和海外交流的日子裡也鍛鍊到一些技能和一份自信。這些優點將會對她以後的發展有莫大幫助。

你們有充分的理由對自己的未來感到樂觀。

因為專業學位有潛在的局限性。誠如加州博雅學府波莫納學院的校長Oxtoby教授最近在香港

指出，大學要為學生提供培訓，讓他們作好準備配合未來的社會，投身一些甚至仍未出現的職業崗位。尤其是科技發展一日千里，對職場工種帶來難以預測的變數。

這表示新一代的年輕人在知識技能方面需要不斷探索、擴闊和調度。正因如此，商界及公共事務界逐漸認識到博雅教育的價值。

的確，最近矽谷的公司大幅增聘博雅教育畢業生。科技公司雖已聘用出色專才負責編寫代碼及開發系統。但這些公司也意識到其他知識技能對產品設計及人際聯繫同樣重要，包括溝通技巧、創意思維，以及市場營銷、人力資源管理、客戶研究及人文學科等知識。

最近《福布斯》雜誌就美國大學排名進行調查，把博雅教育學府比喻為「詩人的孕育處所」。事實上不少企業家，包括科技公司的創辦人，以至在志願組織推動社會改革的人士，均受業於博雅學府。無疑生活上充斥著豐富的數據和資訊，但我們需要創意才可以充分發揮這些訊息的作用以服務他人。

因此，在嶺大就讀的每一位同學，無論是本科生、碩士生或博士生，我希望你們能憑藉博雅教育的薰陶及博雅學生擁有的特質，在瞬息萬變卻又相互關聯的世界裡，找到既精彩又重要的位置。

最後，我再次代表我們三位衷心感謝嶺大頒授的榮譽。這份榮譽同時帶來責任，我們現在已成為「嶺南」大家庭的一份子，未來我們會盡力支持嶺大。事實上，我希望並相信今天所有的畢業生將會與我們一起，以不同方式幫助嶺南大學這家與別不同的學府續創佳績。謝謝你們。