



PRESS RELEASE

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PolyU and Wharf partner in Project *WeCan* to serve the community

Community participation in Wharf's initiated Project *WeCan* to help underprivileged students is taking another giant leap today as the Office of Service Learning (OSL) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) pledges to provide its expert service and care to 10 Project *WeCan* schools when the new school year opens in September, 2014.

The announcement was made in a ceremony at the PolyU campus when the Professor Timothy W. Tong, President of PolyU and Mr Stephen T.H. Ng, the Deputy Chairman and Managing Director of The Wharf Group and the Chairman of Board of Governor, Project *WeCan* witnessed PolyU teaching staff and students pledged to provide their service to principals, teachers and students of local secondary schools to benefit from the collaboration.

PolyU staff and students joining the programmes also shared their experience during the ceremony so that students from the secondary schools had a taste of what is to come to enrich their school life in the five years ahead.

PolyU President Professor Tong expressed his deepest gratitude to The Wharf Group for their support. He was delighted to see that PolyU students were able to offer assistance to secondary school students in need, who will in turn be able to boost their knowledge and sharpen their skills.

Deeply heartened by PolyU's participation, Mr Ng said it represented a giant step forward to involve the rest of the community and the collaboration is unprecedented in scale. Mr Ng said Project *WeCan* targets to provide assistance to underprivileged students from about 150 schools ultimately in the next five years. He called upon the business sector to join hands to provide direct support to more students.

Project *WeCan*, launched three years ago, have been providing financial and volunteer support to 14 schools, benefitting some 12,000 underprivileged students, with programmes to enrich their exposure, nurture their confidence and inspire them to pursue higher studies and fulfilling careers.

The Project is moving into a new phase this September, with 28,000 more students from another 30 schools joining the programme, bringing the total number of schools to 44 and benefitting students to 40,000. "The collaboration with PolyU further witnesses Project *WeCan* going into the community. 11 corporates have signed up to provide financial and volunteer support to additional schools in the coming September and more tertiary institutions, such as PolyU, have joined to provide professional community services to schools," Mr Ng added.

Mr Ng also disclosed that the expatriate community has also started to get involved with the French Consulate, taking up a secondary school to provide students with language and cultural programmes. "This is only a new beginning, we shall continue to engage with corporates, the

expatriate community and other bodies to solicit their support to this worthwhile project,” Ng added.

Under the collaboration, PolyU’s Service Learning team has already engaged with the 10 schools, to identify programmes, academic or other extra-curricular programmes that best suit the needs of individual schools. The team would then identify students across various disciplines within the University to work with the schools depending on their needs.

About Project *WeCan*

Launched in 2011, Project *WeCan* is a business-in-community initiative to empower students who are disadvantaged in learning with opportunities and programmes that will engage them, nurture their confidence and inspire them to pursue higher studies and fulfilling careers. It currently offers a wide spectrum of support ranging from improvement in hardware and software in schools to enhance better teaching and learning, joint-school programmes to facilitate mutual learning and exchange among students, extra-curricular activities like company visits and job tasting, career planning, mentorship and teachers development programmes in the participating secondary schools. The project is an open platform where we call upon business sponsors, professionals and retirees to work closely with schools through financial and/or volunteer commitment in a multi-year partnership. The project aims to support over 150,000 students in 150 schools with a funding commitment of \$100 million on an annual basis.

About PolyU’s Service Learning

PolyU endeavours to develop our graduates into “responsible global citizens”. In alignment with this goal, from 2012-13 onwards, students in the four-year undergraduate (4YUG) curriculum are required to successfully complete a three-credit subject designated before graduation. PolyU is the first university in Hong Kong to make Service-Learning mandatory for all undergraduate degree students. Through Service-Learning, PolyU students apply their professional knowledge in a wide range of community services to help people-in-need, and also enhance students’ social responsibility and problem solving skills.
