HKUST Launches “Sustainable Smart Campus as a Living Lab”

Inspiring a Culture for Sustainability Innovation

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The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) today launched the “Sustainable Smart Campus as a Living Lab” (SSC) – an initiative that transforms the campus into a testing ground for learning, experimenting, and advancing smart and innovative ideas to address real-life challenges.

With a pledge of HK$50 million over the next three years, the University aims to identify sustainable, smart and cross-disciplinary home-grown HKUST projects and implement them on campus. Projects are collaboratively developed by faculty, staff, students and alumni. By uniting HKUST’s quality research and innovative learning approaches, it is hoped that SSC projects will become a source of inspiration to the Hong Kong community, contributing to its development in becoming a world-class sustainable and smart city.

HKUST President Prof. Wei SHYY said, “Universities are microcosms of society. HKUST has been fully engaged in encompassing business management, policy as well as science and technologies to make our campus smarter and more sustainable, and with this endeavor to help advise society’s transition to a future that is greener, more livable, and human centric. SSC is meant to be a springboard for testing new ideas and approaches. Projects need not include cutting edge technologies, nor do they need to succeed on the first try. But by turning our campus into a ‘living lab’, we hope to instill a culture of learning from failure and self-initiated changes, which will eventually spread to a larger community beyond our campus.”

Nine projects – ranging from enhancing library user experience through facial recognition technology, to promoting positive and healthy behaviors through visual arts installations, to utilizing a real-time big data platform of people flows to facilitate effective planning – were selected as the inaugural round of projects. Project champions staged exhibition booths in the Chia-Wei Woo Academic Concourse during the past week to share their ideas and gain feedback from the community. Implementation of the projects are spearheaded through HKUST’s GREAT Smart Cities Center (GSCC), in collaboration with the HKUST Sustainability Unit. The second round of submission of SSC project proposals is now open till March 22.

Director of GSCC Prof. LO Hong-Kam said, “Through actual implementation of concepts and technologies on campus, SSC is an important platform to advance the underpinning science and technology, and sustainability principles for smart city development. Since its conception, many industry partners and government agencies have explored collaborative opportunities with us. We firmly believe that SSC will contribute to transforming otherwise abstract smart city concepts to sustainable and smart realities.”

The SSC campaign follows years of sustainability achievements at HKUST. In June 2016, the University adopted its first sustainability master plan – HKUST 2020 Sustainability Challenge, which set an aggressive set of performance targets for reducing energy consumption, greenhouse gas emission and wastage. Through a combination of actions, policies, and changes in behavior, HKUST has reduced over 700 tons of waste going to the landfill – a reduction of nearly one-third from the 2014 baseline, and has saved enough energy that two new buildings – Cheng Yu Tung Building and Li Dak Sum Yip Yio Chin Kenneth Li Conference Lodge – were added to the campus with no net increase in energy consumption.

For more details of the campaign and the selected projects, please visit: https://ssc.ust.hk/

Photos of some of the nine selected SSC projects:

Facial Recognition for Library Services

Pulse of HKUST
About The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) (www.ust.hk) is a world-class research university that focuses on science, technology and business as well as humanities and social science. HKUST offers an international campus, and a holistic and interdisciplinary pedagogy to nurture well-rounded graduates with global vision, a strong entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking. HKUST attained the highest proportion of internationally excellent research work in the Research Assessment Exercise 2014 of Hong Kong's University Grants Committee, and is ranked as the world's best young university in Times Higher Education's Young University Rankings 2018. Its graduates were ranked 16th worldwide and top in Greater China in Global University Employability Survey 2018.

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