



**Repurposing University  
Education:  
*The Role of Liberal Arts  
Education in Asia***

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# Outline of the Presentation

- The challenging times for developing liberal arts education
- The growing impact of geo-politics on higher education
- Rethinking the role of liberal arts education against the challenging times
- The Lingnan University experience: Institutional responses
- Reflections on the role of arts and humanities in the STEM-dominated era

# Challenging Times for Higher Education

- Over-emphasis on economic purposes and stressing vocational training for graduates
- STEM dominating discourse in higher education
- Digitalization and higher education
- Changing political economy and higher education
- Under valuing arts and humanities
- Questioning the value of higher education in job search / matching the labour market needs
- Rethinking the value of higher education / university education

# Higher Education: Emphasis on Economic Purposes and Vocational Training

- *The economic purposes of higher education dominate policy and public discourse in HE systems around the world with graduate labour market outcomes, graduate salaries, and the skills needs of employers increasingly used as markers of educational quality and mechanisms of institutional regulation.*
- Governments around different parts of the globe have increasingly paid more attention to STEM subjects, believing graduates with STEM knowledge / skills would serve the labour market needs.
- Arts and Humanities subjects tend to be associated with relatively modest labour market returns compared to STEM and medical sciences subjects and are often criticised for failing to provide employers with the skills required by a rapidly digitising economy.
- At the same time, researchers in Arts and Humanities subjects often struggle to show clear impact from their work in a regulatory and funding context that links research value with impact, industrial linkages, and innovation.
- It is against such a broader context that the Arts and Humanities face criticism, regulatory pressures, and reduced funding. The Arts and Humanities are consequently often described as being in a state of ‘crisis’ and sympathetic commentators, advocates, and researchers regularly attempt to justify the importance of these subjects in both economic and intrinsic terms (Robson, 2022; Marginson, 2022).

# New Geopolitics and its impact on Higher Education

- *Development of higher education is increasingly influenced by the new geopolitics and the broader challenging political economy environment*
- Insights from International Relations Theory (Zhang, 2022)
- Liberal International Relations Theory: Interdependence and the needs for collaboration, believing in inter-societal interactions like the integration of global higher education will bring benefits to all
- Realist International Relations Theory: rejects interdependence perspective, cares mostly about national security not economic welfare. The realist IR Theory cares about who gains more than cooperation. Due to their relative gains concerns, states are motivated to sever cooperation with others, even moving towards autarky (Porter, 2019; Kendall-Taylor and Shullman, 2021; Mok, 2022).

# Will New Geopolitics reverse the Globalization of Higher Education

- The Decoupling Trend: US-China relations, pursuing “decoupling” trend not only in the economy but also in higher education
- The driver is US concerns of relative gains (realist IR Theory)
- Fear of working with China would enhance China’s relative gains with potential risk of US relative decline
- US limits the bilateral relationship in the higher education domain
- State’s interests shape inter-societal relations (not favouring inter-societal interactions) (Acharya, 2020; Mok, 2023; Zhang, 2022)
- **So What ?** for Global / International Higher Education

# New Geopolitics and International Higher Education ?

- *Potential risk of the reversal of the globalization / internationalization of higher education*
- Impact on student mobility and mobility of talents
- Impact of knowledge exchange, talent circulation and brain circulation
- Negative impacts on scientific research and barrier for human betterment (medical research as an example in combating global health crisis)
- Regionalization vs globalization: Multi-polar world
- Higher Education: Promotion of Deep Collaborations, Enhanced Communications for Peace (Jung and Mok, 2023 forthcoming)

# Beyond Economic Purposes: Nurturing Talents for Uncertain Futures

- Higher Education has an important role to prepare students / graduates for future labour market needs
- But we should not ignore the equal importance for Higher Education / University Education in:
- Preparing Caring Leaders with Global Vision, Acting responsibly and Managing Changes with humanitarian orientation
- Preparing students for uncertain futures with broad knowledge base and life-long transferable skills
- Preparing responsible citizens caring for human betterment
- Enhancing students' capabilities and capacity for facing / managing changes
- Supporting students / graduates as ambassadors for peace and conflict mediator
- Revitalizing the role of arts and humanities



# Top 10 Key Attributes for Hiring Fresh Graduates

- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to work in a team
- Communication skills (written)
- Leadership
- Strong work ethic
- Analytical /Quantitative skills
- Communication skills (verbal)
- Initiative
- Detail-oriented
- Flexibility / adaptability

Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers Study (USA)

# Lingnan University:

Liberal Arts Education

*Nurturing Caring Leaders with Global  
Vision*

*in supporting UN SDG*

# Lingnan's Commitment to United Nations' SDGs



- As a caring liberal arts university and global leader in Quality Education and Impactful Research, Lingnan University is dedicated to reaching and promoting the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) set by the United Nations for the betterment of humankind
- Lingnan's commitment to achieving the SDGs is demonstrated in its research, programmes, teaching and learning, knowledge transfer activities, social engagement projects, entrepreneurship initiatives, and corporate governance as well as administration

# Lingnan's Liberal Arts Education

- Nurturing caring professionals with global vision
- Broad-based curriculum with stress on interdisciplinary learning
- Whole-person development
- International learning experience and regional engagement
- Experiential learning
- Service learning and inclusive entrepreneurship
- Education: Care for Learning
- Research: Impact with Care

- 跨學科課程 (interdisciplinary)
- 體驗式學習 (Experiential)  
綜合學習課程、服務研習課程、  
本地/海外實習等





# Support for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Students

- **LU's Office of Student Affairs** is responsible to provide assistance for students with special educational needs
- **Financial assistance** through different funds or projects, e.g. Jockey Club IT Scheme for People with Visual Impairment etc
- Provide **special services for students with disabilities** such as Learning disabilities, Physical/mobility and medical disabilities, Vision and hearing impairments, special hostel arrangements etc
- SEN students can apply for **scholarships** such as Sir Edward Youde Memorial Overseas Fellowship / Scholarship for Disabled Students 2022/23, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Scholarship Scheme – Undergraduate Scholarship for Students with Special Education Needs etc
- **Career advising services** will also provide for SEN students to make career choices commensurate with their talents, interests and aptitude in preparation for employment after graduation. LU also works in **partnerships with academic departments, employers and alumni to provide career education programmes and job preparation training** to SEN students

# Lingnan's Equal Opportunities Committee

- Started in 2014, the **Lingnan University Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC)** has been tasked to ensure and uphold equal opportunities at the University. It has also been organizing activities and awareness campaigns to forge the awareness of equal opportunities
- LU's Equal Opportunities Committee provides **one-stop shop online resources** for SEN students
  - **A website is developed** that assists SEN students in their university life, e.g. information about access facilities throughout the campus, equipment available in the library, classrooms, 24-hour computer laboratory and student hostels. The website also informs SEN students about training, workshops and counselling services that help improve the quality of university life
  - **Assistive software for SEN students**, e.g. Voice4U (for ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorders), Mindnode Plus (for ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) etc
  - **Support SEN students with equipment**, e.g. hearing aids, Braille Display, Computers reserved for SEN Students, Height Adjustable Tables etc
  - **Barrier free access**, e.g. chair lifting platforms, wheelchair spaces, Braille and Tactile Signs etc



# Financial Support and Scholarships for Postgraduate Students

- In order to support academic learning and development of postgraduate students, Lingnan University offers financial support and scholarships
- A number of financial sponsorships and scholarships are offered to **research postgraduate students** to support their research studies and to provide opportunities for them to enrich their international learning experiences
- LU offers different forms of scholarships and financial aids, e.g. entrance scholarships, exchange sponsorships, monthly studentship, etc. to **taught postgraduate students**. Many of these are non-local students from low and middle-income countries like Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Nigeria, Zambia

# Graduate Support Fund



- In order to support our graduates facing the adverse economic impact of the pandemic, the University established the **Graduate Support Fund** in 2020 to implement graduate support programmes
- The fund is used to support graduates in the following major aspects:
  - Graduate internship and short-term employment
  - Start-up business / Entrepreneurship
  - Graduates training, skill enhancement and mentorship support
  - Internal job opportunities
  - Postgraduate studies (tuition waiver / scholarships)
  - Psychological counselling support

# Lingnan's Lifelong Learning



- Established in 2001, [Lingnan Institute of Further Education \(LIFE\)](#) aims at providing high quality programmes that meet the needs of learners, industries and Hong Kong society at large, and offering a well-established learning pathway for learners at different levels
- LIFE provides an array of full-time and part-time programmes for lifelong learning and career advancement, covering Associate Degree, Higher Diploma, Diploma, Diploma Yi Jin, Lifelong Learning programmes, Postgraduate Diploma programmes and Corporate Training

# Lingnan's Elderly Academy



- Lingnan University established 'Elderly Academy in Lingnan' in 2009 to provide a one-stop education platform for the elderly
- Lingnan Institute of Further Education (LIFE) offers LingnanU Elder Academy Programme. This project aims at fostering active participation of the elderly in school activities and lessons, and the intergenerational harmony through learn-and-teach dual identity in Elder Academy activities as well as promoting life-long learning and successful ageing by "Through Train" Learning Model

# LU Jockey Club Gerontechnology and Smart Ageing Project



LU Jockey Club Gerontechnology  
and Smart Ageing Project  
嶺大賽馬會樂齡科技  
與智能安老計劃



- The “HKSAR Chief Executive’s Community Project List”, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust funded a three-year project (2019-2022) entitled “LU Jockey Club Gerontechnology and Smart Ageing Project”
- An array of training courses, incubation courses and seminars are organised for elderly, carers and students
- A 2,000 sq ft “[LU Jockey Club Gerontech-X Lab](#)” at the campus to display gerontech products catered to healthcare, dining, living, and transport

# Education: Prepare for the young generation



Funded by Quality Education Fund  
From August 2021 to July 2023

- Promoting Gerontech education boosts the elderly care sector.
- Working with the **8 secondary schools** in Hong Kong.
- Life-wide experiential learning experience to secondary school students and promote Gerontechnology and smart ageing.
- **Preparing young generation to be the carers.**



# LU promotes the Gerontechnology



Since  
2019



LU Jockey Club Gerontechnology  
and Smart Ageing Project  
嶺大賽馬會樂齡科技  
與智能安老計劃



樂齡科技360°專才培育計劃



## 2019-2022:

- With the nomination for the “HKSAR Chief Executive’s Community Project List”, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust donated a three-year project to Lingnan University.
- Promote Gerontechnology and smart ageing on “**Healthcare, Dining, Living and Transport**”.

## 2021:

- Gerontechnology 360° Education, funded by Quality Education Fund From August 2021 to July 2023
- Promoting Gerontech education boosts the elderly care sector.

## 2022:

- Building a caring and inclusive society amid Covid-19

中醫藥膳食療

線上運動

資訊分享



## Promoting Age-friendly Community



Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies (APIAS) is the flagship centre in LU providing elderly care training and putting ceaseless efforts in research, public engagement and professional training

 **Lingnan 嶺南大學**  
University 香港 Hong Kong

 **SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
研究生院

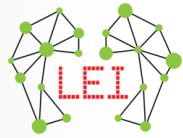
 **LINGNAN UNIVERSITY Chinese Medicine**  
嶺南大學 中醫診所 Clinic

 **中醫藥發展基金**  
Chinese Medicine Development Fund

**Chinese medicine promotion programme to help prevent COVID-19 in the elderly**

Helping the elderly to prevent COVID-19 with Chinese Medicine – the project is sponsored by Chinese Medicine Development Fund and carried out by Lingnan's Chinese Medicine Clinic





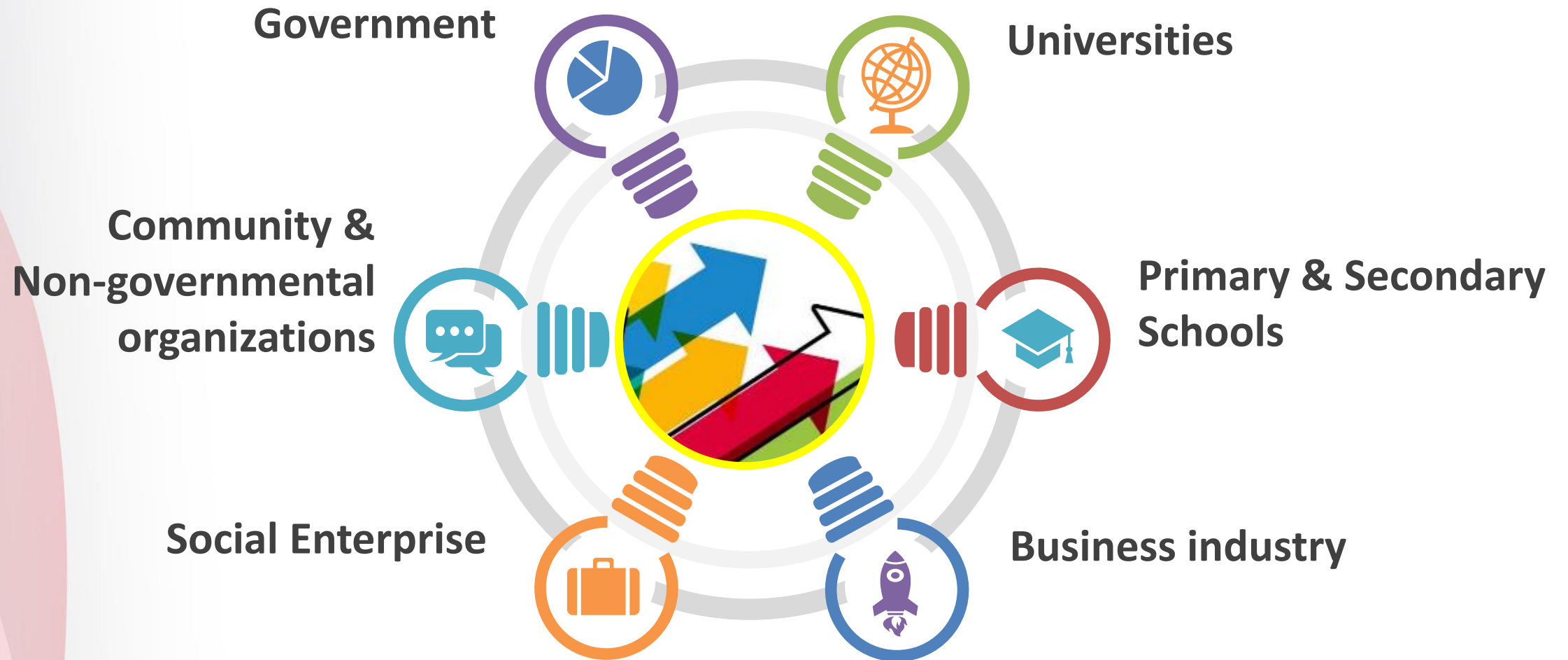
LU wins three awards at  
Geneva International  
Exhibition of Inventions



Lingnan Entrepreneurship Initiative (LEI) has received two Gold awards at the **MUSE Design Award** in the category Conceptual Design for their “CREW Wheelchair Control System” and “12° Mask” respectively.



# Building a sustainable ecosystem for the ageing society



## Reaching out projects to developing countries



- **LU's Office of Service-Learning (OSL)** and the **Lingnan Entrepreneurship Initiative (LEI)** organises Joint Humanitarian Entrepreneurship Summer Academy in 2019 and 2021
- The objective of the programme is to raise awareness about the SDGs by looking at developing regions in the Belt and Road initiative, enabling students to conduct field research, collaborate with local NGOs, and propose sustainable solutions to challenges concerning the SDGs. Different student cohorts, aided by mentors who are experts in their field, then travelled to locations in Uganda, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Nepal etc

**LU's Internationalisation and  
impactful research reach  
world top standards**



- Promoting liberal arts education through regional networks and inter-university collaborations
- AALAU: building from 15 members in 2017 to 28 members in 2023
- Members from major universities in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, India and Thailand
- Annual President Forum and seminar series, course sharing and teaching in teams across campuses
- Research collaboration (see Jung et al. 2016; Mok, 2023a)

# Partners with International Collaborators in Launching the Centre for Global Higher Education

與國際夥伴院校合作成立「全球高等教育中心」



**CENTRE  
FOR  
GLOBAL  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION**



# Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE)

Largest research centre in the world specially focused on higher education and its future development



Lingnan University becomes a partner of this Center led by



Partners:



**Lingnan University, University of Bath and Durham University** developed a strong collaborative partnership  
Lingnan is one of the core partners in the new  
**Centre for Research in Education in China and East Asia**







Co-host

# International Postgraduate Summer School



One Week @ Lingnan University, Hong Kong  
Two Weeks @ University of Oxford, United Kingdom

## HONG KONG SESSION

Co-organisers (in alphabetical order)



**Lingnan university** has  
successfully co-hosted the  
**International  
Postgraduate Summer  
School with Oxford  
University** since 2017.

The summer school  
provides a platform for  
scholars and research  
postgraduate students to  
present major research  
findings, share research  
practices, and reflect  
upon essential  
methodological issues.



# Support for Excellence in Teaching & Research

- Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer (ORKT)
- Library and CIO Office
- Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC)
- Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC)

# Conclusion

- Repurposing Higher Education / University Education in a STEM-dominated era
- Going beyond economic purposes
- Questing for Excellence with a Soul
- Bringing humanities back in against the short-term return-driven society
- Quality Education (UN SDG 4): Inclusive Education and Social and Cultural value in Education
- Collaboration for promoting a Caring Society

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# Thank You