

Speech by SITI at Lingnan University School of Data Science Establishment Ceremony (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, at the Lingnan University School of Data Science Establishment Ceremony today (May 2):

Mr Andrew Yao (Chairman of the Council of the Lingnan University), Mr Tim Lui (Chairman of the University Grants Committee), Professor Joe Qin (President of the Lingnan University and Wai Kee Kau Chair Professor of Data Science), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is my great pleasure to join you all today at the Establishment Ceremony of the School of Data Science in Lingnan University.

For long, Lingnan has taken pride in its long history as well as its legacy and mission of providing whole-person education that blends Eastern and Western philosophies. Liberal arts education, or in Chinese, 通才教育, forms the cornerstone of the Lingnan community.

Today marks the beginning of a new chapter of Lingnan. With the objective to seamlessly integrate arts, humanities and sciences, the new School of Data Science is the best illustration of what higher education looks like today and tomorrow.

In the digital era where data-related knowledge has become indispensable and the demand for talents equipped with such knowledge rises at exponential rate, I am pleased to learn that Lingnan University has offered various programmes on Data Science and AI (artificial intelligence), and will be introducing more in the coming years. These programmes would be the strong propellers to the Government's efforts in enlarging the local talent pool in the innovation and technology (I&T) sector to create new impetus for economic growth.

Having been in the field of higher education for nearly 30 years in Hong Kong, I am well aware of the pressure university administrators face in admitting new programmes and the concerns students may have about their career prospects after graduation. As President Xi Jinping has indicated, new quality productive forces would be the driving force for our future, and I&T is the transformative agent in the process. Please rest assured that I&T is Hong Kong's future and we are on the right track.

The Government is making significant strides to foster the development of Hong Kong's I&T and data-based digital economy. Apart from our steadfast commitment to opening up more data and promoting cross-boundary data flow in the Greater Bay Area, Cyberport is setting up the AI Supercomputing Centre for commissioning in phases from this year onwards to accelerate high-powered

computing projects and facilitate scientific breakthrough. The \$3 billion AI funding scheme as announced in the Budget this year will also help eligible users, including universities, to make the best use of the AI supercomputing infrastructure.

To unleash the potentials of data and optimise these I&T resources, we need more talents in the field of data science to ignite the power of data and AI, transform research outcomes into applications and business opportunities, and chart new horizon of our digital society. Members of the School of Data Science would surely be a good fit for these.

Before I close, please allow me to express my appreciation to Mr Yao, Professor Qin and all Lingnan members for contributing to today's success and steering Lingnan University into a new era. I am confident that Lingnan University will continue to stand tall as a beacon of excellence in liberal arts education. And, with the establishment of the School of Data Science, there is no doubt that Lingnan University will lead the next wave of digital revolution in Hong Kong's higher education sector.

As Lingnan University's 60th anniversary approaches, I wish Lingnan many fruitful returns. And, again, congratulations on today's Establishment Ceremony of the School of Data Science. Thank you.

