

## **Message from Graduate Representative (Class of 2019)**

**YEUNG Tsz Hei**

*Bachelor of Social Sciences in Asian and International Studies*



Well, we did it. We have reached one of the major milestones in our lives: University graduation. We have all worked hard to get to this day and we should be proud of ourselves.

To me, it is exciting yet challenging to graduate. As a student in Hong Kong, we have been told that it is important to get a degree in order to get a decent job. After sixteen years of formal education, it is the very first time that we now have to define our own goals: we have to become fully independent, responsible for our own lives. It is exciting to start this adventure but at the same time challenging because it is full of uncertainty.

I still remember my first day at the City University of Hong Kong (CityU). It was exciting to enter a brand new learning environment. There are fewer rules here than in high school. We had to plan our own timetable, and sometimes we even skipped classes! Time flies, and here we are now in this hall to recap our university life.

In the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS), we don't just study the world in readings or books, we explore the contemporary world in the way that we never imagined before. I am impressed by the variety of classes in AIS. There's no doubt that being an AIS major gave us a vocabulary to analyse complex phenomena. But maybe one of the best things we take away from this degree is the reverse: we learned how to see things that appeared complicated in a more straight forward way. From Immanuel Kant's "Perpetual Peace" to Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilisations", we learned theories of politics and international relations. We also learned about history and culture, society and economics in places near and far. Everything we have learned in the past years have helped us to become more familiar with the world at large and enabled us to speak intelligently about it and to view it from different perspectives. Given how complicated and problematic our world has become, I am glad that AIS has helped us to learn how to analyse and understand it better.

At AIS, I have made friends from all over the world, from Thailand to France to Mexico. AIS has international students from many different countries. AIS brings us together, sharing each other's culture and life story. From the video project that we worked overnight to the presentation in a conference, or our celebration party at the end of semester, we all worked hard and played hard together. All these experiences are my most cherished memories in AIS.

Thank you AIS for providing me the experience of studying abroad - I spent a semester abroad in Jerusalem, and it was a once-in-a-life-time opportunity for me to live in the Middle East. Without the support from AIS and CityU, I wouldn't have been able to study Arabic and learn about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in that holy city.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people that helped us get so far. Thank you to all the professors in the Department for creating such a great environment for us to learn in which we were encouraged to express our own thoughts and opinions. Thank you to all of you for being not only teachers but also tutors who guided us through the university life.

Thank you Professor Daniel Lynch for making complex international relations theories understandable - your detailed presentations were much appreciated. Thank you Dr Sean Starrs, for showing us how the world really is, as you taught us many things outside of the readings. I always look forward to attending your class because we can always express our opinions freely and exchange ideas with classmates. Thank you Dr Justin Robertson for your efforts in your interesting and insightful International Political Economy lectures. And your tutorials were not boring because of all the different and fun activities you planned. Thank you Dr Thomas Patton for all the jokes that made learning in your history class easier and more enjoyable.

We all have great plans and ambitions in the future. For some of you, you will continue your education. Some of you may work for multinational cooperation. Some of you may end up in working for the government or an international organisation. No matter where you go and what you do, I would like to share my favourite quote, especially during a time of uncertainty: "When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind" (from the movie *Wonder*). Being kind probably won't make you a millionaire or a Noble Prize Winner, but I believe it helps all of us to become better persons. There are many ways of being right, but if you choose the one that involves kindness, you never go wrong. From the recent events in Hong Kong and lessons from history, I have learned that being kind is not easy, but at least it will keep up from doing or abetting evil.

Graduation is more than just accepting a piece of paper. It marks the end of our university life and a celebration to our hard work in the years at CityU. "Every end has a new beginning." The graduation does not mark the end of our education, but it is just a new start of our enduring life-long learning journey. I hope you will always find yourself as happy and full of big and crazy dreams!

Once again - Congratulations to AIS Class of 2019!

