Lecture by Professor Stephanie Marshall: Global Challenges for Universities to Deliver Both Quality Teaching and Research Excellence

Joelle Cheng
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Invited by the School of Law, City University of Hong Kong, Professor Stephanie Marshall gave a thought-provoking lecture “Global Challenges for Universities to Deliver Both Quality Teaching and Research Excellence” on 12 November 2015 at Connie Fan Multi-media Conference Room. Provost Professor Arthur Ellis and Associate Provosts Professor Feng Gang Gary and Professor Li Che-lan Linda attended the Lecture, as well as other attendants including Professor Poon Wai Yin Isabella (Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Vice-President) from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Dr Christine Armatas (Senior Educational Development Officer) and Mr Albert Chow (Head (Academic Quality Assurance)) from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Professor Chan Ka Yuk Cecilia (Associate Professor, Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning) from the University of Hong Kong, Professor Pong Ting-Chuen (Senior Advisor to the EVPP (Teaching Innovation & E-learning)) from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Professor
Zhang Hongqi from the Hong Kong Baptist University, and Ms. Sophia Chan-Combrink (Deputy Director of Education, East Asia) from the British Council.

Followed by a light lunch reception, the lecture was kicked off by a warm welcome from Professor Geraint Howells, Dean of the School of Law. Professor Howells also introduced Professor Stephanie Marshall, the speaker, who is the Chief Executive Officer and a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and Professor of Higher Education at the University of Manchester.

The key point of the lecture was the evaluation and enhancement of teaching excellence. Quoted from the speech of the Minister for Universities and Science in the United Kingdom Mr Jo Johnson, Professor Marshall stressed the importance of building a culture where “teaching has equal status with research”. The rapid changing landscape of teaching and learning has challenged the old beliefs – according to Professor Marshall, teaching is no longer merely an attachment to research and private education providers flow into the market – which has raised new questions. Confirming the goal of bringing about learner success, she shed light on the key areas relating to the leadership of learning and teaching. What are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the teaching excellence? How to provide incentives to teachers? How to “professionalise” teaching staff? How to reform the assessment and feedback system of teaching? Along the discussion, Professor Marshall admitted that the process of reforming and improving could be time consuming, however, the HEA is determined to respond to the diverse needs of learners of the new age. While Professor Marshall emphasized on what happened in the UK, the picture she drew certainly mirrors the Hong Kong landscape and therefore inspires the educators in Hong Kong as well.

After the lecture, the attendants actively exchanged their opinions with Professor Marshall. The British Council representative commented that enhancing the UK-HK student exchange programme could improve the international outlook of Hong Kong as well as increase the exchange students' intercultural awareness. Provost Professor Ellis remarked that the frontier is going forward in higher education as innovation is increasingly democratized nowadays. Other professors also discussed issues ranging from Mass Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to the retention matrices as to the evaluation of teaching quality.