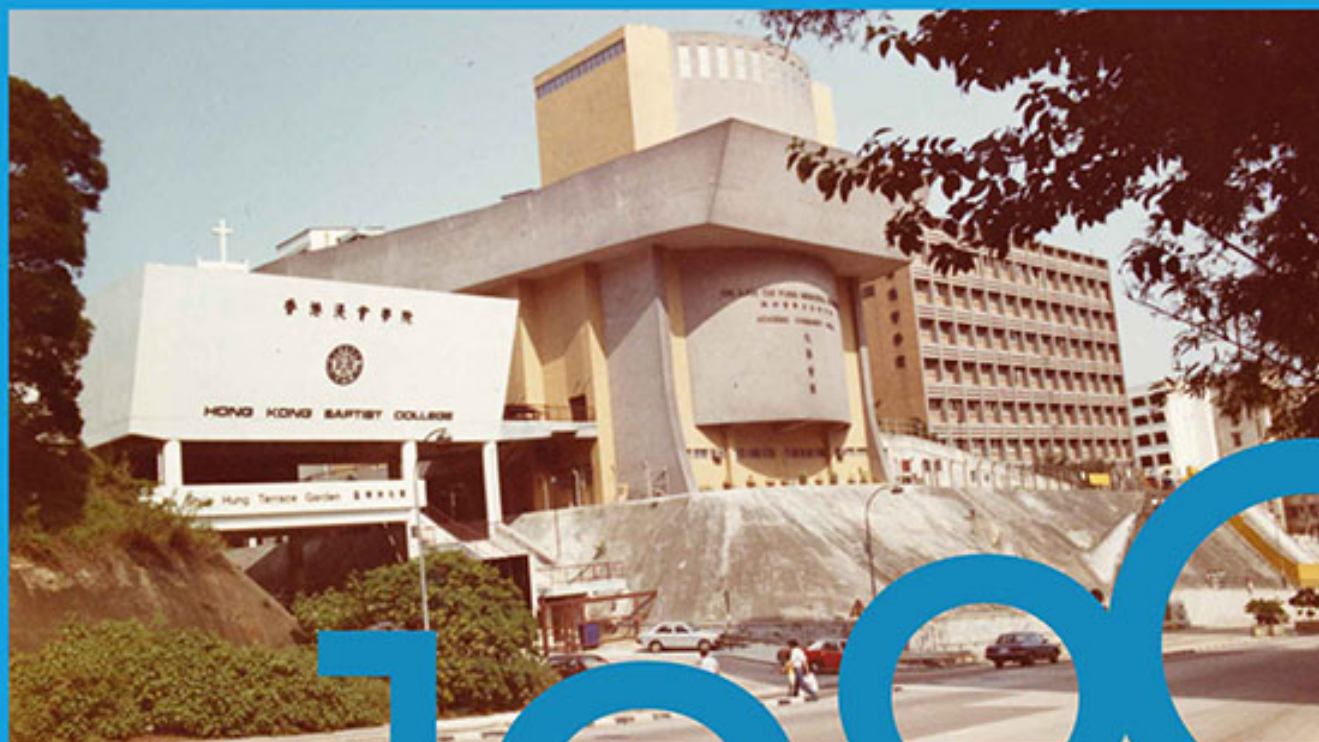


Writing a new chapter: the 1980s

The 1980s were years of vigorous growth for Hong Kong Baptist College. During the decade, it rose from being an impecunious private college to becoming a public higher education institution that offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, thereby laying a firm basis for the elevation of the College to university status.



While concentrating on making preparations for the 2-2-1 system, Hong Kong Baptist College (HKBC) received a welcome boost out of the blue – in January 1981, Britain's Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) arrived at the College on the Government's invitation to assess and validate its diploma programmes. The accreditation exercise was a tough experience for the College – there were no concessions or compromises for a newcomer to this process. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the entire college community, the results were highly fruitful: the CNAA's report was encouragingly positive, it confirmed that the College had proven not only its two-year Senior Diploma was equivalent to a UK professional diploma, but the fifth-year programme was also as rigorous as the final year of a bachelor's degree.

During June of that year, the Government embraced the Executive Council's proposal for increasing the



The delegation from the UK Council for National Academic Awards validates HKBC's diploma programmes in 1981

financial subsidy for the College and providing support for fifth-year students. This move further built the case for exploring opportunities to elevate the College's academic status.

In November 1981, the CNAA paid a second visit to the College to carry out the second phase of its assessment exercise.



President Tse briefs staff and students about the campus development plan of the early 1980s



Newspapers widely report the news of HKBC gaining government approval to become a publicly funded higher education institution



The College celebrates its 30th anniversary and launches its first batch of bachelor's degree programmes in 1986

In February 1982, the Government officially announced its intention to bring the College under the ambit of the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC) in 1983-84. This was a major breakthrough in the College's drive to become an official tertiary education institution fully funded by the Government.

In March, the CNAAC issued its report on the second visit, and the comments were on the whole favourable. It was especially encouraging that many of the College's courses were assessed as being at near degree level. As a result, the College planned to launch a continuous three-year Honours Diploma Programme in 1982-83, replacing the 2+1 structure in post-secondary studies and serving as a basis for further developing degree programmes.

In 1983, the Legislative Council approved HKBC as an independent higher education institution under the aegis of the UPGC that was qualified to offer three-year bachelor's degree courses. The following two visits from the UPGC resulted in more good news: in 1984, two degree programmes of the College were approved and a year later, it was decided that these programmes would commence in the 1986-87 academic year.

Despite these exciting and encouraging developments, the College received unpleasant news from the UPGC concerning the Civil Engineering programme. The UPGC's view was that while the College should develop along the lines of an arts and sciences institution, including a vocational emphasis in its teaching, it should not offer technical subjects. Also the very limited space HKBC had at that time was certainly not adequate to develop civil engineering and other forms of engineering courses. Hence it was decided not to provide funding for the College's Civil Engineering programme. After lengthy discussions with the UPGC, and bearing in mind that it was almost impossible to run the programme with private funding alone, the College finally accepted the Committee's disappointing decision and resolved to close the Department of Civil Engineering after the final batch of students graduated in 1985.

On 1 January 1984, a further positive step was taken when the *Hong Kong Baptist College Ordinance* came into effect and the College became a public higher education institution, fully funded by the Government and an autonomous institution governed by its own ordinance.



President Tse, students and staff protest on campus against the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee's decision to terminate the College's civil engineering programme in 1982

Academic development

In 1982-83, the Academic Board of the College took concerted action to lay down the new structural framework for the three-year programmes to be offered in 1983-84. Under the new framework, each programme was to comprise three key components: major studies (65% of total units), liberal education (20%) and non-major complementary studies (15%).

In developing the new programmes, a combined studies approach involving more than one major discipline plus an inter-disciplinary approach were adopted. The new system first saw reality in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering with its Combined Sciences degree proposal, which was built on the programmes of the Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics departments.



In 1986-87, the first batch of bachelor's degree programmes, in Combined Sciences and in Social Work, was offered. In 1987-88, the College launched the second batch of degree programmes – in Business Administration, and Communication. The Arts and Social Sciences degree, which included disciplines in Chinese Language, English Language, Geography, History, and Religious Studies, was offered in 1988-89.

The academic year 1988-89 was another historic one for Hong Kong Baptist College: it launched its first ever Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programme. The initial intake of six students was in the Faculty of Science. This may have seemed a small step forward but, symbolically at least, it was a giant leap by the College, propelling it into the realm of postgraduate education.

In 1989-90, the College launched another batch of bachelor's degree programmes, this time in Music, Computer Science and China Studies. The China Studies Programme was the first of its kind in Hong Kong. This innovative programme was planned as early as 1984 when two faculties put their heads together to develop it, covering studies in the economics, history, geography and sociology of contemporary China.





The first batch of students to graduate with a bachelor's degree at the Commencement ceremony in 1989



Jovial cheerleading team members demonstrate their team spirit at the sports day

The College witnessed the graduation of its first batch of degree holders during the 30th Commencement in the autumn of 1989, and from that point on all incoming students were enrolled in bachelor's degree programmes.

From 1989-90, the College offered Conversion Programmes for its diploma and honours diploma graduates, who could obtain bachelor's degrees by taking part-time programmes.

During the decade, student enrolment in post-secondary studies programmes grew steadily. In 1980-81, there were 3,353 students enrolled at the College, comprising 1,278 in the Basic Studies Programme and 2,075 in the Diploma Programme or the Programme of Senior Studies. In 1989-90, there were 2,536 students enrolled in master's and bachelor's degree programmes, while 413 took Honours Diploma Programmes.

New departments established during the 1980s included Religion and Philosophy (1984), Computer Science, Finance and Decision Sciences, Marketing (1988), and Education Studies (1989).

Progress in internationalisation

The College's continuing efforts to cater more fully for the needs of its teachers and students by broadening the international outreach of the campus bore fruit during the decade. Established in December 1981, the Faculty and Staff Development Fund offered financial assistance to the College's endeavours that are focused overseas, particularly in supporting staff who travel abroad for further training, attending international conferences and conducting research. The College's goal of strengthening its teaching and academic stature led to a collaborative project established with Britain's University of Hull in 1987. Under this programme, the University of Hull Bursary offered three-year programmes for teachers at the

College to further their education. In the same year, the K C Wong Education Foundation presented its International Conference Grant, subsidising the College's academic staff wishing to attend conferences in Europe and North America.

In May 1989, the College reached an agreement with Tsinghua University in Beijing to establish the Wei Lun Academic Exchange Centre on the Tsinghua campus. This enabled students of the China Studies Programme to spend summer sojourns gaining first-hand experience of the contemporary cultural, social, political and economic situation in Mainland China.



The College attracts a greater number of international faculty members in the 1980s



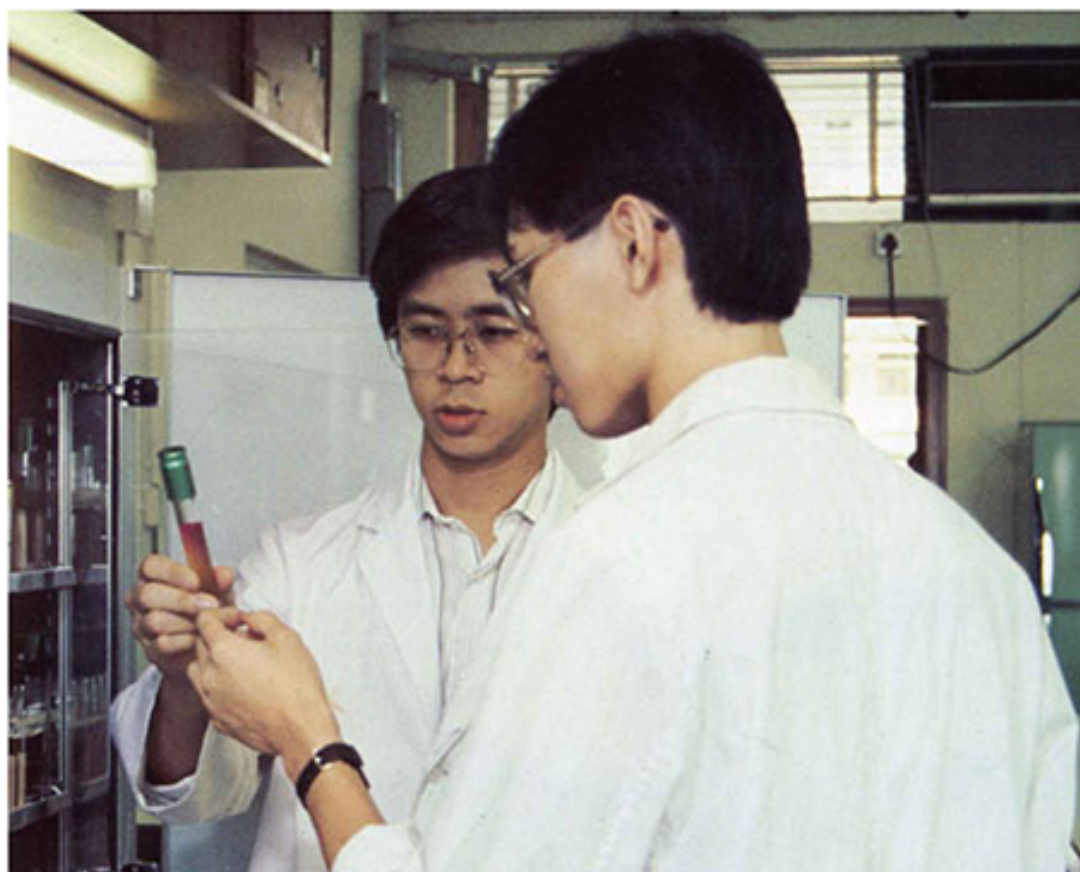
The Wei Lun Academic Exchange Centre in Tsinghua University

Research forges ahead

Since 1983 Hong Kong Baptist College has made coordinated efforts to take its research endeavours to a higher level, based on proposals made by Britain's CNA and in keeping with the College's own strenuous efforts in this field. Taking maximum advantage of improved public funding, in 1985-86 more than 150 research projects were undertaken by almost 100 academics, as compared with the 112 projects in 1984-85. The figure rose rapidly to 272 projects in 1989-90.

In a further measure to motivate staff to undertake research, the College decided to tap its own private funds to provide them with support, in addition to the funds set aside for research from the UPGC.





In 1987, the College benefitted from the Government's decision to allocate a special research grant of HK\$120 million for the higher education sector. The UPGC set up a Research Subcommittee to manage the fund and distribute it under a system of competitive bids. Two projects from the College's staff were given awards in the first round of the exercise conducted in 1988-89. In 1989-90, five out of eight

larger scale research proposals that the College submitted to the UPGC for competitive research funding were approved.

On top of the College's research activities, a number of consultancy services were provided by staff in the Faculty of Science and School of Business to a variety of industrial and commercial concerns.

Enhancing whole person education and campus life

In keeping with its mission to promote the fully rounded development of its students, both within and outside the classroom, student participation in extra-curricular social and recreational functions under the sponsorship of the Student Affairs Office was strongly encouraged during the 1980s. The annual Student Festival was the largest and most welcomed event directed by the Students' Union.

In 1982-83, a new effort was launched to develop student leadership capabilities. Seminars were offered for officers of the Students' Union and support dealing with finance and budgeting, goal-setting, decision-making, creativity and the organisation of committee functions was provided for societies and interest clubs.



In 1983, several core principles were developed to guide the College in planning its programmes for delivering whole person education and enabling students to become well-balanced in academic achievement, professional competence and character development. These principles were aimed at:

1. Promoting liberal education that shapes student development from different perspectives and in a variety of capacities through multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary programmes that meet the diversified needs of modern society;
2. Placing emphasis on self-learning and motivating students to undertake lifelong learning through the use of resource centres, modern educational technology and open-ended student projects that stimulate independent thinking and research;
3. Achieving a thorough understanding of the English and Chinese languages for effective communication and analytical reflection through intensive bilingual training and appropriate computer skills;



4. Encouraging positive interaction with communities and peoples inside and outside the city to broaden students' horizons in the basic tenets of arts, science, religion, philosophy and social sciences, thereby enabling them to understand the differences between peoples and cultures as well as what they share in common; and
5. Training responsible young people who will serve as strong, self-sufficient leaders, fully equipped to face the challenges of society and ready to offer a helping hand to the community, thereby illustrating the eternal truths of a whole person education that is grounded in Christian values – to be responsible and to possess the spirit of serving others.

Campus development

Expanding the campus and its facilities was a key priority in the 1980s. In 1980 and 1981, three projects were completed: the Shiu Pong Hall, which was an executive hall for official functions and meetings and also the residence of the President, the Au Shue Hung Terrace Garden, and the Sing Tao Communication Centre built for the Department of Communication.

In late 1982, the 3,700-square-metre Fong Shu Chuen Library opened, an invaluable facility for both students and staff. The College was happy to receive additional support from the Government, including 2,500 square metres of land on Kam Shing Road to accommodate sports facilities.

In 1985, the Government approved and funded the College's five-year campus development plan which provided an additional 23,000 square metres,

representing an 80% increase in gross area of building space. From 1987 to 1990, the following developments were witnessed: the relocation of the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences to the temporary campus on Renfrew Road (1987), the opening of the Yeung Shui Sang Building for student amenities and the Au Shue Hung Centre for Film and Television for the Department of Communication (1988), the inauguration of the Sir Run Run Shaw Building for the School of Business and central administration, and the Cha Chi Ming Science Tower (1989). The five-year plan was completed in 1990 with the establishment of the Wai Hang Sports Centre on Kam Shing Road.

These new buildings were all named after supporters in appreciation for their donations which they so generously gave to the College when it was weathering the turbulent seas of its early development.

Shiu Pong Hall

Located on 9 Broadcast Drive adjacent to the Ho Sin Hang Campus, Shiu Pong Hall is HKBU's official residence of the president. Named after Dr Hung Hin-shiu and his wife Mrs Hung Yeung Pong-wah in acknowledgement of Dr Hung's generous donation, it was built in 1980 to provide residence for President Daniel Tse. Due to the government's regulations which prohibited post-secondary colleges from building their own residences for presidents, Dr Tse moved in upon its completion in the capacity of a campus ground superintendent, with Shiu Pong Hall being regarded as the night-shift superintendent's quarters and also an executive hall for official functions and meetings. It was only after Baptist College became a publicly funded body in 1984 that the Hall became the official residence of the president.





The five-year campus development plan adds five new buildings to the campus; (top left) Yeung Shui Sang Building; (top centre) Au Shue Hung Centre for Film and Television; (top right) Cha Chi Ming Science Tower; (bottom left) Sir Run Run Shaw Building; and (bottom right) Wai Hang Sports Centre