

Hong Kong's Research Landscape

Roland Chin

**Research Grant Council
and
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**

I am honored today to have an opportunity to attend this conference and say a few words about research in Hong Kong.

Training and research go hand in hand and Hong Kong needs them both for quality education and benefit to its society, industries and workforce.

While spending on research in the US, Japan, South Korea and even Singapore, is in the range of 2.5 to 2.8% of GDP, research spending from all sources in Hong Kong is only about 0.7 %. And China is planning to increase its spending on research to 2.5% of its GDP. Clearly, we are falling behind. But why? Does it mean that research is not important to Hong Kong? Or does it mean that we can rely on others and buy their research outputs?

Research and Teaching

First, research is important for students' learning and teaching to produce a quality workforce that will bring societal benefits. Research generates knowledge and knowledge is disseminated to students through teaching. Professors in Hong Kong undertake research as part of their duties for a better education to our students. Through their research work, they can provide insights and pass on their knowledge to the next generations.

Students involved in research receiving the new knowledge would have enquiring minds to innovate and solve problems.

Applying innovation

Research also trains innovative research personnel, which is extremely important in realizing innovation and creativity to sustain a knowledge-based society. Even if we could import all the inventions from the rest of the world, we would not be able to apply these inventions to create jobs, wealth, or opportunities unless we have the right people here who would know how to use them to produce values.

Discovery and economic benefit

Research training drives discovery, and discovery leads to new services and products. There is evidence around the world that research benefits society economically. Research includes a sequence of events, starting from fundamental research, to applied research, knowledge transfer, commercialization; the entire chain has many components and each of them benefits the society.

Sharing of research findings

In addition to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, research outcomes should be openly shared so that they can provide the maximum benefit. Sharing of knowledge is important, as it will drive further progress. However, there are issues remain to be addressed before open sharing.

First, we have the problem of information overload, preservation of records, liability of inaccurate information, and most importantly, the problem of

intellectual property. Second, we have to provide incentive for researchers to share their blood, sweats, and tears to the widest possible audience so that knowledge could be transferred freely for public good.

Many institutions around the world are considering new ways of scholarly communication and improving the public's access to research findings. There may be lessons which we can learn from. I believe that by putting our brains together, we would be able to come up with the best approaches to these important issues, to benefit the students, the research community and the society.