HAVE YOUR CAKE – BUT DON’T EAT IT!

Dr See Yew Hong, Christopher
PhD Candidate at the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine
Grand Winner and Audience Choice Award
British Council FameLab Hong Kong 2013

Does your mouth water when you see a chocolate cake? Have you ever wondered if it is possible to resist the temptation to gobble up delicious-looking food?

This was the topic of Dr See Yew Hong’s three-minute talk during the International FameLab Hong Kong competition, held by the British Council in February 2013. The competition aims to encourage scientists and engineers to communicate their work to the world. Dr See’s engaging presentation won him the Grand Award, Audience Choice Award, and a trip to the UK in June 2013 to participate in the International Grand Final.

According to Dr See, the key to controlling your desires is a certain neurotransmitter in your brain. Research has shown that exposing yourself to something you don’t like over a long period of time can result in more of these neurotransmitters being released when you want to control your desires.

Dr See, who is a medical doctor by profession and currently a PhD student at the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, is researching in the area of medical education. He believes that scientists should possess not only research and critical thinking skills, but also good presentation skills.

Having taught medical students in the UK before coming to Hong Kong, Dr See says that as a doctor, his job is to ease the suffering of patients, and as a teacher, his job is to ease the suffering of students. Apart from using new methods in teaching, such as films, the presentation and delivery skills of the lecturer are highly important in making sure the students actually ‘get’ what is being taught.

Dr See graduated from the University of Cambridge with degrees in medicine and surgery, and was the youngest recipient of the Excellent Teacher Award at Manchester University Medical School.

While in private practice, Dr See was helping individual patients, but here at HKU, he believes he would be helping many more – by ensuring that future doctors get a good education.

Text by Jiang Ziling, Patrick (Law, Year 2)
FENCING CHAMPIONS!

HKU Ladies’ Fencing Team

Champions
University Sports Federation Hong Kong
Fencing Competition (Ladies’ Sabre)

On the 17th of March 2013, the HKU Ladies’ Fencing (Sabre) Team walked out of the University Sports Federation Hong Kong (USFHK) Fencing Competition with the champion's trophy in their hands. According to teammate Chan Ho Yan, their victory was completely unexpected. The opposing teams were comprised of both Hong Kong Team representatives and Olympic fencers, while the HKU team only had three girls who specialised in sabre fencing, and one on reserve who was actually an épée fencer.

The team had entered the competition with a view to having the chance to play with some of the best fencers in Hong Kong. All four girls tried their best in every match, and managed to emerge victorious at the end.

If there was one word that could be used to describe the sport of fencing, it would be “fast.” Speed and precision are the keys to a successful attack. The sport is divided into three sections, named after the weapons used: foil, sabre, and épée. For all types of fencing, weighing up the risk factor is probably the most difficult part. The fencer must be confident enough to attack, even though playing defence may be easier.

Teamwork plays an important role in fencing—while watching a teammate’s match, teammates can shout out tips and advice about their opponents’ strategies, helping the team win as a whole.

The ladies’ fencing team practice for about three hours twice a week, and one of them continues her training at the Hong Kong Sports Institute. Although it can be tiring to balance fencing with other aspects of university life, the girls believe it is definitely worth it. The HKU Ladies’ Fencing Team have learned to never underestimate themselves; otherwise, they would never have realised what they are truly capable of.

Text by Chum Xiaotong, Hazel
(BSocSc Government & Laws, Year 2)
REWARDING GOLDEN SERVICES

The Golden Z Club, HKUSU session 2011-2012
Second Place
Zonta International Emma L Conlon Service Award

The seven committee members of the Golden Z Club (HKUSU session 2011-2012) spent a year organising nine service projects with diverse targets and big ideas, earning the team second place at the Zonta International Emma L Conlon Service Awards.

Zonta International is a worldwide organisation working towards the advancement of the status of women worldwide, the promotion of justice and the universal respect of human rights on three levels: school, community and international. The service awards aim to acknowledge the projects and programmes done by affiliated Zonta clubs around the world.

In order to promote the status of women, the club organised a mentoring programme that initiated dialogue between successful professional women and students, a public forum that invited the audience to reflect on the roles of women in Hong Kong and cabinet member Ho Lok Hing spread the message of ending violence against women on a t-shirt design which was later featured in a United Nations’ design campaign.

The team was also involved in child services. They arranged a performance by kids with hyperkinetic disorder in the hope of boosting their self-esteem, they helped organise a big-scale fun fair with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in the less privileged Tin Shui Wai region, and they arranged a HKU campus tour for around 50 primary school students from the region.

“We wanted to show them that getting into a university isn’t an impossible dream,” says Tsang King Yi, Elina, President of club. The children were excited about travelling to the other side of the city, and were inspired to study hard after being given a taste of university life.

The biggest challenge the team faced was student participation, as HKU students have busy schedules and there are countless activities going on around the campus. “There are so many service groups at HKU, persuading students to join ours could sometimes be a challenge. We hope they see service as a fun, social gathering first, and then taste the joy volunteering brings,” says Elina.
"Home Sweet Home" is an innovative architectural project designed by two Master of Architecture students for the BEC Low-Carbon Home Competition 2012, organised by the Business Environment Council. The project was awarded both the Gold Award and the Feasibility Award.

The students were given a patch of unexcavated land in Zhongshan on the Mainland and asked to design and create a low-carbon residential area. They were to incorporate features that would decrease the carbon footprint of those living in the densely populated residential buildings in their design.

As part of the team's concept, buildings were designed to have not just one but three "green rooftops". Urban farms were planned to encourage community-based and low-carbon food production for domestic consumption.

The town was inter-connected via cycling paths and low-carbon, mass transportation systems. The team opted to use special building materials that ensure high insulation, and carefully placed windows to maximise natural light. High-rise and low-rise buildings were arranged to form a continuous wind corridor allowing free air flow, and wind turbines were installed on the rooftops of high-rise buildings.

"Architecture is like maths," said Chen Gaoxiang, Ivan, Master of Landscape Architecture second-year student. "We just need to find out a strategy to tackle the problem at hand." Before coming to HKU for his master's degree, Ivan worked as an architect for almost four years in Shanghai and Hong Kong, and met his co-designer, Kan Cheung Heng, Alvin, who was an intern at the office.

Throughout the competition, not only did the team become more practical in designing their model with real-life situations in mind, they also learned that the low-carbon way of life is slowly making its way into every part of the society. They hope their ideas will be implemented and seen around residential areas in the future.

Text by Qi Qi, Mia (BA Year 2)
A PROMISE OF LOVE

“Better Health, Better Lives, Better Future” (Project BBB)
Children’s Health, Education and Environment Rescue Association (CHEER)

2012 Best Student and Youth Volunteering Project
The Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service, Social Welfare Department, HKSAR Government

After witnessing the poor living conditions of the children in a local orphanage during a trip to Cambodia, PhD student Zhang Ying Ying, Cherry decided to initiate a project to improve water quality and hygiene awareness in Cambodian orphanages.

Together with five other HKU students, Cherry set up Children’s Health, Education and Environment Rescue Association (CHEER). Their first project was “Better Health, Better Lives, Better Future” (BBB). For 11 days in the summer of 2012, a team of 17 volunteers visited two orphanages in Siem Reap, Cambodia. They built a long-lasting water purification and storage system, performed basic health checks on the children, educated the children about personal hygiene and simple first aid techniques, and donated daily necessities from various charities in Hong Kong.

Project BBB was awarded the 2012 Best Student and Youth Volunteering Project in a competition organised by the Government’s Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service.

The team was grateful to have support from the HKU SERVICE 100 Fund to kick start the project. Founding committee member of CHEER, PhD student Wei Lui Larry, believed the BBB project’s results would reach beyond the two orphanages they visited. “After the trip, volunteers not only plan to continue volunteering; some even initiated their own service projects. The service spirit spreads exponentially.”

Through the use of simple English and body language, the team built friendships with the Cambodian children. “One girl got very attached to me, and it was heartbreaking when she learnt we were about to leave and cried,” says volunteer Wong Qin Ee, Queenie, “I can’t wait to meet her again.”

The team will return to the orphanages for a follow up project, BBB2. They will be setting up a water well and teaching the orphans efficient farming. “We also look forward to an epic mud war after the heavy rain like last time,” added Larry.
Year one Bachelor of Science (Exercise and Health) student Hui Wai Hei, Ricky, broke his own Hong Kong record in the Men’s Javelin Throw by 50.05 metres in February 2013 at the Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association’s Step Hong Kong Athletics League 2013 (Round 1).

Although at first Ricky’s only javelin experience was from inter-secondary school competitions, his team coach believed his javelin career had huge potential. After just a year of serious training, Ricky broke the Hong Kong Javelin Throw record, and is now a member of the Hong Kong Athletics Team.

“The record is a great achievement, but it also adds pressure. Expectations rise. People don’t ask if I win or lose in a competition, but whether I have broken the record again,” he says.

Ricky was associated more with tennis at first, as he started playing tennis at the age of five. Despite now being more widely known for his success in javelin, he hasn’t given up on tennis yet, and was the Hong Kong National Tennis Championship 2012 Men’s B Double Champion. “I love playing tennis,” he says, “I’ve been practicing tennis for so long, it’s become a part of me.”

Ricky has been striving towards a balance between school, and two competitive sports. Every week, he has four four-hour javelin training sessions and three three-hour tennis sessions. On Saturdays he spends the whole day training for both sports. But even on Sundays, Ricky can often be found on the tennis court.

To Ricky, the secret to success is to have a strong belief in one’s goal and be persistent. “I have a four-year plan for my sports career. My goal for javelin is to set a new record of 70m and qualify for the 2018 Asian Games,” he says. “Also, I have promised my parents to always put my studies first,” he added.