

Rick Glofcheski's Acceptance Speech, on the Occasion of the First UGC Teaching Award, September 8, 2011

1. I am honoured and thrilled to be selected for this award. It is really the culmination of a lot of effort we have put into teaching and learning for a number of years and for that reason it is especially satisfying. The true rewards of teaching come from the students and their achievements, but to have the recognition of the academy is also rewarding because it trumpets in a very public way the importance of teaching, and reminds us all that teaching and learning is the very core mission of the university.

2. There are many people to thank, as this is very much a collaborative achievement. I want to express my gratitude to the members of the UGC and commend them for their work and their vision, under the leadership of Mrs Laura Cha, in instituting this prestigious award scheme, for honouring and recognizing achievements in teaching and learning, and for creating a further motivation for teachers to strive harder to find ways of improving the learning experience of our students. It was a year ago to the day that we received the announcement of the award scheme with great excitement, and now a year later, it is a vision realized. I also want to say thank you to the UGC Secretariat staff and the HKU Registry staff for administering what was for me a very smooth process.

3. I want to thank the members of the selection panel, Professor Bill Kirby, Mrs Pamela Chan, Sir Colin Lucas, Professor Edmond Ko and Professor Brian Coppola, all very busy people, for their time and all their hard work in reading through all of the applications, considering them carefully, and conducting the interviews with sensitivity and encouragement, and for making the selection in what must have been a very difficult decision-making process. I am very pleased to have their approval of my work and to know that my conception of socially relevant learning and of the role that assessment can play in achieving deeper learning is accepted. Having been selected by such a formidable panel of experts, this award serves as a further encouragement for me to continue my work in finding new ways to enrich the learning experience of our students.

4. I know it would have been a difficult choice for the panel to make, and I know all of those teachers here tonight are worthy recipients of this award and their presence here makes this moment that much more meaningful. I hope to be able to meet some of them tonight or soon, to build collaborations and benefit from their expertise now that a strong foundation has been built for sector-wide collaborations.

5. I especially want to thank our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, and our Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, Professor Amy Tsui for their support of teaching and learning at the University of Hong Kong, and for their vision in designing

and introducing our own institutional programme for the recognition of teaching and learning excellence. The programme has proved to be very successful in motivating and inspiring the teachers at our university. In particular I want to thank Pro-Vice-Chancellor Amy Tsui for the support and encouragement she has personally given me over the years. Amy Tsui and Vice-Chancellor Lap-Chee Tsui have worked very hard to build institutional structures that support teaching, and their achievements serve as a constant encouragement and a reminder to me that teaching and learning is taken very seriously at our university.

6. I also want to thank my colleagues in the Faculty of Law, and elsewhere in the University of Hong Kong, including my colleagues and collaborators in the HKU Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, in particular Diane Salter, Gayle Morris, Cecilia Chan and Michael Prosser, all of whom have been supportive and receptive to my ideas and have encouraged me in my thinking about new and better ways of teaching and learning.

7. Tonight we are here to celebrate and recognize and reward excellence in teaching. But we should not lose sight of the students. In fact, teaching and learning is all about the student, not the teacher. It is the learner who is central to our work in teaching and learning. So tonight is really about the learner, about our students, and we should celebrate them.

8. We can only learn to be better teachers through our students. It is only by engaging students and their learning and by reflecting on that learning that we can learn to become better teachers. My students have inspired and motivated me to new ways of thinking, new ways of thinking about learning. They have been receptive to new ideas and new ways of learning, and received my ideas with patience, if not sometimes a little curiosity. They have taught me a lot.

9. If we are serious about wanting our students to become life-long learners, then we as teachers must also learn to become life-long learners. We must be reflective about teaching and learning, and find ways to make the learning experience of our students richer, deeper, more sustained, and socially relevant, so that they can continue to learn on their own long after graduating.

10. I have learned much from my students. Most of all I have learned, as a teacher, how to be a life-long learner. This award is dedicated to my students.