

## OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

### Dr Katherine Noelle CUMMER

Department of Real Estate and Construction 房地產及建設系

Division of Architectural Conservation Programmes 建築保育學部

In a dense and dynamic city like Hong Kong the field of conservation is particularly critical and challenging. This dynamism contributed to the Division of Architectural Conservation Programmes (ACP) developing one of the few undergraduate conservation programmes in the world: the Bachelor of Arts in Conservation. As the founding BA(Conservation) Director, I have worked closely with staff and students alike to develop and improve the curriculum and its course offerings, to ensure our students are exposed to and challenged by the latest thinking in the field and developing the key skills needed to thrive in the professional world. I take pride in being a teacher of an emerging professional discipline and I appreciate the challenge of being a pioneering educator helping ACP and HKU maintain a leading position in conservation education.

I have been teaching at HKU since 2011 and, from the beginning, I understood the need for clear, student-centred instruction. I strive to ensure there is clarity in *what* is being discussed and most importantly *why*: How does it connect to the real world and the professional field? In addition to this professional relevance, experiential learning is a key component of all of my courses. Since Hong Kong and the region provide a complex laboratory environment for learning about the field of conservation and its numerous challenges, local and overseas field studies are extensively used to help illustrate and complement the in-class content.

This is similarly the case with the required Practical Training placement where students are placed with varied organisations to gain practical on-site experience. I work closely with students to determine the best host for them, taking into consideration their career goals and any potential graduate level studies; helping develop their professional network. These experiential learning activities are a key component of my teaching philosophy and help best prepare our students to be making significant contributions on graduation and beyond.

In all of my courses, I always ensure there are a variety of assessment modes that encourage students to excel. This allows me to provide a balance of both summative and formative assessment that promotes student learning. I want my students to do well and I work to provide assessment that recognises and supports their differing strengths as well as their learning needs. As a result, I provide regular and timely feedback so that they know what they are doing right and, more importantly, where they can improve.

In addition to providing an objective-oriented, student-centred classroom, I have cultivated a warm and welcoming environment for my students outside of the classroom as well, helping to build and define ACP's vibrant collegiate community. It is a great pleasure to teach the wonderful ACP students at HKU and I am immensely honoured to receive this Outstanding Teaching Award.



## STUDENTS' WORDS OF APPRECIATION

As I look back on my four years of studies in the Division of Architectural Conservation Programmes, Katie is without a doubt a very important teacher to my undergraduate studies at HKU. Her influence on me is so positive that I still remember the first day I met Katie when I was a new student to the BA(Conservation) programme. Katie was a maternal figure to my classmates and me, as she made great effort in taking care of every one of us in the programme from the day we entered University and continued to nurture us over the subsequent four years. Her door was always open to us and she was always approachable in patiently guiding us through difficulties, whether in our studies, career pathways or even personal matters.

As the Founding Director of the BA(Conservation), Katie set a strong foundation and a high standard for the programme. So much so that we feel exceedingly proud to be alumni of the programme, which is why my classmates and I consider her the Mother of the BA(Conservation).

Her academic advising and curriculum development aside, her teaching really was amazing! Her classes were always interactive and she always engaged every class member to participate in the fruitful discussions in class. There was always clarity in the relevance of the task at hand and an effective reiteration of the course and curriculum objectives. She was also always happy to share her own experience with us. Her effort in preparing for classes and her passion for teaching was one of her many influences on me during my undergraduate studies, and these influences continue to inspire and motivate me in my current research postgraduate studies. I hope to use her influence for my self-development and pay it forward someday.

**Angus CHAN Man Hei**

*BA(Conservation) 2016*

Throughout my four years of studying at HKU, Katie has been a very good advisor and teacher for me. I learnt a lot about architectural conservation from her and was always inspired by her enthusiasm for the field. Personally, as the supervisor of my thesis topic, Katie has given me timely guidance and comments on my research and, at the same time, enough room for me to develop personal thoughts and ideas.

In addition to her guidance in the classroom, with her attentive assistance in overseas networking, I was able to work as an intern in Penang for two months for my Practical Training placement. This internship was a fruitful experience for me and definitely would not have happened if Katie had not made every endeavour to establish contact with the local personnel at the Penang Heritage Trust.

Katie has also been the academic advisor of our class for four years and has helped the class to solve and address our different problems. Her words "never suffer in silence" have encouraged us to speak to her when things are difficult and showed us that she cares about and respects our concerns.

All in all, I am thankful to have Katie as my teacher and am delighted for her to be receiving this award.

**Dawn CHAN Man Yan**

*BA(Conservation), current student*

## OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

For four years, Katie has been the greatest supporter of mine. Not only has she been my academic advisor, organising meetings regularly, she also gave me much guidance on future career paths and potential field opportunities. She is always right next door and ready to provide the most assistance she can give. I happily recall her squeezing out time from her busy schedule to help me prepare for my summer placement interview with the Ontario Heritage Trust. I am always immensely thankful of her for being extremely supportive and approachable.

Katie is well known among our classmates for her speedy responses, in person and through emails. She does not allow any delay on her work and always puts students in the first priority. This efficiency and student emphasis includes her approach to assessment, where she promptly and regularly provides substantial feedback on every assignment. On top of her speedy responses, she always does follow-up work. She keeps in mind every thought and concern of students, and often gets back to discuss further and provide additional insight. She certainly deserves to be known as one of the most outstanding teachers at HKU.

**Sharon CHEUNG Shue Yee**

*BA(Conservation), current student*

As my thesis supervisor and our Division's academic advisor, Katie always provides me with innovative ideas and directs me to the right track. In these four years, Katie has cultivated a mentorship relationship with our class. She values face-to-face communication with us and always offers ultimate support to our studies, careers and life. In my studies, I got through a number of difficulties with her and she always devotes extra time to clear my doubts. I heartily appreciate all of the help and support.

Katie is also an enthusiastic teacher with high passion for her teaching; she demonstrates a high standard of interactive learning and engagement with our class. We are always inspired by and learn from her timely feedback and suggestions on our assignments.

I feel very honoured and proud to be her student in these four years. Thank you, Katie, for all the fun classes and all of the extra effort. Congratulations on achieving this Outstanding Teaching Award!

**Mandy WONG Pui Man**

*BA(Conservation), current student*