

Press Release

June 21, 2018

HKU to Collaborate on Biomedical Innovation with Institut Pasteur and Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation

The University of Hong Kong (“HKU”), Institut Pasteur (“IP”) and Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (“HKSTP”) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) in Paris today (June 21, 2018) to set up a joint biomedical research centre, witnessed by a high-level delegation led by The Hon Mrs Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; and Mr Nicholas W Yang, the Secretary for Innovation and Technology [names and titles of other distinguished guests].

HKU, IP and HKSTP aim to establish an interdisciplinary research centre for immunology, infection and personalised medicine within the HKSTP’s healthcare technologies research cluster (“Health@Inno Cluster”), in response to the HKSAR Government’s initiative to turn Hong Kong into a centre of biomedical innovation and technology.

The Hon Mrs Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of the HKSAR, said: “Pooling together technology talent and attracting top scientific research institutions to Hong Kong are among the eight major areas I set out in my inaugural Policy Address to spearhead innovation and technology development in Hong Kong. I am pleased to witness today the signing of the MOU between HKU and IP, two world-renowned institutions in the area of medical research, to collaborate and set up a joint research centre in the Health@Inno Cluster to be established in the Hong Kong Science Park.”

Professor Gabriel Leung, HKU’s Dean of Medicine, said: “We live in an era of enormous opportunity – when it is possible for biomedical research to produce ‘moonshots’ that will have tremendous healthcare benefits for all of society. The staunch support of the Hong Kong Government means that this deepening of a longstanding relationship between IP and HKU will be able to further harness collaboration between East and West, across multiple disciplines and sectors, to advance the frontiers of biomedical technology in Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area and beyond.”

Professor Stewart Cole, President of Institut Pasteur, extended a warm welcome to the Hong Kong delegation and expressed his delight at the establishment of the visionary research centre at Hong Kong Science Park: “IP and HKU have had a fruitful, decades-long partnership in advancing science, medicine and global public health initiatives, and we are now at a new and significant turning point. I am confident that the Pasteurian spirit and values will be manifested in the work we undertake together at the new research centre and that our discoveries will have far-reaching benefits for humankind.”

Mr. Nicholas W Yang, the Secretary for Innovation and Technology of the HKSAR, said: “Healthcare research is certainly one area where Hong Kong has strength and potential in our pursuit of innovation and technology. In addition to its prospective economic contribution, it also has boundless potential to revolutionise disease prevention and treatment and to address challenges posed by ageing population.”

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Hong Kong Science Park currently is home to about 100 international and local biomedical technology companies, a number that has nearly doubled since 2015. Healthcare technology is one of HKSTP's focused innovation platforms and the Corporation will also host the Health@Inno research cluster announced by the Government in this year's Budget. "The tripartite partnership of HKU, IP and HKSTP is important in this goal because it will create an open platform for multi-sectoral collaboration and facilitate the translation of biomedical innovations into commercial value and industrial impact. HKSTP has been playing a proactive role as a super connector facilitating collaboration among academia, research institutes and industry sectors across continents." said Mr Albert Wong, Chief Executive Officer of HKSTP.

By combining the power of academia and industry, the tripartite partnership and research centre will contribute to Hong Kong's transformation into an international innovation and technology hub of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area. Ultimately, its medical innovations are expected to advance the welfare of humanity.

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More about the tripartite strategic partnership and the new research centre

The proposed new research centre will unite two world-class academic and research institutions, HKU and IP, to establish a unique platform at the Hong Kong Science Park that will deepen understanding of human health and disease and formulate innovative solutions for public health challenges. An example of the biomedical research being planned is an innovative interdisciplinary project in human immunology entitled *The Healthy Human Global Project*. This will provide a personalised patient management strategy to define immune "health", taking into consideration population genetics, local endemic infections, diverse microbiota, and lifestyle and environmental factors; it will undoubtedly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future public health initiatives. Other important pillars at the research centre, which will be equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories, are the creation of enabling platform technologies to enhance preparedness and response to emerging and re-emerging viruses, immune therapies for viral infections, and vaccine development.

About Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong

HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine is the oldest local institution of higher education in Hong Kong. It was founded as the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese in 1887, was renamed as the Hong Kong College of Medicine in 1907 and became the premier founding Faculty when the University was established in 1911. From its modest beginnings, the Faculty has grown to become the largest faculty of the University, with over 400 full-time academic and academic-related staff and 800 research and research-related support personnel. The undergraduate student population is about 2,900 and postgraduates number 1,500. The Faculty is comprised of 14 departments, School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Chinese Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Public Health (home of HKU-Pasteur Research Pole (PRP)) and a number of strategic centres of research excellence. For more information about Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, please visit www.med.hku.hk

About Institut Pasteur (to be confirmed by IP)

IP is a non-profit private foundation with a mission to contribute to the prevention and treatment of diseases through research, education, and public health activities. Since its

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creation by Louis Pasteur in 1887, IP has become famous throughout the world as a symbol of excellence in biomedical sciences. Together with its major contribution to a deeper understanding of fundamental aspects of life, IP continues to devote a large part of its efforts to infectious diseases, inherited disorders, neurodegenerative diseases and certain types of cancers. Approximately 2,600 people work on its main campus in Paris which is at the heart of an international network of 32 research institutes on 5 continents. Over the years, 10 IP researchers have received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

About HKU-Pasteur Research Pole

HKU-PRP is a joint laboratory of HKU and IP, established in 2000 with the aim to developing programmes of excellence in research and education that will generate biological knowledge and advance the understanding and treatment of infectious diseases. HKU-PRP benefits from the outstanding scientific environment offered by the School of Public Health of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, with its significant contributions, both locally and internationally, to research on emerging viral diseases and improving health. Moreover, HKU-PRP is part of the IP International Network, a unique model for health cooperation to further science, medicine and public health with more than 100 years of history.

About Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation

Comprising Science Park, InnoCentre and Industrial Estates, HKSTP is a statutory body established in May 2001. HKSTP is dedicated to building a vibrant innovation and technology ecosystem to connect stakeholders, nurture technology talents, facilitate collaboration, and catalyse innovations to deliver social and economic benefits to Hong Kong and the region. Our work centres around five technology clusters including Biomedical Technology, Electronics, Green Technology, Information & Communications Technology, and Material & Precision Engineering; and the development of three cross-disciplinary platforms which are Smart City, Healthy Ageing and Robotics. We also provide state-of-the-art R&D facilities and all-rounded value-added support services to our partner companies. We are committed to creating new opportunities and propelling the development of Hong Kong into an innovation-led economy. More information about HKSTP is available at www.hkstp.org

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