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THE UNIVERSITY OF
HONG KONG
LIBRARIES

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The University of Hong Kong
Libraries

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MESSAGE FROM
THE LIBRARIAN

It is with a great sense of pride and history that I take up the role as HKU's sixth Librarian as the University embarks on its Centenary celebrations. Many people have asked me "well, what is the new direction for the Libraries and what changes will you make?" Having spent nine years as the Deputy Librarian it would be inappropriate for me to introduce wholesale changes on day one of my tenure. However I would like to clarify what I see as the position the Libraries should take in at least the immediate future. My vision for the Libraries can be encapsulated in the following statement:

As a central player in the vibrant intellectual environment at the University of Hong Kong, the Libraries will be recognized on campus, regionally and internationally for its outstanding collections, its client-centred services, its collaborative and innovative approaches that support the University's teaching, learning, research and knowledge exchange pursuits.

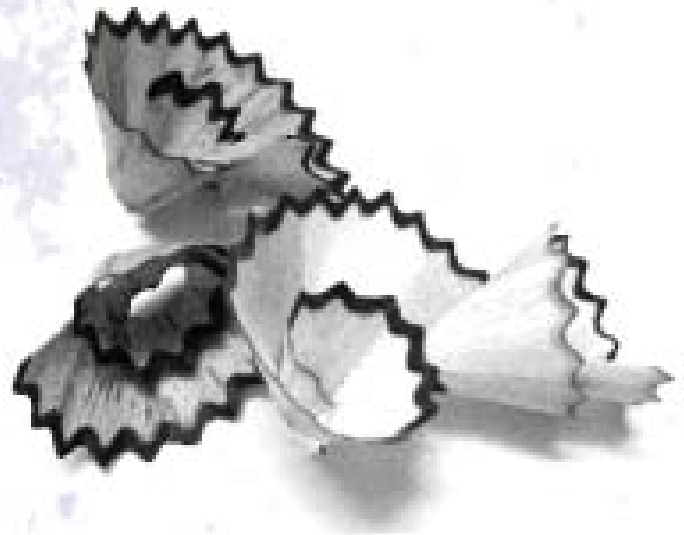
To achieve this, my emphasis will be on alignment, collections, collaboration, value and people.

The Libraries must ensure that we are in clear alignment with the University's strategic directions and priorities and these must remain our driving emphasis. At the same time we must ensure that we are flexible and can readily adapt to new challenges. In this respect the Libraries will continue to expand their role in e-learning by being active partners and where possible facilitators of good e-learning practices. We will also strive to improve our physical environments that make them conducive to today's learners and support the University's aim of "enhancing the student learning experience". Similarly we want to further emphasise our support for faculty by helping researchers with their information access and information management priorities both in the physical and virtual environments. As an existing organ of knowledge exchange, the Libraries will further assist the university to disseminate its scholarship by making further enhancements to the Scholars Hub and by continuing its strong tradition of community engagement.

Our collections will continue to grow within the resources that we have. Our expenditure will be appropriate to the University community's needs and fully accountable. The benefits reaped from digital content will direct our priorities but we remain cognizant of the continuing significance and need for print during this time of significant transition.

We will continue to collaborate, in the interests of the University, at a high level to ensure the best possible value for our expenditure and to capitalize on resource sharing. Such collaboration will be through consortia purchasing, sharing collections, sharing expertise and any other opportunities that arise and provide benefits to the University community. As libraries in mainland China continue to grow and develop at a rapid pace, the opportunities for greater collaboration with them, and with libraries in the region, has become increasingly viable. We will examine such opportunities with renewed vigour. We also need to collaborate with you – our faculty and students. The Libraries want to be your partner. If there are projects or opportunities that you believe the Libraries can assist you, then please let me know. While this may be an amorphous invitation, it is sincere.

In this digital age where many perceive the role of the library as being usurped by search engines and the Internet, it remains for the Libraries to clarify our role and the value we provide within this environment. I firmly believe that the role of the academic library in today's "maelstrom" of information has never been more important as we help staff and students navigate the extensive



networks of information, whether it be commercial, open access, locally created or something else again. Our mandate lies in ensuring that the value we bring to the institution is understood and recognized.

Perhaps above all we must continue to emphasise that the library is for people. Libraries are increasingly bringing people together to discuss, collaborate, and share their knowledge. Our continued emphasis on improving service will remain a high priority. We also intend to renovate the 3rd floor of the Main Library to provide a greater variety of learning spaces suitable to today's academic library users. We want every user who enters our Libraries to feel welcome with the best of possible services, the best information support and a rich learning environment. In addition to their collections, the people who run and manage libraries are their greatest asset and suitable investments in our Libraries' staff will only further benefit the University. We have a talented and dedicated staff and we will continue to develop them so that they are well equipped in supporting the University's evolving information needs and they are flexible and responsive to change as the environment will undoubtedly dictate in the coming years.

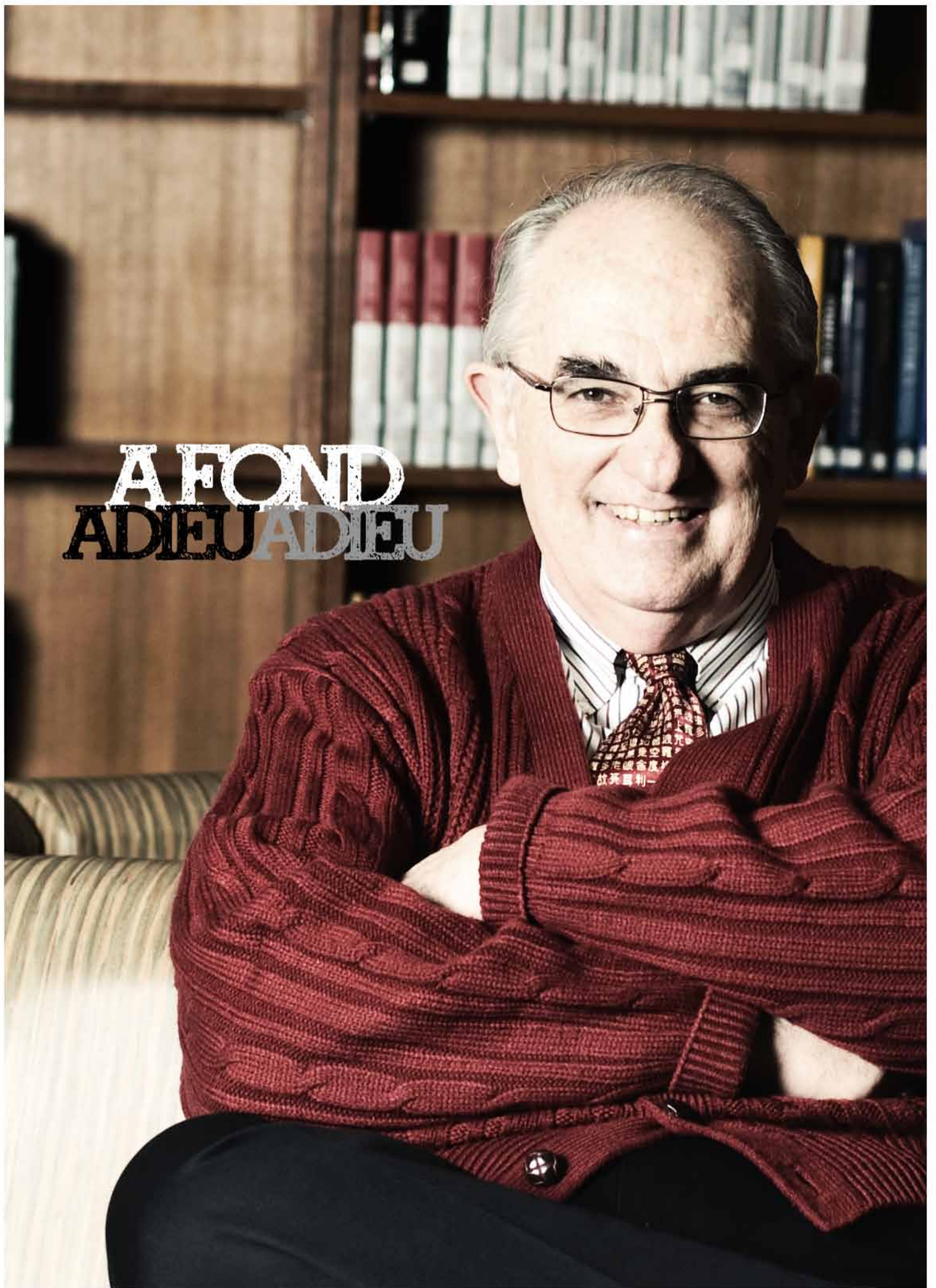
In the nine years that I have spent here as Deputy Librarian and under the leadership of former Librarian Tony Ferguson, many achievements have been realized. We have developed our electronic collections to a world class standard, we have acted collaboratively in the interests of the University through cooperative purchasing with the other 7 UGC Libraries as well as further afield resulting in savings of millions of Hong Kong dollars; we were instrumental in bringing HKALL to the 8 UGC institutions, enabling deep collaboration through the sharing of resources; we have developed our staff to the point that they are now well equipped to meet the ever evolving information needs of staff and students in this digital environment. We have in fact achieved so much more than can be described here and due recognition, indeed applause, must be given to Tony Ferguson for his leadership in transforming the Libraries over these past ten years.

The significance of beginning my tenure at the same time as the University starts its centenary celebration is not lost on me. Like the University, the Libraries will also celebrate this landmark event. Tracing back to the almost 100 year beginning of the Libraries, our first significant collection was received in April 1912. At that time Sir Cecil Clementi, then Hong Kong Colonial Secretary, donated the 1,628-volume Gu jin tu shu ji cheng (古今圖書集成) to the library. Since that time our collection has grown and our services developed in alignment with the University's evolving needs as well as through our utilization of the best of technology to help our users with their information access and retrieval. The Libraries will of course celebrate its 100 years of service through various events including a series of Centenary Book Talks, exhibitions from our Main and Branch Libraries as well as a special rare book exhibition, special centenary purchases by each of the ten faculties, conferences as well as other special events. I encourage you to participate in these events and help us in celebrating the Libraries history and achievements.

Finally, I hope that you can help me and the staff of the Libraries to make our great library even better. Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions for improvement you would like us to make. I look forward to working with you to make our expanding greatness a reality.

Peter E. Sidorko
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It has been a great 10 years and a pleasure to work at the University of Hong Kong. When I first came, I was impressed that all the staff seemed to be so proud of working at the University of Hong Kong. The Libraries had been well supported financially up to that point in time. HKU had been the only university for decades and everyone who was anybody in Hong Kong seemed to be our alum or a friend or relative of one of our graduates. Yet when I met with the 40+ Libraries supervisors and other professionals and asked them to share where we might improve to better meet the needs of our readers, they identified a score of problem areas which became our focus of work for the coming years. The need for/to: 1. larger collections; 2. improved organization; 3. better physical and technical infrastructure; 4. opportunities for the staff to participate in deciding the Libraries' vision and goals; 5. make it easier for readers to find and use information; 6. improve public services; 7. improve communication between the Libraries and its users and among members of the Libraries' staff; 8. employ a collaborative leadership style; 9. make HKU even more famous; and 10., get more money to make all of this possible.

Now at that point in time I was a new library director. I had been a number two or three level leader at three other universities and so I was tired of doing what someone else thought should be done, resulting in 30 years of pent up angst about wanting to do it "the right way". Moreover, I had a four-year contract at HKU and no guarantee of retention beyond that and so had a determination to get as much done as possible in as short amount of time as possible. The mixture of a proud and capable staff, the opportunity to "do it my way," and the knowledge that I only had four years to get the job done initially generated an enormous amount of enthusiasm but also ultimately led to some chaos and exhaustion. We developed a "staff morale problem", the resolution of which became an 11th focus of activity.

This isn't to say we were not making progress on all fronts: We were buying books in new and faster ways; we were building a collection of electronic books and serials at a rate faster than I had done at Columbia University; we employed a series of consultants and did nearly everything they said to streamline and improve our organization; we employed participative management techniques with a vengeance and created separate staff and professional development organizations to draw/drag the staff into the decision-making process; we increased the amount of cataloguing work while cutting its staff to make it easy for readers to find all the materials being purchased; we improved and increased the amount of public service outreach work being done; we developed high quality communication media like our annual reports and this colorful online newsletter; created a quality management team; undertook a number of reforms to make the library a friendlier place by giving staff service training, creating a quality pledge, increasing the number of library items people could check out, increasing library hours, the provision of comfy sofas on which to take naps (the bean bag chairs were too comfortable and had to be removed) allowing food and drink in many parts of the library; joined a host of regional and international organization to gain recognition for HKU in the library world and better fulfill reader needs; reached out to the community through our Book Talk program, created the Libraries Circle of Friends organization, and we got ourselves into the public media whenever possible, including when we got on television to talk about provisions in the

initial version of Article 39 which might have allowed the police to examine our circulation files in search of readers with seditious tendencies. Finally, we also got involved in all sorts of fund raising activities including duplicate book sales; the creation of a Platinum status to provide our alumni with access to a specified amount of electronic forms of information; Circle of Friends membership for groups like the HK Teachers Union' access to our collections for Robert Black clients and non university tenants living in staff quarters' the Honour with Books program; and the creation of an e-book cataloguing program which annually generates nearly a million dollars in revenue.

I must note that the "we", in all of the above, included Peter Sidorko, my deputy and now the New Librarian. It is for this reason that I am confident that the library will continue to improve. But the "we" also included a host of Team Leaders including my other right hand, Esther Woo who has handled everything dealing with money, personnel and our physical facilities; David Palmer, the brains behind our advances in the use of digital technology; the multi talented Dr. YC Wan, who accepted every assignment and completed it with great style and success; Julia Chan for the branch libraries; and Gayle Chan, our head of collection development. The "we" also include the PVC's and DVC's with who I worked including professors John Spinks, Howell Tong, John Malpas, Richard Wong, and Roland Chin. At the risk of offending many of the very talented library specialists that I will not name (and plead for the forgiveness of those not mentioned), let me identify just a few others with whom I have worked closely and without whose help we would not have been a success: Angela Ko for Chinese acquisitions and China relations; Carmen Tsang for public relations and fund raising; Amanda Harizan for international outreach; Antonia Yiu and her boss/colleague Rebecca Yeung for readers services and information skills training; and Thomas Hung for acquisitions. Finally, I gladly say a huge thanks to my super capable third right hand, Marine Yip, whose secretarial and human relations skills were a part of everything good I accomplished. HKU Libraries greatest resources are the colleagues named above and the staff members with whom they work.

Tony Ferguson



3RD FLOOR RENOVATION

Main Library 3rd Floor Renovation

If campuses exist to foster specific kinds of learning, they should inspire and foster this work physically as well as intellectuallyⁱ.

Nancy Van Note Chismⁱⁱ.

For some months now the Libraries have undertaken initial planning into creating a more dynamic learning environment to be housed on the 3rd floor of the Main Library. The entire 3rd floor of the Main Library will be renovated to create a learning commons style facility that will provide a range of learning spaces suitable to different learning styles including reflective self-study as well as collaborative study in small and larger groups. This learning facility will include a technology rich environment providing full access to the vast array of digital content provided by the Libraries and beyond. The space will encourage interactive group learning through technology enhanced spaces as well as individual technology facilities for self study as well as key spaces for reflection. Books that are currently situated on the 3rd floor will be relocated to other floors, yet will remain readily accessible to those working on the 3rd floor. Furthermore this new learning environment will provide several hundred (final number yet to be determined) additional spaces to help us cater with the extra cohort of students soon to arrive at our entrance in 2012.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

1. **Changing student needs and learning habits:** While much learning occurs in formal settings, at other times informal settings serve a similar purpose by bringing people together to encourage collaboration, exploration and discussion. Our intent is to create a vibrant environment that will cater to the varied needs and learning styles of today's learners by providing spaces that encourage collaboration, individual reflection, interactivity with technology, and perhaps most importantly the flexibility to accommodate changing demands on library spaces as they fluctuate throughout the academic year.
2. **Supporting the University's Strategic Theme of Enhancing the Student Learning Experience (HKU Strategic Theme 1):** This strategy seeks to "Enrich the educational environment and enhance student support" and to do this "... we will enhance substantially our student support infrastructure to enable students to benefit from the enriched learning environment"ⁱⁱⁱ. As a major learning environment, the Libraries is a major player and must be responsive to enriching its environment in order to support and enhance the student learning experience.
3. **The New Curriculum and Common Core:** Among the six educational aims for the new curriculum, three are directly applicable to the Libraries and our ability to support these aims. These include supporting students in their:
 - pursuit of academic/professional excellence, critical intellectual enquiry and life long learning;
 - tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems;
 - communication and collaboration.

As students are encouraged to undertake activities related to these aims, they will require learning spaces that help to facilitate their success in pursuing these aims. The Main Library does not currently adequately support these aims through its physical environment.

4. **Feedback From Students and Faculty:** Our recent survey (December 2010) has once again provided us with views that are critical of the Main Library's physical environment and in particular the shortage of seating and the entirely inadequate provision of group study facilities. This was the most frequent comment we identified in this survey. This same survey, conducted by InSync Surveys also identified that the two most important factors (tied at 6.34 out of a possible 7) for respondents were: "I can find a quiet place in the Library to study when I need to" and "The Library is a good place to study". Both of these categories appear in the top ten gaps where our performance does not meet the importance our users place on the service.
5. **Consolidating zoning within the Main Library:** By consolidating group learning activities as well as the majority of technology related functions within the third floor, we have the opportunity to rethink, and to more easily regulate, the tolerance of food, drink and noise in the rest of the Library. In order to eliminate confusion regarding what is acceptable in which parts of the Library, we plan to make the 3rd floor the only area where discussion and related noise will be accepted, similarly we will only tolerate food (within strict limits) on the 3rd floor. This will make it easier for our users to comprehend as well as for our staff to regulate. By doing this we believe that the atmosphere in the remainder of the Main Library will improve significantly for those users who want ready access to the collection and an uninterrupted study environment.

FEEDBACK

As we embark on this most major of renovations of the Main Library since the building of the new wing, I encourage you to provide us with your views on what you would like to see in this new 3rd floor environment. As plans for the renovation continue to evolve we will update our dedicated webpage <<http://lib.hku.hk/mlr/>>, we will continue to seek your views in a number of ways including feedback through this webpage as well as focus group sessions whenever possible.

ⁱVan Note Chism, N. (2006) Challenging Traditional Assumptions and Rethinking Learning Spaces, In Oblinger, D.G. (Ed.), Learning Spaces, Washington, D.C.: Educause, 2.1-2.12. < <http://www.educause.edu/LearningSpaces>>

ⁱⁱNancy Van Note Chism is the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and associate dean of the faculties at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, as well as a professor of higher education at Indiana University.

ⁱⁱⁱThe University of Hong Kong, 2009-2014 Strategic Development, <<http://www3.hku.hk/strategic-development/eng/strategic-themes-for-09-14/enhancing-the-student-learning-experience.php>>