Good evening Chairman Ben, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

At a time when our society is deeply divided in respect of political reform, when friends and families are painfully torn, thank you for inviting me back and allowing me to take sanctuary for a moment. Being back to the University is like coming home where diversity is treasured and differences respected.

University is where people undergo intellectual baptism of fire, where the younger generations are empowered to surpass the predecessors. No wonder why Isaac Newton said “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” University is where idea and imagination blossom, where people challenge conventional wisdom with innovations and discoveries. University is where social transformation takes place, where people start appreciating who they are and how one relates to others.

While most students in Hong Kong aspire for university education, not every one of them could make it. Take year 2014 for instance, of the 80,000 candidates who took the Diploma of Secondary Education examination, less than one fifth of them managed to get into local universities. The competition to enroll in HKU engineering programme is extremely tough, and you are the selected few who have made it.

Many a time when we are down, many a time when we are in grief, many of us would ask why, and why me. But what about when we are on top of others, and what about when we least deserve for the given. As a matter of fact, not many of us would ask why, not to mention why me. Tonight, I would like to challenge you with the question - Why you?
Of all the species on this planet Earth, humanity has overcome all odds and proliferated. Despite the lack of sharp claws and powerful jaws, humanity survives and thrives with nothing but creativity and innovation over time. Instead of leaving things to chance, humanity takes control of its destiny. Instead of living at the mercy of nature, humanity plants and farms. Instead of dwelling in the wild, humanity builds shelters that we call home. Over time, humanity has discovered and created things of all kinds. Over time, humanity has redefined the meaning of space and time. From generation to generation, humanity has ceaselessly gone beyond confine. The answer is: You are the generation who is going to define the world decades ahead of our time. You are the generation who is going to take charge and command.

University is where we learn to contribute and serve in a way that makes the best out of oneself. My warmest congratulations to every one of you who dare to take up the challenge in serving fellow students with passion and commitment. It is a small but leading step for future success, a part of university life that you won’t regret.

2 April 2015