

**Press Release**

**The 35th World Cultural Council Award Ceremony successfully held at CityU**

The 35th World Cultural Council (WCC) Award Ceremony, hosted in Hong Kong and the Greater China region for the first time, was successfully held at City University of Hong Kong (CityU) today (8 November).

The 2018 Albert Einstein World Award of Science and the 2018 José Vasconcelos World Award of Education were granted to two eminent scholars from France and South Africa, respectively. Also, nine young scholars from CityU received special recognition at the ceremony for their outstanding achievements.

Over 300 distinguished guests attended the ceremony, which was officiated by, among others, **Professor Way Kuo**, President of CityU, **Professor Sir Colin Blakemore**, President of the WCC, and **Dr Choi Yuk-lin**, Under Secretary for Education, HKSAR Government.

Speaking at the ceremony, President Kuo said “It is our great honour that CityU has this opportunity this year to host this influential academic award ceremony. We are proud that we are the first university in Hong Kong, and in the Greater China region in fact, to host such a major event.”

Professor Sir Colin Blakemore said, “Over the years, our distinguished jury members have identified an impressive list of prize winners, selected not only for their scientific, educational or artistic merits, but also for their contributions to the well-being of humanity and their qualities as role models who can inspire future generations.”

Guest of honour Dr Choi thanked CityU for bringing this signature event to Hong Kong. She said, “The development of science is indeed closely linked with school education. Nurturing talent with different science and technology expertise is not only essential for meeting the challenges of today’s world, but also significant for enhancing the long-term development and competitiveness of Hong Kong.”

Widely acknowledged as one of the fathers of modern neurobiology and neuroscience, **Professor Jean-Pierre Changeux**, Emeritus Professor of Neuroscience at the Institut Pasteur and Collège de France, was granted the 2018 Albert Einstein World Award of Science for his exceptional scientific achievements and leadership in the field of neuroscience, and especially for his pioneering contributions to the understanding of neuroreceptors over the past 50 years. His work on the mechanism of neural networks has narrowed the gap between molecular biology and cognitive science, and has had a significant impact on healthcare and drugs related to illnesses such as neurological disorders.

In his acceptance speech, Professor Changeux thanked the WCC for granting him the award and said the field of research that the Council had focused on this year was highly relevant.

“Brain science is, in my opinion, one of the most important, if not the most important, area of scientific inquiry,” Professor Changeux said. “The brain is the target of many disabling diseases such as Alzheimer’s, schizophrenia, autism and depression,” and these would require a deeper understanding of the “brain as a chemical machine” to pave the way towards identifying and designing new medications.

**Professor Malik Mâaza** of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and at iThemba LABS-National Research Foundation, South Africa, and the holder of the UNESCO-UNISA Africa Chair in Nanosciences and Nanotechnology, UNESCO, was granted the 2018 José Vasconcelos World Award of Education. The award acknowledges his efforts in promoting education for societal development and sustainability and recognises his international and humanistic approach to science education, as well as his commitment to training and mentoring young scientists in Africa.

“I accept this unique recognition in the humblest manner and pledge to carry out the noble legacy of the late Honourable José Vasconcelos and instil it in the hearts, minds and souls of African youth and all those whose paths I cross from this moment on,” said Professor Mâaza after receiving the award.

The WCC Award Ceremony also granted special acknowledgements to young researchers and scholars from Hong Kong who have achieved outstanding performances in the fields of science, education or the arts.

“I am pleased to see nine of our own CityU scholars receiving special recognition diplomas from the WCC today,” President Kuo said. “Coming from engineering, creative media, science and public policy disciplines, they have outstanding records of giving back to society through their research.”

The nine promising young CityU research leaders are **Dr Ray Cheung Chak-chung**, Associate Professor, Department of Electronic Engineering; **Dr Johnny Ho Chung-yin**, Associate Professor, Department of Materials Science and Engineering; **Dr Lam Miu-ling**, Associate Professor, School of Creative Media; **Dr Patrick Lee Kwan-hon**, Associate Professor and Associate Dean, School of Energy and Environment; **Dr Eddie Ma Chi-him**, Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences; **Dr Shi Peng**, Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering; **Professor Wang Zuankai**, Department of Mechanical Engineering; **Dr Zhang Xiaoling**, Associate Professor, Department of Public Policy; and **Dr Zheng Bo**, Assistant Professor, School of Creative Media.

They were recognised with a commemorative diploma during the ceremony.

**Notes to editors**: Photos will be emailed.

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Professor Sir Colin Blakemore (2nd from left), Professor Jean-Pierre Changeux (4th from left), winner of the 2018 Albert Einstein World Award of Science, Professor Malik Mâaza (5th from left), winner of the 2018 José Vasconcelos World Award of Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin (4th from right), Professor Way Kuo (3rd from right) and guests at the 35th World Cultural Council Award Ceremony held at CityU.

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