

Make Your Choice, from the Innovation Capital

My dear students, teachers and friends,

Good morning.

On this special day, with Teachers' Day around the corner, we have gathered here to cordially welcome the 935 students newly enrolled from 21 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Welcome to Shenzhen! Welcome to South University of Science and Technology (SUSTC)! Also, this is my first address to you at the opening ceremony as the president of SUSTC. Unlike previous years, this year's opening ceremony is attended by not only new students but all the faculty and staff members as well. Besides, we have invited representatives from all walks of life who have been caring for and supporting the development of South University of Science and Technology to witness this occasion. This is a grand opening ceremony to greet the new arrivals; this is a family gathering of SUSTC. Five years ago, SUSTC had only 45 students; today, we boast a faculty team of nearly 180 well-qualified teachers with international backgrounds, and the number of our currently registered students have exceeded 2,100 for the first time, including the 12 graduate students that SUSTC has recruited and is co-training with partner universities. SUSTC has ushered in a new stage of "steady growth and rapid expansion!"

Today, I would like to congratulate all the new students:

My congratulations go to all the students who have been longing to study at SUSTC, because you have made a right choice with your dream and perseverance. You can proudly declare: "I'm in Shenzhen, the Innovation Capital; my university life has begun in SUSTC."

Hu Qing, a teacher newly on board once told me: "Big as the world is, SUSTC is my first choice." What an unswerving choice! Then why do we come to SUSTC? The answer is that we dare to make choices, we dare to make innovations, and we dare to seek adventures! We are a team with aspirations, a team with passion and more importantly, a team with a down-to-earth attitude and an indomitable spirit. In this team, there is Chair Professor Jeff Xia from Northwestern University USA, who has conquered the Painlevé Conjecture and aspires to build the world's best mathematics

department at SUSTC; there is Chair Professor Zheng Chunmiao from University of Alabama, the most outstanding Chinese American scientist in hydroscience, who is intent on turning our School of Environmental Science and Engineering into the best research base in the world to give all-out support for the water environment governance in Shenzhen; there is Professor Zhang Xumu, a distinguished senior expert as well as part of the “Yangtze River Scholars Program” and the “Thousand Talents Program”, who is going to invite Nobel Prize laureates to personally participate in the construction of our Department of Chemistry. Also, there are vice-presidents Wu Chuanyue and Tang Tao, Dean of General Affairs Lu Chun, Professor Zhao Yusheng, Professor Shan Xiaowen, Professor He Jiaqing, and Professor Cheng Xin, to name just a few; SUSTC has assembled over 20 experts of “Thousand International Talents Program” and over 40 experts of “Thousand Talents Program for Distinguished Young Scholars”; a host of insightful and capable professors have given up the favorable treatment in foreign countries and have come here, taking root in SUSTC and taking the whole world in view.

As “unswervingly” as you and they, I quitted my position as “vice-president” of Peking University and came to this exuberant land. I am here to join all of you, with passion and solid work, to build SUSTC into a modern world-class university with Chinese characteristics.

Choosing SUSTC means imagination, confidence and a broad horizon. Here we have the tradition of daring trials; we have the aspiration to be the best; we have emerging, interdisciplinary and frontier sciences; we have professors more than willing to communicate with students; and we have freely accessible laboratories; and we have an omni-bearing, all-dimensional and international campus!

By choosing SUSTC, you also have chosen the most innovative city in China – Shenzhen. It is the first special economic zone in China since the reform and opening-up. It features the spirit of “daring to be the world’s first”, the ethos of “encouraging innovation and tolerating failure”, the belief that “empty talk harms the nation, practical action helps it thrive”, and the mindset that “once in Shenzhen, you are a Shenzhener.”

Dear new students, from today on, you are members of South University of Science and Technology! You are to join us in her construction and development, share her glories and accomplishments, and hold yourselves accountable for her future. I am very impressed by Fuhe Yifei, a newly-enrolled student from Shanghai this year. He said that choosing SUSTC means choosing to make history, and making history is something to bring a sense of accomplishment!

SUSTC is a new type of university. With a new vision, a new thinking, a new system and a new mechanism, SUSTC is entrusted with the historical mission to lead the higher education reform, explore the modern university system and innovate talent training patterns; SUSTC is also committed to serving the construction of an innovation-oriented nation, the Pearl River Delta, and Shenzhen as a modern, international and innovative city. Being “new” means we have more opportunities to create: Here, you can found a new association, initiate a new research project, or establish a new maker center.

SUSTC is a university integrating research, innovation and entrepreneurship. SUSTC will focus on the world’s frontiers of science to enhance her competitiveness of basic research; focus on the major national demands to enhance her competitiveness of applied basic research; focus on Shenzhen’s scientific and technological progress to enhance her competitiveness of applied research. Here we aim to cultivate Nobel Prize candidate scholars, and we hope our teachers and students will accomplish as great exploits as those of Ren Zhengfei and Pony Ma.

If you are a good observer, you may have noticed that the Dasha River flowing through our beautiful campus is a river of wisdom: along the upper reaches are scattered SUSTC, graduate schools of Academia Sinica, Beijing University and Tsinghua University, Shenzhen Campus of Harbin Institute of Technology and other original innovators; in the lower reaches is the Shenzhen Science and Technology Garden, home to Mindray, ZTE and an array of other high-tech enterprises; further down the Dasha River empties into the Shenzhen Bay and the bosom of sea, representing the products “Created in Shenzhen” and “Created in China” going out to the world. I think this conveys a natural implication: SUSTC represents the

innovation source of Shenzhen in the future, and is destined to take the lead and go global.

SUSTC is a university of the future. During your four years on campus, SUSTC will undergo rapid development: We will complete the Phase II planning, bringing you a modern campus that is the most beautiful in China; following the discipline development plan approved by the Council of SUSTC, we will successively establish six schools, namely School of Science, School of Engineering, School of Life and Health Sciences, School of Business, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship; more than 20 departments and 23 frontier interdisciplinary research centers will spring up in the near future; according to the plan, SUSTC will build a team of about 800 high-quality teachers led by world-class talents in the next 10 years, featuring noble morality, rational structure, outstanding teaching and research competence, robust vitality, and international competitiveness. The enrollment size will be increased to 8,000 students (with 1,000 undergraduates and 1,000 postgraduates enrolled every year). Recently, SUSTC will also conclude agreements with Guangdong Province and Shenzhen City to jointly build a high-level university of technology. SUSTC will adhere to the top creative talent cultivation model with “credit system, collegiate system, tutorial system, internationalization, individualization and excellentization” as the core and characteristics. Of the first 29 graduates of SUSTC, 23 have been admitted to world-famous universities (including Yale University, University of Cambridge, Columbia University, California Institute of Technology) for higher degrees, and several of them have been employed by famous enterprises like Huawei and Tencent. I believe that as the students of SUSTC, you are guaranteed more and better opportunities for growth, further study and employment.

Boston has Harvard and MIT; San Francisco has Stanford and Berkeley; Beijing has Peking and Tsinghua; Shanghai has Jiaotong and Fudan. I firmly believe that SUSTC will become a world-class university as well as the most typical symbol of Shenzhen!

The university represents the beginning of an independent life. I have three hopes for your study at SUSTC:

I hope you will lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning. University education is only a small part of the whole life, but is of critical importance. In the short university time, you will be treated to a feast of abundant knowledge, shape the attitude to the unknown world, and cultivate your own learning methods and ability. Einstein once said: What we know or our knowledge is analogous to the part inside a circle; what we don't know is outside the circle. As our circle of knowledge expands, so does the circumference of darkness surrounding it. So the more we know, the more we feel that we don't know. It is precious life wisdom to feel our own ignorance, which propels us to tirelessly and eagerly explore new knowledge and stick to the belief of lifelong learning. The university days are a golden period to cultivate such a learning belief and lay a solid foundation for future learning. The unique collegiate system of SUSTC precisely creates a community for students of different grades and majors to closely interact and communicate with their tutors. I hope in SUSTC you can derive joy and satisfaction from collision of ideas and acquisition of new knowledge, exercise your minds and hands, cultivate your own learning system and methods, hold knowledge in awe, and shape the humble spirit to learn for life.

I hope you will develop an independent and confident temperament, and always cherish a critical spirit in exploring the unknown. Innovation starts from critical thinking, and persistent rational criticism is a shortcut to truth. In the university, you will learn various new knowledge, new theories, and new ideas. When you shift from passive acceptance to active thinking and analysis, and acquire new knowledge always with doubt, your knowledge and theory system will be firmer and more flexible. Only by thinking independently, eliminating the false and retaining the true in the vast world of knowledge, can you eventually make some findings and creations, and in turn open the door to success!

I hope you will learn to communicate and cooperate with others and cultivate a positive team spirit while inflating your ambition. When you go into a laboratory, you will find it very hard for an individual to complete any scientific research on his/her own today; instead, it often takes collective intelligence and joint efforts of a team. The European Organization for Nuclear Research, which detected the 'God particle' –

the Higgs boson in 2013, is composed of around 6,500 scientists and engineers from 80 nations and more than 3,000 full-time staff members. Their experiments and theoretical researches often required hundreds of people to work together. However, on the strength of their excellent team spirit and orderly coordination mechanism, their scientific researches always advanced efficiently and accurately. Team spirit is an important part of one's comprehensive quality as well as a key indicator of one's emotional quotient. Modern education not only emphasizes the cultivation of independence and individualism but more of the significance of teamwork. In the free and relaxed learning environment of university, I hope you can foster a cooperative spirit, improve communication skills, help each other, and work shoulder to shoulder with like-minded friends to achieve your dreams and change the world!

Dear teachers and students, where we are today is the venue for the 2011 Shenzhen Universiade. The slogan "Start Here, Make a Difference" remains clearly visible. This is the strength of Shenzhen spirit as well as the bugle call for us to charge. Finally, I would like to cite a few lines from *The Road Not Taken* written by one of the most popular American poets in the 20th century, Robert Frost, as our mutual encouragement:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.