

# Honorary Doctor of Science

## Professor XIE Shengwu

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Chairman:

Now is the time for me to introduce a scholar, a scientist, and an inspiring educator. Born and raised in Shanghai, Xie Shengwu was educated at the same university of which he is now the President: Shanghai Jiao Tong University. He was awarded a Master of Science in Optics in 1981, and in the ten years from 1981 to 1991, he was quickly promoted from Lecturer and Associate Professor to Professor and Chairman of the Department of Applied Physics and Vice President of the University. In 1994, he was Dean of Graduate School and then in 1997, he became President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The rapid advances in Mr Xie's career testify to his extraordinary talent and ability as a scholar and administrator, and they also reflect the tremendous changes that are taking place in China, and particularly in Shanghai, in the exciting period of reform and openness since the early 1980s. As one of China's new generation of leaders in higher education, President Xie plays a significant role in shaping the future of universities in accordance with the strategy of achieving the prosperity of the nation through science and education. He envisages China in the 21st century as a "knowledge economy" society in which the production and dissemination of knowledge and information will be the main social and economic activity. "The university," President Xie argues, "will be one of the most important pillars of a knowledge economy society and plays a central role in it. Not only is the university charged with the mission of producing a large amount of high-level talents, but it is also responsible to conduct scientific research in response to the economic reconstruction and social development." In his vision of the university in such a high-tech society, the human value is not lost but emphasized as he sees knowledge and talent as the crucial elements. For Shanghai Jiao Tong University, President Xie proposes as the governing idea "putting the human factor at the basis and the building of teaching staff as the first priority." He emphasizes the cultivation of creativity and all-round education for a new generation of students, and sets up the

ambitious goal of making Shanghai Jiao Tong University a first-rate university in the world.

Shanghai and Hong Kong are two great cities with special characteristics; they have been very important for the social, economical, and cultural development of China in modern history, and both have great potential and will play even more significant and crucial roles for China in its future prosperity in the next century. Both cities and their leaders have realized the importance of education in the society of the future and the new mode of social productivity based on knowledge and information, and it is our task as educators in the university to deliver the kind of quality education that adequately answers the needs of our communities in the twenty-first century. Facing the challenge of a new century and inspired by the vision of a better and more efficient higher education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and City University of Hong Kong have shared interest and common goals, and our two institutions have formed strong ties in research and academic exchange, which we must strengthen even further in the years ahead. It is therefore a great pleasure to have President Xie with us here today and to honour him in acknowledgement of his leadership and extraordinary contributions to the cause of China's higher education.

Mr Chairman, now I present to you Xie Shengwu, for the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.