Seminar on "Hidden Synergy: Hong Kong's Role in the Development of Science and Technology in Chinese Higher Education"

Date: 19 February 2025 (Wednesday)
Time: 15:00-16:00
Venue: E33-2036, Faculty of Education
Language: English
Registration: Online Registration (https://go.um.edu.mo/evuaw5be or)
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Speaker:
Prof. Yisu ZHOU is an Associate Professor and Programme Director of Doctor of Education at the Faculty of Education, the University of Macau. Prof. Zhou has explored a wide range of topics concerning people and institutions in education. His research draws from a lifelong interest in understanding people and places, which began during his time as a rural schoolteacher after college. Prof. Zhou's current project examines the development of science and technology at the tertiary level in the Greater China region.

Abstract:
This paper examines the rapid growth of China's science and technology (S&T) sector within the broader context of higher education, focusing on Hong Kong's crucial yet understudied role in this transformation. While conventional narratives emphasize China's relationship with the United States, our analysis reveals Hong Kong's distinct contribution as a vital bridge in China's scientific development. Drawing on comprehensive data from the Web of Science, institutional archives, university leader biographies, and PhD dissertation records, we identify three key patterns. First, Hong Kong consistently ranks as mainland China's second most significant international collaborator in S&T, surpassed only by the United States. Second, this collaboration shows clear temporal characteristics, with partnerships intensifying during the 1990s as Hong Kong's research doctoral programs matured and mainland students sought advanced training. Third, the collaboration exhibits distinct geographical patterns, with Beijing maintaining centrality despite distance, while Guangdong leverages its proximity to Hong Kong. Our findings challenge the perception of Hong Kong as merely a finance-driven city, revealing its role in fostering a robust academic community that facilitated knowledge transfer between mainland institutions and global scientific networks. This relationship thrived despite cultural and ideological differences, combining mainland China's motivated talent pool with Hong Kong's academic freedom and international connections. By documenting this understudied dimension of China's educational development, this paper offers new insights into the forces behind the country's emergence as a global scientific power.