

Message from the President

The year 2003-4 was highlighted by the Annual General Meeting held on 22nd November 2003 and the election of the new office bearers of the College. Our immediate past President, Professor Leung Nai Kong, retired from the Presidency after serving the College in this capacity for two consecutive terms. Thanks to Professor Leung, the College has moved forward in big strides under his leadership both in fulfilling our role of setting and maintaining the standard of Paediatric training locally, and in enhancing the College's international profile. For six long years, Professor Leung has worked almost full time for the College, sitting in the President's couch behind the big wooden desk in the College chamber for several hours every day. It is hard to think of the College not having him as our helmsman for even one day. Fortunately Professor Leung continues to guide us after relinquishing his presidency through his active participation in all College activities both in the Council as an ex-officio member and as the chairman of the House Committee. It gives me great pleasure and reassurance to inform you that it will be a long while away before we say "happy retirement" to him.

In the AGM, I was extremely honoured to be elected to succeed Professor Leung as the third President of the College. I fully understand that it is no easy task following the footsteps of my two predecessors, Professor CY Yeung and Professor NK Leung. Much to my relief, I have inherited a most supportive Council and at the same time blessed with a team of very capable office bearers elected on the same day – Professor Low Chung Kai, Louis (Vice President), Dr Wong Sik Nin (Hon. Secretary) and Dr Ko Wai Keung, Frederick (Hon. Treasurer). I have counted on them for their unfailing support in serving the College for the last twelve months, and will continue to do so for the next two years.

Because of the SARS outbreak, many of our activities came to a halt in the first half of the year 2003. However, like the rest of Hong Kong which is recovering rapidly from the aftermath of the epidemic, our College resumed all its activities soon after the outbreak was over. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Chairpersons and members of the various standing committees who have served the College in the previous term, and also those who took over from them starting November last year, for making this possible. In addition to the regular activities such as the annual "Paediatric Update series in Child Health" jointly organized for doctors and nurses with the Paediatric Society, the "Paediatric Update Meetings" organized for our fellows, members, and associates, and the Paediatric Advance Life Support (PALS) Course, we organized the First Asia-Pacific Regional Adolescent Health Conference "Towards Healthy Adolescence: Intersectoral Collaboration" in January 2004 in collaboration with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University School of Nursing and

Hong Kong Paediatric Nurses Association. Later in July, the 5th Guangdong-Hong Kong Paediatric Exchange Meeting was held in collaboration with the Chinese Medical Association Guangdong Paediatric Society at the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine Building. Instead of sending our delegation to Guangdong, this was the first time when colleagues from the Mainland came to Hong Kong to attend the meeting. As in previous years, our College and the Hong Kong College of Physicians co-organized the annual joint Scientific Meeting of the two Colleges in October 2004. Through the College's wide network of connection, our educational activities were also extended to the Chinese Mainland. The H.M. Lui Fellowship, established in the College by a generous donation from the Providence Fund, is intended to sponsor young Paediatric trainees to receive training overseas. The Fellowship for 2003-2004 was awarded to Dr Liu Xiaorong from the Beijing Children's Hospital. The College is now inviting nominations for the H. M. Lui Visiting Professorship, which is established also by the Providence Fund for the promotion of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Hepatology in Hong Kong. In support of the College's effort in accrediting subspecialty training, the Providence Fund has also agreed to provide funding for the College to invite overseas experts to come to Hong Kong to assist in the review and promotion of subspecialty development.

In addition to organizing educational activities, our College has revised the guidelines for basic and higher training in order to enable our trainees to cope better with the changing pattern in Paediatric practice. The guidelines for continuing medical education (CME) have also been extensively rewritten in preparation for the transition from CME to CPD (Continuous Professional Development) as recommended by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. Compared to the old ones, the new guidelines are designed to accommodate more professional activities for the purpose of offering CME (or CPD) points, and will soon be promulgated to all fellows for consultation. As an endeavour to promote subspecialty training, the Task Force on Higher Training of Paediatric Subspecialties, under the leadership of the Chairman of the Accreditation Committee Dr CW Chan, has finalized the Guidelines on the Criteria for Accreditation of Paediatric Subspecialty Training Programme. The College is now ready to consider application from subspecialty groups for subspecialty accreditation. As in previous years, our College organizes the MRCP and DCH Examination jointly with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health twice a year. The MRCP Examination this year has been revamped to make it more structured and, hopefully, fairer. Changing to the new format inevitably causes a substantial amount of work to our colleagues in the Examination Committee, the College Secretariat, and the host examination centres. Thanks to all these colleagues we have put up a good show in our first Examination adopting the new format which was held in November this year.

Over the last year, our College continued to enjoy a steady growth in its membership, which has now reached a record number of 598, with 466 fellows, 56 members, and 76 associates.

This inevitably requires expansion of the Secretariat and leads to an increased demand on office space. Thanks to the effort of the House Committee in negotiating with the Academy, we will very shortly move into a larger College chamber presently occupied by the Hong Kong College of Physicians. The new chamber has a floor space 50% larger than what we have now. Growth in physical size must however be accompanied by growth in strength – strength in achieving our objectives which can be summarized as: maintaining high-quality training for our trainees, functioning as a child advocate, and promoting research in Paediatrics for public benefit. I would like to thank all our fellows, members and associates for their support over the last twelve months which is the source of strength for the College. I look forward to your continued support in the years to come.

Prof. FOK Tai-fai
President