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**Press Release**

**UM is committed to research excellence, says Rector Wei Zhao at UM’s congregation 2011**

Today (27 May 2011), the University of Macau (UM) held the Congregation 2011 at the Macau East Asian Games Dome. More than 3000 people, including approx. 1000 graduates, members of the University Assembly and the University Council of UM, government officials, community leaders, representatives from the educational circle, parents and UM staff, attended the ceremony.

Chief Executive of Macao SAR and Chancellor of UM Dr. Chui Sai On, accompanied by Chair of the University Council of UM Dr. Tse Chi Wai, UM Rector Wei Zhao, Vice Rector (academic affairs) Prof. Simon Ho, Vice Rector (research) Prof. Rui Martins, Vice Rector (administration) Dr. Alex Lai, presided over the ceremony.

In his speech Dr. Chui said: “Through thirty years of development, the University of Macau has established—and is constantly improving—a set of sound and scientific systems on teaching, academic research and university governance, with the quality of scientific research on steady increase. The rapid progress of the university in hardware, faculty team development, teaching quality, and overall competitiveness, has earned the university high recognition and greater support from the SAR government.” He said that the future of UM will be “as beautiful as the new campus”. He also expressed hope that UM can “seize the new opportunities and rise up to the challenges” and work hard to “realize the goal of becoming a world-class university”. At the end of his speech, he encouraged the students to “embark on the new stage of life with tenacity, persistence, an enterprising spirit, a strong sense of social responsibility, and a willingness to pursue constant improvement” and “contribute to a better future of Macao SAR” and make the alma mater proud of them.

In his speech Rector Wei Zhao said “In fact, motivation for research shares a lot of similarities with those of modern sports. First, we conduct research, typically, for practical applications, for example, invention of a new kind of medicine. We can liken this to people who exercise every day in the hope that it will result in some practical benefits; for example, running daily will increase our speed and endurance to enable us to run faster in life threatening incidents, for instance. However, practical applications should not be the only reason for conducting research, in the same way as practical benefit should not be the sole purpose of playing sports. Sports test our physical and mental strengths and persistence, whereas research explores the unknowns and challenges to go beyond the limits. In both cases, a

holistic approach is required. That is why we believe that research is an essential part of education for our students.”

Rector Wei Zhao added that both sports and research have been a “means to attract talents”. He said that some top European and American universities “utilize their research opportunities and emphasis on sports to attract hundreds of thousands of talents and top notch athletes”. So he believes that UM’s “dedication to and emphasis on a research-focused culture will also attract many talented scholars to come here”.

Rector Wei Zhao further added that sports and research are “effective ways to galvanize the population at large”, and the “active development” of research will be “crucial for Macao’s long-term development”. He said that’s why UM is committed to “pursuing research excellence for Macao, for China, and beyond”.

Student representative Lai Hok Chio thanked the support of the teachers, staff and their families on behalf of all graduates and expressed hope that UM can “scaling new heights in teaching and research”. The student said: “Sometimes I do think that it is a pity that I had not been born a few years later to make me able in time to study on the new campus on Hengqin Island so that I could be exposed to a more lively campus culture, enjoy better teaching resources, and reap the benefit of studying under the residential college system. A few years of total immersion in the campus life and getting along with teachers and fellow students in the community atmosphere of the residential colleges would not only make us more dedicated to our study, but would also offer us an unforgettable life experience.”

Caption:

1. More than 2000 guests attend UM’s Congregation 2011
2. Dr. Chui Sai On hopes UM can seize the new opportunities and work hard to realize the goal of becoming a world-class university.
3. UM Rector Wei Zhao says that breakthroughs in research are crucial for Macao’s long-term development

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