

The Speech at the Annual Conference and the 27th Anniversary of the Magna Charta Universitatum

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It's a great honor to have this opportunity to visit the University of Bologna, which is known as the "Mother of Universities" and to deliver a speech at the Annual Conference of the 27th Anniversary of the Magna Charta Universitatum as a representative of Chinese universities.

While economic and social development gives birth to universities, universities also help to push economic and social development. In contemporary society, universities attract all eyes, for they are not only the places which produce and propagate knowledge, but also the places that promote scientific research, social innovation and cultural inheritance. The purpose of cultivating talents is not only to meet the demands of economic development, but also to resolve increasingly serious problems regarding resource shortages and environmental needs as well as cultural conflicts. Generally speaking, universities are playing an increasingly vital role in the process of social development.

The first modern universities in China were born between the late 19th Century and the early 20th Century, which only covers about 120 years. As compared to the 900-year-long history of the University of Bologna, Chinese modern universities are historically young, but are growing rapidly, especially during the last 30 years. With the high speed of China's economic development, Chinese universities are realizing their historical roots and their current role as a world class educational system. China is ranking as one of the best countries for education and in this process, Tongji University always act as the pioneer.

Tongji University's mission has always been to aid the poor and relieve the weak. In addition, since the beginning of the 21st Century, Tongji has established the additional purpose to build a world class university oriented to sustainable development by

integrating the concept of green ecology into every discipline and specialty. This concept is central in cultivating students' talents, scientific research, social services and cultural inheritance. Tongji University would like to work together with universities from all over the world to disseminate and practice this concept as well as build relevant cooperation. Tongji is now the president of the Global University Partnership on Environment and Sustainability of UNEP; we have also founded the China Green University Network and the International Green Campus Alliance (IGCA). Furthermore, we have taken on the relevant responsibilities of these organizations. We hope that more and more universities will take part in the above unions and make joint efforts to promote the sustainable development of human beings.

We also hope to carry out joint talent training with universities from all over the world. It's known to all that the fundamental task of a university is to cultivate talents. The orientation of Tongji University is to build leadership and expert skills in our faculty and students in order to lead the needed socially sustainable development. To achieve this purpose, it's important to cultivate students' international vision and intercultural communication competence. Although in the era of the Internet, advanced higher education and various cultural concepts can be shared with each other; knowledge, science and technology can circulate around the world which helps to promote wider academic exchange and cooperation. However, face to face communication still cannot be replaced. Therefore, we are looking forward to cooperating with more universities on student mobility, credit exchange, joint curriculum design, etc. in order to cultivate students' creativity, abilities to innovate and their entrepreneurial skills in a dynamic and ever-changing world.

We are also willing to expand our exchange and cooperation with universities to include more fields. Tongji University began to cooperate with universities and companies in Germany and the whole of Europe almost a century ago. We are actively cooperating with Italian universities such as the University of Bologna, Politecnico di Milano and Politecnico di Torino and we are constantly promoting our internationalization. In recent years, Tongji University has set up eight institutes as the platform for International cooperation, including Sino-German, Sino-French, Sino-Italian, Sino-Finnish,

Sino-Spanish, as well as United Nations, and have signed over 200 cooperation agreements with overseas universities. We have established research centers with multinational enterprises including Volkswagen, Siemens, Bayer and IBM. Tongji University has become a vital bridge for China to communicate with other countries in the aspects of education, culture, science and technology. Each year, we send about 6,000 teachers and students abroad and receive about 7,000 foreign experts, scholars and students. We have made significant achievements in carrying out joint research with R & D departments of multinational companies. However, in the process of high-speed economic and social development, there is still a large number of science and technology issues which require our attention and study. It would be a great pleasure if we could have the participation of our foreign colleagues.

Dear rectors and colleagues, Tongji University is located in Shanghai and is one of the most livable cities in China. Tongji is 108 years' old and is considered to be one of the most time-honored and outstanding universities in all of China. Our school motto "In the same boat, for the same goal" embodies a spirit of solidarity, which helps bind us together in making concerted efforts to overcome difficulties. While facing common challenges, we will adhere to the unification of academic freedom and social responsibility, cultural inheritance and technological innovation, global consciousness and national identification, adaptability to the requirements and the courage to lead revolutions. In summary, we will devote ourselves to assemble more resources to address our common problems.

We sincerely invite you to come to visit Tongji University and hope that we can establish an all-round exchange and cooperation in the fields of science, engineering, humanities, and sociology and carry out joint training of our collective future talents.

Thank you!