

Advice to students: be moderate

Student unions of individual institutions should not overly concentrate on political issues as far as student activities are concerned.

The Director of the Hongkong Polytechnic, Dr Keith Legg, said some student unions have adopted an extreme political stand and hence neglected the non-political desires and needs of the majority of their fellow students.

Dr Legg was speaking at the opening ceremony of the 19th annual conference of the Hongkong Federation of Students.

However, Dr Legg said student bodies should not ignore political implications and the best forum for such open debate is in the federation of student bodies.

He said that even on such an occasion, extreme political stands can defeat objectives.

"Such stands have been adopted by student federations in many parts of the world in the past, and it is currently interesting to note the considerable swing, over the last few years, to more moderate student political attitudes. It is especially true in the United States and Europe," Dr Legg said.

He said this may be due to the recent worldwide recession and to a growing realisation that the world has to live and work together, and to learn to share both the good and the bad - often irrespective of political, religious or racial prejudice.

Dr Legg added that the world is currently facing considerable technological change.

"Industrialisation, in particular, brings in its train a host of environmental problems such as excessive noise, air and water pollution, waste of all kinds, odious smells and deteriorating urban living," he said.

He said all of this concerns people and society in general and in particular, the need to retain and improve the degree of self-respect of social groups and the individual within the total society.

"The world ignores such factors at its peril, and you as young people will greatly influence the future direction to be taken. Only by sound debate, open and free discussion and good decision will that direction be the right one," he said.