

CommonWealth Magazine Interviews Dean Kuo-Hua Chen: Tamkang University Equips Students with Future Skills and Superpowers

Campus focus

Dean of the College of Education at Tamkang University, Professor Kuo-Hua Chen, was recently interviewed on the online program CommonWealth Learning—Sustainability Talent Salon (「天下學習—永續人才會客室」) hosted by the CommonWealth Magazine Group. The discussion centered around the importance of "future literacy" and Tamkang University's innovative approaches to cultivating future-ready talent.

As a member of Tamkang's Future-Oriented Committee, Prof. Chen emphasized that equipping students with future literacy is a vital skill for adapting to rapidly changing societies. He highlighted that as early as the 1960s, Tamkang University adopted the educational philosophy of "Internationalization," "Information-Oriented Education," and "Future-Oriented Education," embedding "Future-Oriented Education" deeply into its curriculum design to ensure every student develops a forward-looking vision and capabilities. After decades of effort, Tamkang University was recognized in 2024 as a future studies institution by the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF), becoming the 4th institution globally to achieve this distinction. This milestone underscores the university's dedication to advancing future-oriented education and producing talent with a mindset geared toward the future.

Chen explained that "future literacy" consists of 5 core competencies: foresight, insight, creativity, imagination, and collaboration. These abilities enable students to not only identify trends but also act effectively and shape the future in uncertain times. To instill these competencies, Tamkang University introduced a series of required courses three years ago, such as "Exploring Sustainability" and "AI and Programming Languages," covering areas like environmental sustainability, artificial intelligence, and technological applications to build a solid foundation for students.

Chen further noted that individuals without future literacy are often passive recipients of others' decisions, whereas those with future literacy can discern direction, plan actions, and lead teams. The impact of future literacy is evident not only in students' academic achievements but also in their career development. He shared examples of alumni who returned to the university 3 to 5 years after graduation, acknowledging the importance of future literacy in adapting to changes and advancing their careers. They noted that while professional skills may become outdated, future literacy is a lifelong asset embodying the essence of lifelong learning.

In 2023, Tamkang University's trademark " $AI + \text{SDGs} = \infty$ " was officially registered with the Intellectual Property Office of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Chen emphasized the synergy between sustainability and future studies, proposing the concept of " $\text{Sustainability} + \text{Future} = \infty$." He stressed that designing for the future must incorporate sustainability, as future studies serve as a critical vehicle for sustainable development, and sustainability is a core objective of future studies. This integration allows students to approach future challenges from a long-term perspective, design sustainable solutions, and ensure that future generations have greater choices and hope. It creates societal value and empowers students to become key leaders in shaping the future.

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