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Located at the heart of Asia, Hong Kong is the premier gateway to China, the world's largest trading economy. As such, it is a preferred entry point to China for businesses and a magnet for Asia's financial and trading community.

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Postgraduate Success

Dreaming of Sustainability- The Origins of an Environmental Scientist

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in Asia¹



2nd
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Young Universities
in the World^{1,2}



30th
in the World³

¹ THE Young University Rankings, 2017 ² QS University Rankings: Top 50 Under 50, 2016 ³ QS World University Rankings, 2018

Dreaming of Sustainability- The Origins of an Environmental Scientist



Tesfaldet Gebreegziabher

PhD Graduate in Environmental Engineering



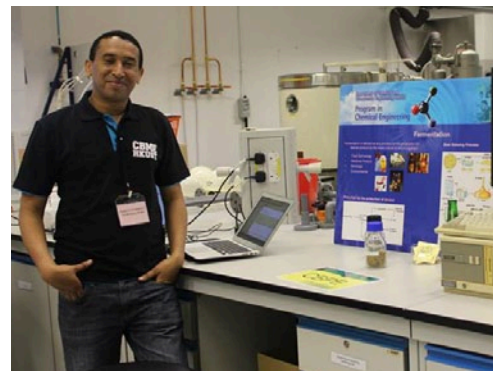
Realizing His Potential

Coming from Ethiopia, a developing country in the horn of Africa sometimes known as the 'land of origins', Tesfaldet was driven by an ambition to work in the field of energy research and dreamed of going to graduate school after completing his studies at home and in India. In particular, he was fascinated by the environmental side of energy research, which formed part of a desire to contribute to developing sustainable and far-reaching solutions to the challenges of the energy sector. Unfortunately, the lack of postgraduate programs and qualified faculty mentors in Ethiopia once constrained his dream.

Searching for the Perfect Program

To turn the dream into reality, Tesfaldet started looking into global programs that would suit his needs. In 2011, he accepted an offer at HKUST to pursue his most important academic qualification to that point, an environmental engineering PhD under the supervision of Professor David Hui.

"I was awarded a full scholarship for my studies based on academic merit and the proposal I submitted to my prospective mentor. After taking the sound advice of Professor Hui, I adjusted my focus to environmental sustainability and renewable energy, one of the five research pillars of the Environmental Engineering program."



Building an Academic Portfolio

The title of Tesfaldet's thesis was 'Integration of Biomass Drying and Power Generation'. Made up of both theoretical and experimental study of the drying process of solid fuel, its central aim was to improve energy efficiency during thermochemical conversion. With this in mind, he was able to design a strategy for reducing the heat required to dry biomass by integrating it with an existing power plant. None of this would have been possible without the state of the art lab equipment at HKUST, combined with continuous support and mentoring from the department.

"My time at HKUST helped shape me into the person I am today. Most importantly, I acquired excellent research skills and a determined work ethic, traits which are reflected in my publication record in peer-review journals since leaving HKUST."

Outside of Scientific research, Tesfaldet learned a lot from the Teaching Assistant Training Program organized by the Center for Education Innovation, which helps prospective academics learn effective teaching strategies. On the other hand, the tailored writing and presentation courses offered by the Center for Language Education were vital in enabling him to complete his PhD, especially when presenting research at international conferences.

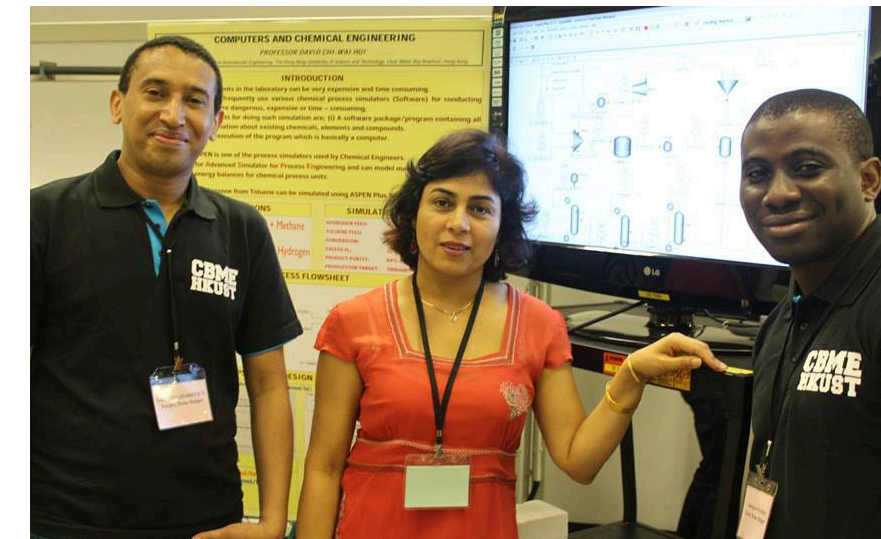


Variety is the Spice of Career Progression

"Thanks to the prestigious status of HKUST, I have a varied and successful academic career in the years after my graduation."

Upon returning to Ethiopia, Tesfaldet was asked to chair the Contract Research and Publication Office at Mekelle University. At the same time, he worked as an assistant professor teaching undergraduate courses at the Mekelle Institute of Technology, and postgraduate courses at the Ethiopian Institute of Technology Mekelle.

Following these roles, he was hired as a junior professor at EDULINK- Energy Agro-Food International Intensive School, giving seminars and lectures to international students from East African universities. His research training and record at HKUST proved an invaluable asset in securing this extremely competitive position. Currently, he works as a research associate in the Petroleum Institute, Abu Dhabi, on a research project entitled 'High Energy Efficiency Power Generation in Oil and Gas Facilities'.



"I'm often reminded of my time at HKUST, with its stunning backdrop of natural beauty and community of people from all corners of the world, a remarkable melting-pot that contributes to the production of successful research, excellent teaching and a vibrant academic culture. When reminiscing I can almost feel the breeze of South China Sea working its way across the strikingly beautiful football field, bringing a fresh smell of innovation and anticipation in its wake."

