

# COLLOQUIUM BY GERARD POSTIGLIONE

## THE KEY QUESTION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CHINA'S PRECARIOUS BALANCE

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TIME: 1-2PM, TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

VENUE: AB 1079

**Speaker:** Gerard A. Postiglione, Associate Dean (research), Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

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### ABSTRACT:

With the world moving toward mass higher education and the spectacular rise of Asia's flagship research universities, this talk will raise a key question for China: Will the country become a major or partial power by 2020 in the international higher education with a unique and exportable university model?

The global influence of China's universities in 2025 will hinge on how it handles a precarious balance between domestic demands and aspirations to go global. The domestic demands include those by employers for knowledge and skills to upgrade production, by urban middle class households for status culture that distinguished their children, and by the rural poor, migrants, and minorities for equitable access to higher education and jobs. However, these demands remain subsidiary to the state's demand for national prosperity, power and strength, stability and unity.

The aspirations of universities to going global concerns how to promote internationalization and introduce liberal studies, while protecting educational sovereignty, and gradually seceded institutional autonomy to universities. Handling any two is easier than managing all three at once.

By 2020 more China will have more students with a higher education than the entire workforce of the United States, where it sends more students than does any other country. At the same time, China is fast becoming one of the most popular international destinations for overseas study by students from all over the world. Harvard University's Professor Ezra Vogel may be

right that the result of China's opening and reform for higher education has been an intellectual vitality that may be as broad and deep as the Western Renaissance. But the extent to which China will have a unique and exportable university model of social justice that powers international higher education in 2025 or 2035 remains an open question.

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**BIO:**

Gerard A. Postiglione is Associate Dean for Research, Chair Professor in Sociology and Educational Policy, Humanities and Social Science Prestigious Fellow, and Director of the Wah Ching Centre of Research on Education, Faculty of Education, at the University of Hong Kong.

He has published over 150 journal articles and book chapters, and 16 books. His books include: *Education and Social Change in China*, *China's National Minority Education*, *Asian Higher Education*, *East Asia at School*, *Crossing Borders in East Asian Higher Education*, and *China's Precarious Balance* (forthcoming). He is editor of the journal, *Chinese Education and Society*, and four book series on education in China. He received the Best Book Award from the Comparative and International Education Society, the Outstanding Research Supervisor Award from the University of Hong Kong, and the Humanities and Social Science Prestigious Fellowship Award by the Research Grants Council. He also received a Lifetime Contribution Award for studies in higher education from the Comparative and International Education Society in USA in 2015. His autobiography is forthcoming in *Leaders in the Sociological Study of Education* (Brill Press).

He has been a consultant for projects of the Asian Development Bank, Department for International Development (UK), Institute of International Education (US), International Development Research Center (CA), Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, and other international agencies.

He advised the China Ministry of Education on educational policy. He was also invited to brief the Office of the US Secretary, Department of Education on education reform in China, and is a member of the National Committee on US-China Relations.

He held sabbatical appointments at Stanford University School of Education, Yale University Council on East Asian Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Columbia University Institute for East Asian Studies, Boston College's Center for International Higher Education, and George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development. In China, he held visiting appointments at the Chinese Academy of Social Science, Peking University and Shanghai Jiaotong University.