

Preface

This issue of the *AAOU Journal* contains nine papers, most of which have been selected from the award-winning papers at the Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities in 2013.

In recent years, open and distance learning (ODL) has been playing a vital role in meeting educational needs in both developed and developing countries because of its flexibility, cost-effectiveness and freedom from restrictions on study time and place. The ODL mode can be further strengthened by integrating innovative technologies and various forms of media to reach its students in remote areas in an effective manner. The papers in this issue discuss a range of aspects of ODL: the emerging trends; its application in various disciplines; its relationship with human capacity-building; the technologies and strategies used to provide ODL education; and building a global future through research and innovative practices. The authors of these papers share their studies and analyses of these issues, and it is hoped that they will facilitate collaboration between institutions on projects emphasizing the use of technology in ODL.

The Presidency of the AAOU has just been taken up by the Open University of Hong Kong. A new Editorial Board has been formed, and the Board and the AAOU Secretariat are adopting stringent criteria for the paper selection and review processes to uphold the quality of the journal. The presentation of the journal has also been modified.

We would like to thank all those involved in the production of this issue, especially the authors for sharing their wisdom and experiences in their papers. We also extend our sincere thanks to the reviewers for their expertise and comments, and to the staff of the AAOU Secretariat for their efficient support in handling the papers and the design work.

Kam Cheong LI
Executive Editor