

2019 School Opening to 2-Year College Freshmen

Good morning, my dear freshmen from the 2-year college program. Welcome back to Wenzao. I know most of you are from our 5-year program, but some are new. I am glad that I have the chance to talk to you and this is a very good opportunity for you to catch up with the important ideas about Wenzao.

First, I would like to congratulate you on your new role as Wenzaorians. Students of the 2-year program form one of our elite groups. The Sisters of the Ursuline Order established this school more than 53 years ago. They devote themselves to helping young people to develop potentials and be responsible for what they do. Ursuline schools are well known for quality education throughout Europe, in the US, and in many different parts of the world. Now an increasing number of international students are attracted to come over for short-term visits and long-term studies in Wenzao. You will enhance your language skills by being exposed to the multilingual environment and to different cultures. With your competence and confidence, you will soon walk abreast with people from around the world and contribute your accomplishments. Wenzao's high academic status today is the result of many years of efforts made by teachers, students, and especially those friends who share our values and appreciate our achievements. It is the pride and honor you should cherish. As Wenzaorians, you are expected to live up to Wenzao's good reputation with your performance.

In what ways are Wenzaorians unique? Your Wenzaorian DNA, that is the 3Ls: Life, Language and Leadership, will give you more strengths to face challenges in your new life. You will have to master not only two foreign languages but also the professional skills that lead you to career success. For example, you will find language classes conducted either in English or in the target language. English as a medium of instruction has always been a request and rewarding demand for our teaching excellence. Students are immersed in the whole-language environment for accuracy and fluency. On the other hand, teachers demonstrate an advanced application in the teaching profession, on top of their ability to teach in their native language, such as Chinese. Once you acquire these skills from your teachers, you can easily switch between languages both for learning and for work.

However, what does English or a foreign language mean to you? In the AI age what challenges would you be facing as a Wenzao student or as a liberal art university student? Artificial Intelligence, or simply computers, can learn like mankind and now it is learning fast, including languages. Fortunately, when God created the world, He also gave a special gift to mankind: creativity. Wenzao's liberal art education provides a nurturing ground for us to grow more human than robotic, with the ability to think, to select, to analyze, to interpret and to review in meaningful ways. Language is taken as the source for inspiration and creation, rather than a simple tool for job-hunting.

Now use your creativity and think about my two questions for you: "What do you want to become or expect when you complete the program at Wenzao and what's your vision?" If you can't answer me right now, please keep these questions in your mind in the next 5 or 10 years. Remember that when you graduate from Wenzao, it is not the end of your education but the time of putting your competence to real test. It's competence and attitude, instead of knowledge or skills, that keeps us going forward and paving the way to the future. A lot of the new jobs we have today didn't exist 5 years ago, but they were created to meet new needs and were given new perspectives. It is creativity that opens up the gateway to explore and try new possibilities. Future is to be created and not taught and I believe no one can teach you better than yourself. Of course, there will be a lot of trials and errors, but you will have new horizons right in front of you. You will map out a future out of your self-learning.

Your two years here will fly so quickly, even before you are aware of them and this is the reason why, finally, I would like you to make the best use of all the resources that you can get from Wenzao, especially in a more practical and job-oriented mindset. With your advanced language proficiency and multi-cultural background, you stand on a firm footing to develop a promising career. For example, the demand at the job market for professionals in Chinese teaching has become a trend much in your favor. You will outshine others by being able to teach Chinese not only in English but also in other languages. Related applications such as instructional technology will contribute to the success of this career. You can be greatly empowered by a variety of module programs, ranging from digital contents design, communication arts, to business and cultural affairs management.

Please remember to explore your talents and move out of your comfort zone for broader horizons. Look around you with new eyes, find insights to meanings, and feel the world with new passion. Learning comes in many forms. Your active involvement will lead you closer to your fulfillment. Thank you for listening and I wish you an enriching experience in the new semester.