

34 startups attend HKU's first ever Startup Job Fair

By Preya Shah

HKU held its first ever Startup Job Fair organized by CEDARS on Feb. 5, 2016, a day after the annual three-day long Careers Fair. 34 startups attended the fair, looking for students to fill up their part-time, full-time and internship positions.

Startups that featured at the fair included First Code Academy, MakerBay, Cocoon, EasyVan and XDYNAMICS, from industries such as technology, software engineering and videography.

Hong Kong's startup culture is growing; it is the fifth-fastest growing startup ecosystem in the world, according to think tank Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre. In a society where finding steady jobs is the norm, there has been a remarkable 46% increase in the number of startups within a year, taking the number up to more than 1500.



The general perception among students regarding startups is that they are a risky option. Ashwin Dokania, year four student studying Electronics and Communications Engineering verbalized a common fear among students, that "in a startup you're not sure: it might be a

success, it might not.” Another student, Caleb Leung said that working in established companies would be “more secure.”

When asked about students’ concerns regarding startups, Lok Wong, the Business Development Manager at the startup MyiCellar Limited countered the general perception. “As a student, you’re still young. You’ve still got time so why not try something different before you commit to a corporate long career,” he said.



Several others mentioned that working at startups had its own set of perks when compared to established companies. Paul Verron, Producer at The HK Fixer made a point about startups having an edge. “A startup is a smaller organization, so as an intern you will have much more empowerment and be exposed to more situational challenges than in a big company where you are diluted into many employees and responsibilities and stratified,” he said. HKU student Mayuri Wadhvani said, “You get to learn more with startups because they’re in their starting process and you get to be more involved with what they actually do,” and fellow student Justin Chung agreed.

Emmanuel Ofembe, an HKU alumnus from the class of 2013 who has worked in 4 startups, said that he wanted “a bigger experience and more self-expression” which he did not think he could get with bigger companies. He responded with a confident yes when asked if he has achieved this goal.



A number of students had gone to the fair to explore their options and find out more about what the startups have to offer. Leung said that the fair was more or less helpful to him. Dokania elaborated by comparing the Startup Fair to the Careers Fair, finding the latter “much more professional.”

The growth of startups in Hong Kong may be a phenomenon worth exploring, especially with advice from Verron who simply said, “Go for it.”