

On Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, CIL Director Professor Lailani Alcantara hosted APU alumnus and current CEO of *Nature's Care* and *Hunter's Dream* Michael Wu. This was the first part of CIL's highly anticipated webinar series "COVID-19 and Beyond: Towards an Inclusive Workplace and Society." While this was not Michael Wu's first time giving a talk at his alma mater – as he remains an active mentor to APU's Global Business Leaders – his insight into COVID-19's impact on businesses and outlooks towards the future was markedly different from all his previous talks.

In keeping with the theme of the webinar, Mr. Wu shared how his business has dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, including engaging employees and collaborators in changing the model of his yakiniku restaurant within only seven days, and converted the challenges into growth opportunities. He highlighted the need for leaders to accept the reality, respond decisively and quickly to thrive in difficult times. Additionally, Michael Wu emphasized the importance of creativity and flexibility in order to keep the business going and "for staff to have a job to continue working."

Mr. Wu shared his view on the new workplace, which he believes to be "more inclusive than ever before" as it allows more work flexibility, broadens the global talent pool and accelerates innovation. This feeling of inclusivity in the workplace is doubly important due to Michael Wu's own experience as an immigrant in Australia.

Mr. Wu also gave advice to the participants about to embark on job hunting, and told them that while the global pandemic has certainly affected numerous industries, the fundamental skills that employers look for remain mostly the same. He recommended young people to look for businesses that they believe they can excel in and contribute to.

Mr. Wu ended the webinar by calling leaders to include people in decision making process "not based on what they look like, or what they say, but on their abilities, their capacities in the workplace" in order to create a more inclusive work environment and society. Even though it can be easier said than done, making inclusion a core value is important not only to the workplace, but also other organizations and communities.