

Dear Students and Staff,

Normally, we gather in the ILLC common room to celebrate happy occasions. Unfortunately, today is not such a day. We are here to pay tribute to our beloved student Shengmen Luo, who tragically passed away a few weeks ago. This news came as a complete shock to all of us. I still remember seeing him in my class a few days before he went missing.

Shengmen joined the Master of Logic in September 2024. I remember reading his admissions application very clearly. It was academically outstanding, supported by strong letters from Professors Dag Westerståhl and Johan van Benthem, both his professors at Tsinghua University. But what caught my attention even more was a video he included of a piano performance from a concert. It was absolutely beautiful, and I remembered it for many months to come. We will play that video today. We will also play a music piece composed by him. Shengmen was definitely a person of multiple talents and I find listening to his music completely captivating.

Shengmen's mother told me that, although he graduated from the prestigious Tsinghua University and could have gone to many top institutions with his impressive résumé, his first and only choice was the Master of Logic. This, of course, makes us extremely proud - and at the same time, enormously sad. Still, it's comforting to know that Shengmen was following his passion.

In November 2024, the leadership of Tsinghua University visited UvA, led by their Vice-Rector. The event, I believe, was called *Tsinghua meets ILLC* or *Tsinghua meets UvA*. I was asked to present the Master of Logic programme at that event. One of my slides highlighted successful graduates from both ILLC and Tsinghua. I included names like Professor Fenrong Liu - a MoL and PhD graduate from the ILLC who is now head of the Logic Group at Tsinghua and was one of Shengmen's professors. I also included on my slides Shengmen, referring to him as a Tsinghua graduate and, jokingly, a "future MoL graduate" and a "future PhD student at a top university" as if we could fast-forward via a time machine. Sadly, I was wrong. But I truly believe that, if not for this tragic event, my prediction would have come true. Shengmen was a talented student on the path to becoming a very successful academic.

I had the privilege of meeting Shengmen's parents - Mrs. Yawen Hu and Mr. Xiaofan Luo - as well as his uncle, Mr. Jianfan Luo, with whom I've established friendship. While there is little that can comfort a family grieving the loss of their son, I believe solace could be taken in knowing that Shengmen was living his dream. They must be incredibly proud of him. We are proud of him, and he will always be remembered by the Master of Logic and the ILLC at large.

I also want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who took this to heart and supported Shengmen's family and the ILLC during this difficult time. I'd like to thank the Rector of the University of Amsterdam who met the mother of

Shengmen in person, as well as the Dean of the FNWI, and their offices; Maaïke Maatena from Internal Affairs who was enormously helpful; Mawgosia Bos and her colleagues from the Communications office; Tugba Altin the former Coordinator of MoL and Tanja Kassenaar, our study advisor.

A special thank you goes to our scientific director Robert van Rooij and our manager, Peter van Ormondt, for their tireless help and support, also in organizing this event. I also want to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Chinese Master's and PhD student community. They have shown tremendous loyalty to Shengmen and his family and were a great help throughout - from assisting with the investigation to supporting his parents. I'd especially like to thank Qian Chen for all his invaluable efforts. Your support has been deeply meaningful and appreciated.

Lastly, I want to thank all MoL students and ILLC staff members for their sympathy and support. Perhaps this moment can also serve as a reminder that nothing in life is guaranteed - and that we should continue to look after and support one another as much as we can, both in difficult times and in times of peace. We do have something very precious going on in the Master of Logic and ILLC at large. The atmosphere that we have based on our scientific curiosity, passion for learning and scientific discovery, and mutual respect - is very special and we should cherish it.

Our thoughts remain with Shengmen's family who raised a very special, kind, beautiful person, who despite his short life, left a long lasting mark on all of us. Shengmen will forever stay in our hearts.

This is indeed a very sad day for us.

Thank you.