

Letter of HKIEd President to the Members of the LegCo Panel on Education

6 January 2005

2005-08 Funding for The Hong Kong Institute of Education

I would like to thank you, as member of the Panel on Education, for your genuine concern about the funding situation and the future of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd). Following the advice of some Panel members at the Panel meeting on 3 January 2005, the Institute is in active discussion with the University Grants Committee (UGC) to find ways to address the issue.

Let me reiterate that the massive cut of funding by 33% in three years (2005-08) after a previous cut of 20% during 2004-05 will certainly have an impact on our ongoing efforts to upgrade the Institute and the teaching profession, the extensive support we have been offering to the school sector, and, potentially, our capacity to support the new curriculum reforms. Suffice to say, it will have a huge impact on our staff and students' morale.

During the Education Panel Meeting on 3 January when the funding of the next Triennium was discussed, a number of comments were made about the HKIEd. These included the advice that funding would be available if we offered more collaborative programmes with other institutions and if we were more innovative in preparing for the future.

In this regard, I believe it is important to provide Honourable Members a clear picture of the development of the Institute.

Since 2000/2001, the Institute has taken the initiative to develop collaborative programmes with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in mathematics, information technology and science subjects, and English language teaching respectively. In the next Triennium, we will introduce three additional collaborative programmes in English education with Lingnan University (to be introduced in 2005/06), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (to be introduced in 2006/07) and the City University of Hong Kong (to be introduced in 2006/07).

In summary, we will have collaborative programmes with all of the other UGC-funded institutions which do not themselves train teachers and we believe our joint synergies will be beneficial to the education sector.

We would like to inform the Panel that we proposed the following new programmes to meet the needs of schools, the first three of which involve collaboration, for the 2005-08 triennium, but regrettably we did not obtain the necessary funding to offer these programmes.

- A collaborative Degree programme in Business Studies and Education with the City University of Hong Kong and the Lingnan University
- A collaborative Degree programme in Liberal Studies and Education with the Lingnan University
- A collaborative Degree programme in Technology and Education with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- A new Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Vocational) programme for providing professional training for teachers in the emerging Career Oriented Curriculum and the growing number of teachers in the continuing education sector in Associate Degrees and Project Yi Jin
- A new Postgraduate Diploma in Education programme in Early Childhood Education for the increasing number of untrained degree holders who have been employed to work in early childhood settings

Apart from the above, unlike the other seven UGC-funded institutions, our request for 20 additional undergraduate places for intaking quality graduates from our Associate Degree programmes in art and music was not supported by UGC/EMB although we were encouraged to offer such in the first place. Our proposal to maintain the Certificate in Kindergarten Education places to meet the strong demand of upgrading from in-service kindergarten teachers was also not supported.

Other changes which have been introduced to meet the changing environment and anticipated funding cut include, for example: an extensive review of all non-academic processes and activities which resulted in a substantial reduction in/savings of more than \$50 million of recurrent non-staffing expenditure per year and a substantial reduction in non-academic staff establishment of 22%, or some \$65 million in annualized staff costs.

Also, major reforms to the curriculum and organizational structure have been introduced by the Institute. Further we have provided increased support for schools in areas such as Mentoring, Curriculum and School Leadership which have been initiated, supported and funded by the EMB.

As to allusions to matters of quality and performance, the HKIED has, since its establishment a decade ago, been effectively upgrading itself from its role as post-secondary colleges only offering sub-degree courses to a university-level institution with self-accrediting status. The success of this ongoing process of upgrading has been recognized by a series of independent exercises such as the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review and the Institutional Review conducted by the UGC. For example, the Report of the UGC Institutional Review Panel published in 2004, which led to the granting of self-accrediting status to the HKIED, remarked that:-

- *“HKIED is strongly led in respect of quality. This can be seen in terms of academic structure, the level of administrative support, the upgrading of staff academic profiles, and student graduation requirements.”*

- *“Principals showed approval of HKIEd’s ability to produce young teachers who are committed and energetic, with particularly strong attributes in pastoral care.”*
- *“Students are highly appreciative of staff commitment, enthusiasm and responsiveness.”*

These comments are echoed by surveys which have been undertaken of school principals in the primary and early childhood sectors and our graduates.

I hope the above will help you understand the Institute’s efforts in contributing to teacher education at the time when the community has put high hopes and aspiration for a significant improvement in the quality of education in Hong Kong.

Should you need any further information, please feel free to contact me on 2948 6315 or Ms Katherine Ma, Director of Communications and Institutional Advancement on 2948 6041.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Morris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Morris
President

