

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)767/07-08  
(The minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 10 December 2007, at 4:30 pm**  
**in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP  
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Items IV and V  
Mr Michael WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (1), Education Bureau  
  
Mr Michael STONE  
Secretary-General, University Grants Committee

Items VI and VII

Mr Michael WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (1), Education Bureau

Mrs Dorothy MA CHOW Pui Fun  
Deputy Secretary-General (1), University Grants  
Committee

**Attendance by  
invitation** : Items VI and VII

The University of Hong Kong

Mr Kenneth WONG Pak-keung  
Director of Estates

Mr TAM King-leung  
Senior Assistant Director, Estates Office

Professor JIM Chi-yung  
Chairman of Project Group of Human Research  
Institute, Phase 1

Dr Albert CHAU  
Dean of Student Affairs

**Clerk in  
attendance** : Miss Odelia LEUNG  
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

**Staff in  
attendance** : Mr Stanley MA  
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

Miss Josephine SO  
Council Secretary (2)1

Miss Carmen HO  
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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**I. Confirmation of minutes**  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)396/07-08 and CB(2)502/07-08]

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 October and 12 November 2007 were confirmed.

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**II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

2. Members noted the following papers issued since the last meeting -
- (a) letter dated 31 October 2007 from Hongkong Guangdong Boundary Crossing Bus Association Limited to the Education Bureau concerning cross-boundary coach arrangement for cross-boundary students [LC Paper No. CB(2)343/07-08(01)];
  - (b) the Administration's response dated 9 November 2007 to the letter from Hongkong Guangdong Boundary Crossing Bus Association Limited [LC Paper No. CB(2)343/07-08(02)]; and
  - (c) information paper provided by the Administration on the development of an extension to the existing Academic Building by The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology [LC Paper No. CB(2)539/07-08(01)].

**III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)501/07-08]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 14 January 2008 at 4:30 pm -
- (a) The Third Strategy on Information Technology in Education;
  - (b) Scholarship Endowment Fund;
  - (c) Upgrading of the Web-based School Administration and Management System; and
  - (d) Progress Report on implementation of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme.

4. Given four discussion items, members agreed to extend the meeting to 7:00 pm.

**IV. One-off Special Equipment Grant for University Grants Committee-funded institutions**

[LC Paper No. CB(2)501/07-08(03)]

Briefing by the Administration

5. Deputy Secretary for Education (DS(Ed)1) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to provide a one-off grant of \$200 million to the

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University Grants Committee (UGC) for establishing a Special Equipment Grant (SEG) for the acquisition, replacement or upgrading of research equipment of the UGC-funded institutions and the operating principles for SEG.

Allocation of SEG

6. While expressing support for SEG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong noted that under SEG, each UGC-funded institution was allowed to submit a total of 10 applications, and that the funding requirement for any single piece of equipment under each application should be at least \$2.5 million, including the contribution of a minimum 25% of the cost of the equipment by the applicant institution. The maximum grant for each application would be capped at \$10 million. He was concerned that the \$200 million one-off grant might be fully allotted to the universities with a longer history and higher capability to raise private donations such as the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). He enquired whether any arrangements would be put in place to enable smaller and younger institutions to get a fair share of SEG, and whether private universities operated on a self-financing basis were eligible to apply for SEG.

7. DS(Ed)1 responded that only the UGC-funded institutions would be eligible for SEG. Secretary-General, University Grants Committee (SG(UGC)) supplemented that the allocation of SEG would follow the existing principles and practices adopted by the Research Grants Council (RGC), and applications would be assessed on the basis of their academic merits. The proposed principle of requiring the institution concerned to contribute a minimum amount of 25% of the cost of the equipment was reasonable and should not discourage institutions from submitting their proposals.

8. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong accepted that institutions' proposals should be assessed on the basis of academic merits. Notwithstanding, smaller and younger institutions should be given a fair chance for getting SEG as long-established institutions excelled them in terms of both quality and finance. Like the Matching Grant Scheme, the Administration should set a guaranteed minimum for each institution and allow a reasonable period for them to submit their proposals. The Chairman echoed Mr CHEUNG's concern.

9. DS(Ed)1 responded that the Administration had consulted the eight UGC-funded institutions on the operating principles for SEG. The institutions agreed that the current principles and practices adopted by RGC for allocation of research grants on the basis of academic merits should apply to SEG.

10. SG(UGC) explained that it would be natural for the comprehensive universities to have more areas of specialty and thus a greater need for research equipment than smaller institutions. UGC would expect institutions to submit applications for procurement, replacement or upgrading of research equipment

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that would contribute to the development of their areas of excellence. The Heads of the UGC-funded institutions and academics had all along accepted the guiding principle for awarding research grants on the basis of merits. At this stage, it would not be appropriate to set a minimum or maximum allocation of SEG for each institution. Nevertheless, should institutions indicate any difficulty in shouldering part of cost of the research equipment, UGC would consider the issue.

11. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong agreed that larger universities with more areas of excellence would be able to obtain a larger share of SEG. However, he considered that smaller institutions should be given an opportunity to obtain a reasonable share of SEG. He suggested that the Administration should set aside a minimum allocation of \$10 million for each institution and specify a deadline for submission of their proposals. The guiding principle of academic merits should be followed in assessing their proposals. Proposals which were submitted beyond the deadline or which did not satisfy the criterion of academic merits would not be granted SEG.

12. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed support for Mr CHEUNG's suggestion. He considered that on the principle of equity, all UGC-funded institutions should have a reasonable share of SEG. In his view, some smaller institutions could not afford 25% of the cost of the equipment. He considered the allocation of \$200 million for SEG insufficient and asked how the amount was determined

13. DS(Ed)1 responded that it would be difficult for the Administration to change the well-established guiding principle for allocation of research resources at this stage. The Administration believed that UGC would assess the proposals on the basis of academic merits, with regard to the principle of equity.

14. As regards the requirement for institutions to shoulder 25% of the cost of the equipment, DS(Ed)1 explained that it was the Administration's policy to encourage the UGC-funded institutions and the community to support research developments and activities. The Administration considered it fair and reasonable for institutions to contribute 25% of the cost of the research equipment required. DS(Ed)1 further said that the amount of \$200 million was decided having regard to the financial resources available to the Education Bureau (EDB).

15. Dr Fernando CHEUNG shared Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's concern. He opined that large institutions undoubtedly had an edge over smaller institutions in competing for research resources. He was concerned if the Administration had reached any understanding with institutions on the allocation of SEG among themselves. SG(UGC) pointed out that UGC had no pre-conceived idea of the institutions that would be given SEG. UGC would encourage institutions to make use of the equipments procured under SEG to conduct collaborative researches.

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16. Dr YEUNG Sum said that SEG was publicly-funded and should be allocated equitably. As a staff member of HKU, he did not object to the allocation of SEG to institutions on the basis of the academic merits of their proposals. However, as the larger institutions were stronger and more capable of raising private donations, it would be fair to put in place some arrangements to facilitate smaller and younger institutions to get a reasonable share of SEG. He urged the Administration to consider members' views and suggestions.

17. DS(Ed)1 reiterated that the eight UGC-funded institutions had agreed to compete for the award of SEGs on the basis of the merits of their proposals. The Administration would relay members' views and suggestions to UGC for consideration.

18. Professor Patrick LAU asked whether the Administration would provide another one-off grant for the procurement of research equipment in the next financial year. DS(Ed)1 replied that the Administration could not make any commitment at this stage. Subject to availability of funds, the Administration would consider members' view on the need to provide more support for research activities.

Scope of SEG

19. Dr Fernando CHEUNG sought information on the scope of research activities the equipment for which would be covered by SEG. He was concerned whether research in non-scientific areas such as social sciences and humanity studies would be covered.

20. SG(UGC) explained that SEG was established to support the acquisition, replacement or upgrading of research equipment and all UGC-funded institutions were eligible to submit applications. UGC was of the view that over the recent years, the UGC-funded institutions had not spent as much as they should on research equipment to support scientific researches in bio-medical, electronic, electrical and computer engineering areas. In comparison, the need for high-cost equipment to support researches in humanity studies was relatively small. At present, academics could submit their proposals on humanity researches to RGC for the necessary funding support. SEG was intended for the procurement of large and advanced equipment.

21. Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that smaller and younger institutions, like the Hong Kong Institute of Education and the Lingnan University which specialized in humanity studies, would unlikely be benefited from SEG.

22. Professor Patrick LAU said that the UGC-funded institutions including HKU did not have sufficient space to support the conduct of research activities. He asked whether SEG would cover renovation projects to provide more space and better facilities for conducting researches.

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23. DS(Ed)1 said that SEG was intended for the procurement, replacement or upgrading of research equipment. It was unlikely that purely renovation projects would be covered by SEG. The details of individual applications would be examined in deciding their eligibility for SEG. SG(UGC) supplemented that institutions should apply for grants under the Alterations, Additions and Improvements Vote to support renovation projects to create additional space for carrying out researches.

Conclusion

24. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered it essential that each institution should be benefited from SEG. He suggested that each UGC-funded institution should at least have one proposal being awarded SEG, unless it had not submitted any proposal or its proposals were assessed to lack academic merits. Dr YEUNG Sum expressed support for Mr CHEUNG's suggestion.

25. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the timetable for submission of applications, DS(Ed)1 said that subject to members' views and the approval of the Finance Committee in January 2008, the UGC-funded institutions would have to submit proposals to UGC by March 2008 at the latest. All proposals would be assessed by academic experts under a peer review process to ensure that there was a genuine need for the equipment and that the research activities to be supported by the equipment were of a high standard. RGC would hold a meeting in June 2008 to consider the recommendations of the academic experts in accordance with the established principles in a fair and open manner. To allow time for procurement of equipment, UGC would specify a period within which the institutions would have to spend all the funds disbursed. SG(UGC) supplemented that the peer review process would involve overseas experts and take a few months to complete.

26. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman requested the Administration to relay members' views to UGC and explain how members' concerns could be addressed in its submission to the Finance Committee for funding approval. Dr YEUNG Sum remarked that the Democratic Party might not support the funding proposal should the operating principles not be modified to address members' concerns.

**V. Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded institutions for the 2008-2009 roll-over year**

[File Ref. EDB (HE) CR 2/2041/05 and LC Paper No. CB(2)501/07-08(04)]

27. Members noted the background brief on recurrent funding for the UGC-funded institutions prepared by the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat.

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Briefing by the Administration

28. DS(Ed)1 briefed members on the justifications for the planning of the 2008-2009 roll-over year. He highlighted that as the implementation of the new four-year undergraduate programmes under the new academic structure from 2012 onwards would entail significant changes to the UGC-funded institutions, the Administration decided that the 2005-2008 triennium should roll over for one year to cover the 2008-2009 academic year. The next triennium would correspondingly be postponed to cover the 2009-2012 academic years. The arrangement would give the institutions, UGC and the Administration more time to consider the academic planning as well as the associated funding requirement from the 2012-2013 academic year onwards. For the 2008-2009 roll-over year, only a few changes would be introduced in respect of the overall student numbers (mainly in the increase of senior year places) and their distribution, and for accommodating necessary changes in manpower requirements for specific sectors.

Recurrent funding for the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd)

29. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong recalled that HKIEd had suffered a substantial reduction in recurrent funding for the 2005-2008 triennium the impact of which was mitigated through the acquisition of additional funding from successful tender bids for the provision of various programmes in support of the education reforms. As the funding for the roll-over year was based primarily on the 2005-2008 triennium and the recurrent funding for HKIEd would only be increased from about \$440 million in the 2007-2008 academic year to about \$480 million in the 2008-2009 academic year, Mr CHEUNG enquired whether the funding for HKIEd could be further increased to enable its healthy development.

30. DS(Ed)1 responded that as compared with other UGC-funded institutions, the indicative student number target for HKIEd had seen a relatively larger increase in the 2008-2009 roll-over year. There had been concern about the student number targets for HKIEd's Department of Creative Arts and Physical Education in the 2005-2008 triennium but the matter had been resolved and was no longer an issue for the funding of the 2008-2009 roll-over year. UGC had discussed with HKIEd the funding proposals for the 2008-2009 roll-over year, and HKIEd accepted the proposals.

31. SG(UGC) explained the main justifications for the substantial reduction of recurrent funding for HKIEd in the 2005-2008 triennium, which was attributed to the cessation of the exemption from a 10% funding cut in the 1998-2001 triennium and the phasing out of front-end loading. He pointed out that HKIEd was now funded on the same basis as other UGC-funded institutions, except for its entitlement to a monotechnic premium for its primary engagement

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in teacher education. Apart from recurrent funding, HKIED could continue to bid for additional allocations through tender bids for the provision of professional development and other programmes. UGC had had discussions with HKIED on the recurrent funding proposals, and received no complaints so far. SG(UGC) added that contrary to the fear over the reduction of recurrent funding in the 2005-2008 triennium, HKIED was currently holding a larger reserve than it had before the 2005-2008 triennium. UGC was confident that HKIED would continue to develop without any financial difficulty.

32. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that HKIED had undergone a series of funding cuts and major changes including a change of its President over the recent years. He doubted whether HKIED had been fully consulted on the funding proposal for the roll-over year. He suggested that the Panel should write to HKIED to seek its confirmation of the acceptance of the funding proposal. Members agreed.

*[Post-meeting note : The Clerk issued a letter to the Acting President of HKIED on 11 December 2007, and his reply dated 14 December 2007 was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)642/07-08 on 17 December 2007].*

33. Ms Emily LAU said that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) had examined matters relating to the UGC-funded institutions a few years ago, and had expressed concern about the lower salaries for staff of HKIED than other institutions. She asked whether the Administration had followed up PAC's recommendations and assisted HKIED in competing with other institutions in recruiting quality staff.

34. SG(UGC) responded that staff salaries in the UGC-funded institutions had been de-linked from the civil service pay in 2003. All institutions were funded on the same basis, and they had the autonomy to determine their staff salaries. Since HKIED operated a significant number of sub-degree programmes, this might be a reason - if it did indeed have lower staff salaries. However, he was also aware that HKIED had recently adopted new staff grades and salary systems. According to the Acting President of HKIED, the responses to HKIED's recent staff recruitment exercises were favourable. UGC had no doubt about the ability of HKIED to recruit quality staff.

35. Ms Emily LAU considered it important for HKIED to be able to compete with other institutions in recruitment of quality staff as its students were prospective teachers. She requested the Administration to provide information on the salary scales for different staff grades adopted by the eight UGC-funded institutions. SG(UGC) agreed to provide the staff grades and salary scales published by the institutions.

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Other specific allocations

36. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong queried why the allocations under the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund, the Research Development Fund and the Central Allocation Vote which were included in the 2005-2008 triennium were not covered in the recurrent funding for the 2008-2009 roll-over year. He considered it necessary to set out the relevant items in the recurrent funding in the 2005-2008 triennium and the 2008-2009 roll-over year to facilitate members' scrutiny.

37. SG(UGC) explained that the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund was held by UGC but was put in abeyance. UGC would consider the restructuring and collaboration proposals submitted by institutions on an ad hoc basis. The allocations for the Central Allocation Vote as well as some research and areas of excellence projects were subsumed under the item "Others" referred to in paragraph 6 of the Administration's paper.

38. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that the total allocations for the Restructuring and Collaboration Fund, the Research Development Fund and the Central Allocation Vote was more than \$400 million in each of the three academic years in the 2005-2008 triennium, which was significantly greater than the \$145 million for the item "Other" for the 2008-2009 roll-over year. He requested the Administration to provide a comparison of the various items of the recurrent funding allocations for the 2007-2008 academic years and the 2008-2009 roll-over year.

39. SG(UGC) explained that UGC had been allowed to retain the savings arising from the phasing out of the publicly-funded Taught Postgraduate programmes in the 2005-2008 triennium and some of the savings were held in the form of Research Development Fund. These savings had been used to provide 450 postgraduate research places and additional senior year places in institutions through the block grants - as shown in the student number figures in Annex A of the paper. Hence, the remaining amount held by UGC was very small. DS(Ed)1 added that the Administration would provide the information requested by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong.

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Provision of First-year-first-degree (FYFD) places

40. Ms Emily LAU urged the Administration to review the provision of publicly-funded FYFD places in the UGC-funded institutions. She considered it necessary for the Administration to review its investment in education and increase the number of FYFD places. Dr Fernando CHEUNG shared the view of Ms Emily LAU and opined that the increase of the quota for non-local students would incur public resources as non-local students would also use the manpower resources and the facilities of the institutions. He considered that FYFD places for local students should be increased at the same time.

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41. DS(Ed)1 responded that the number of publicly-funded FYFD places would be maintained at 14 500 for the 2008-2009 academic year. Subject to availability of resources, the Administration would review the provision as appropriate.

Provision of senior year places

42. Referring to paragraph 5 of the Administration's paper, Dr YEUNG Sum noted with concern that while the number of Year 2 undergraduate places would be increased to 1 927 places, there would only be 967 Year 3 places in the UGC-funded institution in the 2008-2009 academic year. He enquired whether the number of Year 3 places would be increased in the 2009-2010 academic year.

43. DS(Ed)1 responded that as the funding proposal under consideration by members related to the 2008-2009 roll-over year, information concerning the 2009-2010 academic year had not been included. Subject to members' support for the recurrent funding proposals for the 2009-2012 triennium, Year 3 undergraduate places would see a corresponding increase in the 2009-2010 academic year.

Allocation of higher education resources

44. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared interest as a staff member of the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong (PolyU). He pointed out that under the recurrent funding proposals for the 2008-2009 roll-over year, PolyU would be provided with a recurrent funding of \$1 648.9 million calculated on the basis of a student population of 11 801. Although the absolute student number of PolyU was great as compared with other institutions, a significant proportion of its student population were enrolled in higher diploma and professional diploma programmes. He considered it inappropriate for the concentration of resources concerning FYFD places on a few institutions. He urged the Administration to review the policy on the allocation of funding and distribution of student number among the UGC-funded institutions to enhance a balanced development under the new academic structure. DS(Ed)1 noted Dr CHEUNG's views.

Earmarked Research Grants

45. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the Earmarked Research Grants of \$656 million for the 2008-2009 academic year was higher than the 2007-2008 academic year by about 8%. However, in comparison with the major Asian countries, Hong Kong had been spending a very small proportion of its Gross Domestic Products (GDP) on research activities. According to the report on Higher Education in Hong Kong published by UGC in 2002, Hong Kong invested only 0.48% of its GDP on research and was ranked 16 among the 20

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countries under study. He asked whether the Administration would increase the allocations for research activities.

46. SG(UGC) acknowledged that Hong Kong currently spent about 0.8% of its GDP in research, which was low by international standard. He pointed out that apart from the \$656 million grant for RGC to support researches proposed by individual academics, around 20% to 25% of the recurrent grants for institutions would be used to fund research activities. Nevertheless, UGC agreed that more resources should be spent on research activities.

47. DS(Ed)1 supplemented that the Administration was aware of the relatively low investment in research. Currently, around 25% of the annual recurrent Government expenditure was in the area of education and about one-quarter of it had been allocated to higher education. The Administration considered that public funding apart, it was necessary to promote private donations to support research activities.

48. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested the Administration to provide the respective amounts of public funding/grants and private donations for research purposes received by the UGC-funded institutions since the launching of the First Matching Grant Scheme, and to compare the percentage of the total amount of public and private funding for research against the GDP of Hong Kong and other major Asian countries. DS(Ed)1 agreed to provide the relevant information.

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Conclusion

49. Members supported the submission of the recurrent funding proposal for the UGC-funded institutions for the 2008-2009 roll-over year to the Finance Committee for approval.

**VI. Development of Human Research Institute - Phase 1 by The University of Hong Kong**

[LC Paper No. CB(2)501/07-08(05)]

Briefing by the Administration

50. DS(Ed)1 introduced the proposed capital works proposal for HKU to develop a Human Research Institute (the Institute) at Sassoon Road, Pokfulam. He highlighted that the Institute would accommodate HKU's new and existing research centres and facilities on human research which at present were scattered around various sites of the university campus. Phase I of the Institute project would involve the construction of a 12-storey academic and research block with some 6 000 square metres of net operational floor area (NOFA). The Southern District Council had been consulted on 28 June 2007 and had expressed support for the proposal.

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Phase 2 development of the Institute

51. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the possible sites and estimated costs for Phase 2 development of the Institute. Dr YEUNG Sum declared interest as a staff member of HKU. He expressed support for the proposal and expressed a similar concern.

52. Mr TAM King-leung, Senior Assistant Director, Estates Office of HKU replied that the proposed site for Phase 1 development of the Institute was the present site for the Li Shu Fan Building. A possible site for Phase 2 development was the present site for the Patrick Manson Building and the temporary student hostels and recreational centres in the vicinity. HKU would consider Phase 2 development after the Phase 1 development had been approved. Since the site that could be made available from the Patrick Manson Building was limited and owing to the Pokfulam Moratorium, should HKU decide to proceed with Phase 2 development, it would need to seek the approval of the Executive Council concerning the Pokfulam Moratorium.

53. The Chairman was concerned about the impact, if any, of the development or otherwise of Phase 2 of the Institute on the human research work of HKU should only Phase I development be carried out.

54. Professor JIM Chi-yung, Chairman of Project Group of Human Research Institute, Phase 1, HKU responded that Phase 1 development of the Institute would accommodate the existing eight specialized research laboratories and state-of-the-art inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary centres. HKU would look forward to the carrying out of Phase 2 development to increase the capacity of the Institute to accommodate more research centres and facilities which would be conducive to the long-term development of human research. DS(Ed)1 added that Phase 1 development of the Institute would be independent of Phase 2 development. Irrespective of whether Phase 2 development would proceed, Phase 1 development would be valuable as it would provide the space and facilities for the long-term development of human research in HKU.

Space shortfall and long-term planning

55. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for the proposal. Noting that HKU had an existing space shortfall of 35 000 square metres and the establishment of the Institute would only provide 6 000 square metres in NOFA, he asked how the Administration would assist HKU to meet its space requirements in accordance with the results of the reviews on space and accommodation requirements of the UGC-funded institutions carried out by UGC in 2006.

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56. DS(Ed)1 explained that like other institutions located in urban areas, HKU had all along suffered from a shortage of space for teaching and research. Owing to the limitation of available space in the vicinity for its development, the problem could not be resolved easily. Nevertheless, the Administration would continue to collaborate with UGC and HKU to search for suitable sites to meet the space requirements of HKU. HKU, on its part, had also made temporary measures to relieve space shortage. He added that despite the space shortfall, HKU had been able to offer quality education and ranked high in the international academic community.

57. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that a suitable land site in Pak Shek Kok had been identified for the long-term development of CUHK. CUHK was working on a 15-year development plan. He considered that the Administration should similarly identify appropriate sites for HKU to plan its long-term development. He enquired about the feasibility of allocating sites in Pokfulam to HKU for its long-term development.

58. DS(Ed)1 explained that unlike HKU, CUHK was located in New Territories East and had been able to identify a suitable site for its long-term development. He reiterated that the space shortfall experienced by HKU had not affected its provision of quality education in any way.

59. Mr Kenneth WONG, Director of Estates of HKU responded that HKU was working on a Centennial Campus Development Project to facilitate its long-term development. The project would provide more than 40 000 square metres in NOFA to meet the space requirements. HKU was exploring the feasibility of constructing university buildings and facilities on a possible site near the Pokfulam Reservoir. Owing to its historical developments, some HKU faculties would have to continue to operate in scattered buildings and facilities.

60. Ms Emily LAU asked whether the site in Sassoon Road was large enough to accommodate Phase 2 development of the Institute to meet the existing space requirement. Mr TAM King-leung explained that the redevelopment project in Sassoon Road would include Phase 2 development of the Institute, but the total NOFA generated from the redevelopment would not resolve the existing space shortfall. In view of the location of the redevelopment project, the new buildings and facilities to be constructed would be used mainly to support the collaborative operation of the Faculty of Medicine and the various health and medical institutions in the district.

61. Ms Emily LAU sought information on the basis for calculating HKU's existing space shortfall of 35 000 square metres in NOFA, and the development plan to meet the shortfall. She pointed out that according to a joint submission from four organizations on the proposed development of student residences at Lung Wah Street, HKU owned a number of sites in Pokfulam which were not properly used at present.

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62. Mr TAM King-leung explained that, the land in Pokfulam owned by HKU were subject to stringent restrictions under the Pokfulam Moratorium and a low plot-ratio. Some of these sites had been used as staff quarters. Since the relaxation on the provision of housing benefits a few years ago, staff were allowed to rent private flats, resulting in vacancy in the staff quarters. However, with the implementation of four-year undergraduate programmes in 2012, HKU would recruit more than 200 additional staff and would then have a shortfall of staff quarters. He added that the provision of staff quarters was essential for the recruitment of quality staff worldwide. Professor Patrick LAU remarked that given the implementation of the four-year undergraduate programmes and the additional staff to be employed, HKU should continue to provide staff with a choice to live in private flats or staff quarters.

63. Professor Patrick LAU and Dr YEUNG Sum called on HKU to formulate long-term development plans and proceed with the acquisition of the target land sites as early as practicable. They were of the view that the Pokfulam Moratorium were formulated having regard to the traffic requirements in the district. With the proposed extension of the rail network to the district, the current restrictions on land use might be reviewed and relaxed in due course.

64. Mr TAM King-leung responded that HKU would consider members' views and suggestions. He added that HKU would shortly conduct a review on the usage and potential of its lands and buildings for long-term development.

Details of the Institute

65. Ms Audrey EU sought information on the existing and new research centres to be accommodated in the Institute, the use of the facilities and space to be made available after the relocation of the existing research centres to the Institute, and the management structure for the Institute. She also enquired about the design features of and the facilities in the Institute, and the environmental impact of the construction of the Institute including the number of trees to be removed or relocated.

66. Professor JIM Chi-yung responded that the Institute would accommodate a total of eight existing and new research centres involving 20 disciplines and provide the necessary space, advanced technologies and facilities to cultivate a multi-disciplinary environment for fundamental human research. It would facilitate HKU to develop into a leading institute on human research internationally. The space and facilities to be vacated would be re-allocated to other faculties and departments. The Institute would be managed by an independent committee comprising representatives from the participating faculties and departments. As the Institute would be constructed on the existing site of Li Shu Fan Building, the impact on the nearby slope would be minimal. Twenty-one trees would be preserved in-situ; three trees relocated within the

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site, nine to be cut down of which four had fell down and five were not of specific value; and 20 new trees would be planted around the Institute. In addition, the Institute would be designed with a number of environmental-friendly features such as vertical greenery, and its facilities at the ground floor would be open for public access. At Ms Audrey EU's request, Professor JIM agreed to provide details of the Institute.

Admin

Conclusion

67. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman said that members supported the submission of the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for consideration on 9 January 2008 and the Finance Committee for funding approval on 1 February 2008. He reminded the Administration to provide the information requested by members as early as practicable. Ms Emily LAU requested the Administration to include the relevant information in its submission to PWSC for consideration.

Admin

**VII. Construction of student hostels at Lung Wah Street, Kennedy Town by The University of Hong Kong**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)501/07-08(06) and (07)]

68. Members noted the background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(2)501/07-08(07)] and a joint submission from four organizations which was tabled at the meeting.

[*Post-meeting note* : The joint submission was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)585/07-08(01) on 11 December 2007.]

Briefing by the Administration

69. DS(Ed)1 briefed members on the capital works proposal for HKU to develop 1 800-place student residences at Lung Wah Street, Kennedy Town, as detailed in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)501/07-08(06)].

Consultation

70. Referring to the joint submission from the four organizations expressing objection to the proposed construction of new student residences at Lung Wah Street, Mr TAM Yiu-chung highlighted the concerns of the residents in the vicinity about possible noise nuisance and traffic impact arising from the new hostels. While acknowledging the need to address the shortfall of hostel places in HKU, he considered it necessary to balance the interests of the community. It would be difficult for members to support the project if the residents in the vicinity objected to it. Mr TAM requested HKU to arrange meetings with the local residents and community representatives as soon as possible to explain the

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measures to be taken by HKU to minimize the possible adverse impact on the neighbourhood.

71. DS(Ed)1 and Dr Albert CHAU, Dean of Student Affairs, HKU responded that HKU had been maintaining a close dialogue with the local community over the development of the project. During the past two years, HKU had attended meetings of the Central and Western District Council and organized consultation sessions and workshop for the residents and the community representatives. On receipt of a recent request from some community representatives for another round of discussion, HKU was arranging with the parties concerned a consultation session to be held on 12 or 13 December 2007. (Post-meeting note: as the residents were not available on both dates, the meeting was held on 2 January 2008)

72. Dr Albert CHAU further explained that having regard to the residents' concern about possible noise nuisance, HKU had adopted appropriate features and made necessary adjustments to the design of the project to minimize the possible impact. For example, the students' facility rooms and activity centres would be placed beneath the podium, and the hostel blocks would be situated closer to the hill, hence increasing their distance from the residential community of Lung Wah Street. Since senior years of students of undergraduate programmes, research postgraduates and non-local students held extra-curricular activities relatively less at night, HKU would allocate the 1 800 hostel places to these students. UGC had already been informed of the measure under consideration. Dr CHAU added that under HKU's existing policy, students would be penalized if they behaved in such a way as to affect seriously the serenity of the nearby environment. There had been cases where students were vacated from the hostels for having caused excessive nuisance to other persons.

73. Dr YEUNG Sum said that as a teaching staff of HKU, he considered it inappropriate to allocate the 1 800 hostel places to some designated groups of students or to vacate from the hostels those students who had caused nuisance. Should these measures be implemented, the educational value of hostel life would be undermined. Dr YEUNG urged HKU to enhance communication with the local residents, and to explain to them the benefits of hostel life to students. He suggested that graduates of HKU who had lived in student hostels and were currently residing in the Western District should be invited to attend the consultation session to share their experience of hostel life with other members of the community.

74. Dr Albert CHAU responded that students of HKU were of diverse background. Expectation of hostel provision had been changed in recent years, and HKU was reviewing the philosophy of hostel education. HKU agreed that hostel life was an integral part of university education, and was reviewing whether the quality of hostel life could be enhanced by promoting students' participation in community affairs.

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75. Ms Audrey EU said that the Civic Party supported the proposal, but considered it necessary for HKU to improve its communication with the residents. She suggested that HKU should consider providing the residents with a layout plan of the new hostel residences to facilitate their understanding of the project design.

76. Dr Albert CHAU said that HKU acknowledged the need to consult the public and had made efforts to gauge the views of the local community on its proposal to construct new student residences. Information in respect of the project design including the layout plan had been provided to the residents. He assured members that HKU would continue to maintain dialogue with the local community.

Adequacy of hostel places

77. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned about the adequacy of hostel places to meet the boarding need of local students. He was given to know that many institutions had accorded priority to non-local students and students enrolled in self-financing programmes in the allocation of hostel places in order to increase the appeal of their courses to these students. He asked whether the Administration and UGC were aware of the situation that many local students including those living in remote areas were not provided with hostel places.

78. DS(Ed)1 responded that the criteria for calculating the overall provision of publicly-funded student hostel places at the UGC-funded institutions were that all non-local students attending full-time, publicly-funded sub-degree, degree and taught postgraduate programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions would be provided with hostel places throughout their studies in Hong Kong, and local undergraduate students would be given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for one year of their courses. Under the prevailing hostel policy, the approved publicly-funded hostel provision for HKU in the 2007-2008 academic year was 5 690 places. Given that HKU currently had 3 885 publicly-funded hostel places, it had a shortfall of about 1 800 places. The student hostel project at Lung Wah Street was proposed to meet this shortfall.

79. Dr Albert CHAU supplemented that HKU had not allocated publicly-funded student hostel places to students admitted to self-financing programmes, e.g. master degree programmes. Although non-local students pursuing publicly-funded programmes were also staying in student hostels, the overall quota for non-local students to attend publicly-funded full-time programmes at post-secondary levels was set by the Administration at 10% of the approved student number targets for these programmes. HKU agreed with the need to maintain a balanced allocation of hostel places among local and non-local students, and had allocated some 30% of those 3 885 publicly-funded hostel places to non-local students, with the remaining to local students.

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Dr CHAU further advised that under the bilateral agreements between HKU and overseas institutions in respect of student exchange programmes, HKU had to provide non-local students with accommodation throughout their studies in Hong Kong. To address the current shortfall, HKU had already taken some short-term measures, such as by renting premises in the private market for the use as hostel units.

80. Ms Emily LAU considered it unsatisfactory for non-local students to be provided with hostel places throughout their studies in Hong Kong, whereas local students including those living in overcrowded environment could stay in student hostels for only one year of their courses. She called on the Administration to review the existing criteria for calculating the provision of student hostels at the UGC-funded institutions with a view to increasing the opportunity for local students staying in hostels.

81. DS(Ed)1 responded that the existing policy on the provision of publicly-funded student hostels at the UGC-funded institutions was promulgated in 1996, based on the recommendations of a working group formed under UGC. In view of the increasing demand for hostel places, the Administration had explored other possible options. For example, it was examining the feasibility of constructing "joint hostels" to accommodate students from different UGC-funded institutions. Dr Albert CHAU added that HKU had a marking scheme for allocation of student hostel places, under which students living in remote areas or overcrowded environment would have a greater chance to get a hostel place.

82. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong acknowledged the difficulties encountered by HKU in pursuing the student hostel project at Lung Wah Street. He suggested that HKU should identify suitable sites in Pokfulam in future for the construction of additional student hostels. Mr CHEUNG hoped that HKU should make it a policy for local students to stay in hostels for at least one year of their courses. Given the prevailing shortfall, HKU should review the appropriateness of the criteria for allocating hostel places to non-local students throughout their studies in Hong Kong. In his view, consideration should be given to providing non-local students with hostel places for a certain period, say one to two years. Ms Audrey EU echoed his view.

83. Dr Albert CHAU responded that under the bilateral agreements in respect of student exchange programmes, HKU had pledged to provide non-local students with accommodation throughout their studies in Hong Kong. Non-local students could choose to stay in student hostels or private residential units rented by HKU.

84. Mrs Selina CHOW considered that the provision of sufficient hostel places was essential to achieve the policy objective of developing Hong Kong as a regional education hub. To this end, the Administration should ensure the

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boarding needs of both local and non-local students were catered for. As the residents in the vicinity had expressed concern about possible noise nuisance, the Administration should explain to the community measures to be taken by HKU to address their concern, so as to avoid potential conflicts between students and residents. Ms Emily LAU shared the view and considered it necessary to take action to allay the concern of local residents.

85. Dr Albert CHAU reiterated that to minimize possible impact on the neighbourhood, HKU had adopted appropriate features and made necessary adjustments to the design of the project, such as locating the hostel blocks closer to the hill, adding architectural fins to the building facades to serve as noise barrier and increasing the area for greenery. On the education front, HKU would make efforts to cultivate a sense of belonging among its students towards the local community. This would enhance students' consideration of the interests of the residents in the neighbourhood when conducting extra-curricular activities at night.

86. Professor Patrick LAU appreciated the efforts made/measures taken by HKU to address the concern of the local community, and expressed support for the proposal to construct student hostels. He understood that the detailed layout plan would be provided when the proposal was submitted to PWSC for consideration. Professor LAU agreed with Mrs Selina CHOW on the need to provide sufficient hostel places in order to achieve the policy objective of developing Hong Kong as a regional education hub. He requested the Administration to consider converting the vacant school premises returned to EDB under the consolidation policy into student hostels for the UGC-funded institutions.

87. DS(Ed)1 responded that to meet the existing shortfall in hostel places, there were about 6 000 additional hostel places under active planning/implementation. Nevertheless, the demand for hostel places would be further increased with the implementation of four-year degree programmes under the new academic structure in the 2012-2013 academic year and the increase in phases in non-local student quota to 20% of the approved student number targets for publicly-funded programmes. To cater for the additional demand, the Administration had been actively exploring with institutions viable measures to increase their hostel capacity. In addition to constructing "joint hostels" for shared use by institutions, the Administration had also considered giving the UGC-funded institutions an additional option of applying for a one-off grant to build, rent or purchase premises to meet with the agreed provision. DS(Ed)1 further said that the Administration would consider the use of suitable vacant school premises for the purpose as and when appropriate.

88. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Mr TAM King-leung said that HKU had appointed a consultancy firm to assess the possible traffic impact arising from the new hostels. The study had concluded that with the anticipated

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implementation of Mass Transit Railway West Island Line, the traffic impact of the new hostels on the neighbourhood would be minimal. Moreover, HKU would arrange transportation for its students.

Long-term hostel development plan

89. Dr YEUNG Sum strongly urged the Administration to set up a working group, comprising representatives from departments responsible for planning, lands and works, to review the requirement of student hostel places at various institutions in the next three to five years, giving particular attention to the implementation of four-year programmes under the new academic structure in the 2012-2013 academic year and the increase in non-local student quota to 20% of the approved student number targets for publicly-funded programmes. He said that the working group should report to the Panel the outcome of its study together with the Administration's work plan on the provision of hostels for tertiary students. DS(Ed)1 agreed to relay Dr YEUNG's suggestion to the Secretary for Education for consideration.

Follow-up

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90. Dr Fernando CHEUNG requested the Administration to provide the following information -

- (a) the current capacity of student hostels at the various UGC-funded institutions, and the distribution of these hostels among local and non-local students, as well as students enrolled in publicly-funded and self-financing programmes; and
- (b) HKU's long-term student hostel development plan.

Conclusion

91. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that members present at the meeting in general supported the submission of the proposal to PWSC on 9 January 2008. He requested the Administration to provide the Panel with the information sought by members and HKU to conduct further consultation with the local residents prior to the PWSC meeting.

**VIII. Any other business**

92. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:01 pm.