

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2157/07-08
(The minutes have been seen
by the Administration and
The Hong Kong University of
Science and Technology)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 8 May 2008, at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : 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 Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Agenda item V
Mr Michael WONG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)
Ms Amy WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)

Mrs Dorothy MA
Deputy Secretary-General (1), University Grants
Committee Secretariat

Agenda item VI

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

Ms Amy WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)

Mrs Amy CHAN
Chairperson - Project Yi Jin, Programme Management
Committee

**Attendance by
invitation** : Agenda item IV

The Hong Kong University of Science and
Technology (HKUST)

Dr Marvin K T CHEUNG, SBS, JP
Chairman, the Council of HKUST

Professor Paul C W CHU, JP
President

Professor Roland T CHIN
Vice-President for Academic Affairs (Deputy to the
President)

Mrs Catherine LAI
Secretary of the Council, HKUST

Professor WONG Yuk-shan, BBS, JP
Vice-President for Administration & Business of
HKUST

Professor CHENG Shiu-yuen
Dean of Science of HKUST

Professor CHENG Siu-wing
Senate representative of HKUST

Mr Sean LIN
President of the HKUST Alumni Association

Mr Max YEUNG Chi-yung
President of the HKUST Students' Union

Dr Lijing ZHU
Chairman of the HKUST Staff Association

Agenda item V

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor CHING Pak-chung
Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Professor Michael K M HUI
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Lingnan University

Dr Veronica TAM Sin-ping
Director of Student Services

Miss Anita NG Ching-ying
Student Services Officer

The Hong Kong University of Science and
Technology

Professor PONG Ting-chuen
Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs

Mrs Pandora YUEN
Senior Student Affairs Officer

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Professor LAM Chi-chung
Dean of Students

Hong Kong Baptist University

Professor LEUNG Mee-lee
Chairman of Resident Masters Committee

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Professor Thomas K S WONG
Dean of Faculty of Health and Social Sciences

Mrs Dorinda FUNG
Director of Student Affairs

The University of Hong Kong

Dr Albert W L CHAU
Dean of Student Affairs

City University of Hong Kong

Professor Lilian L P Vrijmoed
Dean (Student Learning)

Ms Rebecca CHAN Po-yu
Director, Student Residence Office

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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The Deputy Chairman informed members that as the Chairman had an urgent commitment and could not attend the meeting, he would take the chair.

I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1794/07-08]

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2008 were confirmed.

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

3. Members noted the following papers issued since the last meeting -
- (a) information paper prepared by the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat on the development of the internal grievance and complaint mechanisms in the UGC-funded institutions [LC Paper No. CB(2)1655/07-08(01)];
 - (b) email dated 23 April 2008 from Mandu Shed of Creation enclosing the findings of a questionnaire survey concerning primary school students' attitude towards inclusive culture conducted by Dr Eva LAI Shui-ying [LC Paper No. CB(2)1720/07-08(01)];
 - (c) information note provided by the Administration on Early Retirement Scheme for Aided Primary School Teachers [LC Paper No. CB(2)1791/07-08(01)]; and
 - (d) information note provided by the Administration on Early Retirement Scheme for Aided Secondary School Teachers [LC Paper No. CB(2)1791/07-08(02)].

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1793/07-08]

4. Members noted the letter dated 7 May 2008 from Dr David LI Kwok-po to the Chairman requesting the Panel to discuss the draft University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Bill 2008 at the meeting to be held on 12 June 2008. The letter was tabled at the meeting.

[Post-meeting note : The letter was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1891/07-08 on 9 May 2008.]

Items for next meeting

5. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Thursday, 12 June 2008, at 2:30 pm -
- (a) University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Bill 2008;
 - (b) Education for ethnic minority students; and
 - (c) Progress of preparation for the new senior secondary and higher education academic structure.

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Special meeting in June 2008

6. The Deputy Chairman informed members of Ms Emily LAU's suggestion to discuss the paper entitled "Governance structure and grievance and complaints mechanisms in the University Grants Committee-funded Institutions" [LC Paper No. CB(2)1655/07-08(01)] and to receive views of deputations. The Deputy Chairman said that the Panel had earlier agreed to receive views of deputations on the Report on Phase 2 Review of the Post-secondary Education Sector. He suggested and members agreed that a special meeting should be held in June 2008 to discuss these two subjects.

[*Post-meeting note:* The special meeting was scheduled for Friday, 27 June 2008, from 9:00 am to noon.]

7. Ms Audrey EU said that she had written a letter to the Chairman on 6 May 2008 regarding change of the school net of S.K.H. Wei Lun Primary School in Discovery Bay from the Central and West net to the Islands net. With such a change, the number of secondary one places in schools adopting English as the medium of instruction available for the primary six graduates of the School would be reduced substantially. As many students and parents to be affected were concerned about the change of the school net, she suggested that the issue be discussed by the Panel. The Deputy Chairman considered it more appropriate to refer the matter to the Complaints Division of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat for follow-up first. Members agreed and suggested the holding of a case conference to discuss the matter.

IV. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Amendment) Bill 2008

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1793/07-08(01) - (04)]

8. Mr Abraham SHEK said that he would introduce the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) (Amendment) Bill 2008 (the Bill) into LegCo shortly. He hoped that the Bill could be enacted within the current session to facilitate the work of HKUST including preparation for the implementation of the new academic structure for higher education.

9. Dr Marvin CHEUNG, Chairman of the HKUST Council, said that the HKUST Council thanked Mr Abraham SHEK, a member of the HKUST Council, for his agreement to introduce the Bill into LegCo. The HKUST management had consulted the stakeholders and obtained their support for the proposals in the Bill. At the HKUST Council meeting on 12 March 2008, members of the HKUST Council unanimously voted in support of the proposals in the Bill. To facilitate members' consideration of the Bill, representatives of the HKUST Staff Association, Students' Union and Alumni Association had also attended the meeting to respond to members' questions. He appealed to members to support the Bill.

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10. Professor Paul CHU, President of HKUST, said that the Bill sought to reduce the size of the HKUST Council in the light of the recommendations of The Report on Higher Education in Hong Kong in 2002 and the Report of the Public Accounts Committee No.40A; and create a new position of Provost in the senior management structure. To prepare for the implementation of a four-year undergraduate structure and important strategic developments in the future, HKUST had engaged a management consultant to review its senior management structure. The consultant had recommended, among others, to add a Provost to oversee all educational affairs and activities including academic personnel. Professor CHU added that the proposals in the Bill were fully supported by the Senate, Staff Association, Students' Union and Alumni Association of HKUST.

11. Professor Roland CHIN, Vice-President for Academic Affairs (Deputy to the President) said that the Bill would reduce the size of the HKUST Council from 34 to 27, comprising external and internal members at a ratio of about 2:1. This would be achieved by reducing the number of representatives from President/Vice-President/Deans from nine to five, academic members of the Senate from three to two and lay members from 18 to 17. The proposed revised composition of the HKUST Council would add a student representative and a staff representative. HKUST was conducting email polls among full-time students and staff respectively on the method for electing their representatives to the HKUST Council, namely by direct election or indirect election. Should they go for a direct election, every eligible full-time student and staff would have a vote to elect their representatives. Should the students and staff go for an indirect election, the President of the HKUST Students' Union and the Chairman of the HKUST Staff Association would be appointed as members of the HKUST Council. As at the date of the meeting, about 70% of the respondents were in favour of a direct election for their representatives in the HKUST Council. HKUST would respect the decision of the students and staff.

Composition of the HKUST Council

12. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the proposed composition of the HKUST Council was in line with the general principle to reduce the membership of governing bodies of the UGC-funded institutions and increase the ratio of external to internal members to 2:1. He considered that to facilitate early enactment of the Bill, HKUST should specify in the Bill the election method for the representatives of students, staff, alumni and academic members of the Senate to the HKUST Council, and the election method should be supported by the relevant categories of persons.

13. Professor Roland CHIN responded that as in the case of students and staff, HKUST was consulting alumni on the election method for their representative to the HKUST Council. HKUST would respect the outcomes of the polling exercises and reflect the preference of the staff, students and alumni on the

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election method for their representatives to the HKUST Council in the HKUST Statutes. As regards the Senate, Professor CHIN said that its academic members were elected from among professors, and under the existing HKUST Ordinance, the representatives of the Senate in the HKUST Council were elected by its members.

14. Mr Albert CHAN said that he would respect the preference of the staff, students and alumni for direct or indirect election of their representatives to the HKUST Council. Noting that the students were represented in the Senate under the existing arrangement, he suggested that the President and the Vice-President of the Students' Union be appointed as the ex officio members of the HKUST Council and the Senate respectively as this would enhance the acceptability of the student representative in the HKUST Council and avoid possible clashes of views between the President of the Students' Union and the elected student representative.

15. Professor Roland CHIN pointed out that the President of the HKUST Students' Union was elected from among students who were members of the Union and not all full-time students. HKUST was consulting all full-time students on the election method for their representative in the HKUST Council and would reflect the outcome of the consultation in the Statutes. Mr Albert CHAN remarked that in the circumstances, the HKUST Students' Union should consider the election of its President through direct election from among full-time students.

16. Dr Fernando CHEUNG welcomed the proposals in the Bill which would enhance the participation of stakeholders. He invited representatives of the HKUST Students' Union and the HKUST Staff Association to comment on the Bill. Mr Max YEUNG said that education policies should be formulated in the light of students' needs, and students were in the best position to express what they needed. The HKUST Students' Union supported the inclusion of a student representative in the HKUST Council and the conduct of the poll to ascertain the preference of full-time students for direct or indirect election of their representative to the HKUST Council. Dr Lijing ZHU said that the HKUST Staff Association welcomed the inclusion of a staff representative in the HKUST Council and would respect the outcome of the poll on the election method for their representative in the HKUST Council.

17. Ms Audrey EU expressed appreciation of the HKUST Council for having proactively consulted staff, students and alumni on the proposals of the Bill. She referred members to section 9 of the HKUST Ordinance, and pointed out that the present drafting of the relevant provisions in the Bill only allowed a direct election of the staff and student representatives from among staff and full-time students respectively to the HKUST Council. She also shared the concern of Mr Albert CHAN about possible clash of views between the President of the Students' Union and the elected student representative in the HKUST Council.

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18. Dr Marvin CHEUNG thanked Ms Audrey EU for her view, and said that HKUST would revise the relevant provisions of the Bill in accordance with the outcomes of the polls among the staff, students and alumni on the election method for their representatives in the HKUST Council. Should the outcomes be available after the presentation of the Bill to the Council, Committee Stage amendments to the Bill would be proposed.

19. Mr LI Kwok-ying supported the spirit of the Bill. He noted that under the Bill, the HKUST Council would comprise 10 internal and 17 external members. He sought information on the rationale for the proposed ratio of internal to external members and how the external members would be appointed.

20. Professor Roland CHIN explained that the proposed ratio of external to internal members at 2:1 in the HKUST Council was modeled on the best practices adopted by leading universities as stated in the Report on Higher Education in Hong Kong. Of the 17 external members in the HKUST Council proposed under the Bill, nine members would be appointed by the Chancellor and eight members nominated by the HKUST Council for appointment by the Chancellor. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong remarked that the ratio of external to internal members in the governing bodies of the UGC-funded institutions should be 2:1.

Enhancing transparency of university management

21. Mr Albert CHAN considered that except for sensitive matters such as personnel and commercially sensitive matters, the HKUST Council should consider opening up its meetings. He hoped that the HKUST Council would take the lead among the UGC-funded institutions in enhancing the transparency and accountability of its operation.

22. Professor Roland CHIN said that the HKUST Council would consider making available the minutes of its meetings for public access with the excision of sensitive information.

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed support for the HKUST Council to move towards the direction of wider participation of the stakeholders and enhanced transparency in its operation. As a former member of the Council of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, he noted that all the papers for the Council meetings were confidential and the meetings were closed. In the circumstances, it would be difficult for representatives of different categories to participate in the Council business in an effective way. In his view, the UGC-funded institutions should enhance the transparency of their Councils' operation by opening up their Council meetings and making available the relevant documents and minutes of meetings for public access, except those concerning sensitive matters. This would set a good example to students of how publicly funded bodies should operate.

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Conclusion

24. The Deputy Chairman invited members' views on the need to establish a Bills Committee to scrutinize the Bill after its introduction into LegCo. He said that he would report the recommendation of the Panel at the relevant House Committee meeting.

25. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that he did not consider it necessary to form a Bills Committee to scrutinize the Bill provided that there were no dissenting views and the relevant provisions would reflect the outcomes of the polls among staff, students and alumni on the election method for their respective representatives in the HKUST Council.

26. Dr Marvin CHEUNG assured members that as soon as the outcomes of the polls among staff, students and alumni were available, the HKUST Council would consult its legal adviser on the need to revise the Bill to reflect the outcomes. He added that the Bill was drafted after extensive consultation with the stakeholders and so far, no dissenting views from the stakeholders on the proposals in the Bill had been received.

27. Ms Audrey EU said that the HKUST Council should encourage the stakeholders to write to indicate their support for the Bill before the House Committee was to consider the Bill at the relevant meeting. Subject to the advice of the Legal Adviser of LegCo on the drafting and legal aspects of the Bill, it might not be necessary to form a Bills Committee to scrutinize the Bill.

28. Concluding the discussions, the Deputy Chairman said that the views of members on the Bill expressed at the meeting and the response of HKUST Council and representatives of the Staff Association and Students' Union would be recorded.

V. Allocation of hostel places by the University Grants Committee-funded institutions

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2) CB(2)1793/07-08(05) and (06)]

29. Members noted the background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(2)1793/07-08(06)].

Briefing by the Administration

30. Deputy Secretary for Education (1) (DS(Ed)1) took members through the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)1793/07-08(05)] which set out the current policy on the provision of publicly-funded student hostels in the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions, the allocation criteria

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for hostel places, the present situation regarding the demand and supply of hostel places, and the measures taken to address the increasing demand for boarding facilities.

31. DS(Ed)1 pointed out that the Administration was examining the feasibility of constructing two "joint hostels", one each in Ma On Shan and Tseung Kwan O, to accommodate students from different UGC-funded institutions. For the proposed project in Ma On Shan, three institutions, namely, the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) had indicated interest to engage in collaborative development of "joint hostels". A project team, under the leadership of CityU, had been formed to take up the planning and implementation of the proposed project. Pending the findings of the engineering feasibility studies, some 2 000 hostel places would be provided upon the completion of the project. As for the project in Tseung Kwan O, HKUST would take up the role of project leader and HKBU had also indicated interest to participate in the project.

Existing hostel policy

32. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that according to the information provided by the eight UGC-funded institutions, the overall ratio of local students to non-local students in occupying publicly-funded hostel places was 58% to 42%. He believed that with 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, a higher proportion of hostel places would be allocated to non-local students in the future. This would inevitably lead to conflict between local and non-local students. Mr CHEUNG questioned the appropriateness of upholding the existing hostel policy and criteria for allocating hostel places to non-local students, given the prevailing shortfall and pressure for constructing new hostels. He was strongly of the view that the Administration should increase the opportunity for local students getting a hostel place. Referring to overseas practice, he considered it reasonable to provide non-local students with hostel places for a limited period of their studies, say one to two years.

33. DS(Ed)1 responded that providing all non-local students attending the UGC-funded programmes with hostel places was one of the supporting measures for the development of Hong Kong as a regional education hub. Since the rental of private housing in Hong Kong was expensive, it would be difficult for some non-local students to complete their studies in Hong Kong without the provision of student hostels. The Administration was mindful of the keen demand for hostels from local and non-local students in the UGC-funded sector. To resolve the shortfall in hostel places, the Administration had encouraged the UGC-funded institutions to submit proposals on hostel developments to UGC for consideration, to make the best use of their existing stock of student hostels,

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and to explore imaginatively other possible options to meet students' demand for hostels. The Administration believed that addressing the problem at source was more effective than adjusting the criteria used for calculating the level of publicly-funded student hostel provision at the UGC-funded institutions. DS(Ed)1 emphasized that the allocation of student hostel places was a matter within institutional autonomy, and each institution had devised its own set of criteria and procedures for allocating student hostels amongst its students. According to the allocation criteria set out at the Annex to the Administration's paper, not all institutions guaranteed the provision of hostels for non-local students throughout their studies in Hong Kong.

34. Mr Albert CHAN said that local undergraduate students should be given the opportunity to stay in hostels since hostel life was an integral part of university education, and was conducive to students' learning and personal development. He considered it discriminating against local students as they were subject to different and unfair treatment vis-à-vis non-local students in respect of hostel provision. He shared the view that it was sufficient to provide non-local students with hostel places in the first one to two years of their studies in Hong Kong. He called on the Administration to review the existing policy to ensure parity of treatment to local and non-local students and to expedite the planning and construction of new hostels to ensure that no local students were deprived of the opportunity to experience hostel life due to shortage of provision. He suggested making use of vacant public rental housing units for the use as hostel units.

35. DS(Ed)1 responded that the Administration fully appreciated the educational value of hostel life and was striving to resolve the shortage through various measures. He reiterated that given the current economic climate, non-local students might have practical difficulty in renting residential premises in the private market. This explained why non-local students were granted hostel places throughout their studies in Hong Kong.

36. Dr Fernando CHEUNG echoed Mr Albert CHAN's view that the existing policy was discriminating against local students. He expressed concern that the current policy and criteria for calculating the approved level of publicly-funded student hostel provision had not been reviewed since its implementation in 1996. With new developments over the years, such as improvements to the transport network, such policy and criteria were outdated. Dr CHEUNG was of the view that although allocation of student hostel places was a matter within institutional autonomy, the UGC-funded institutions could hardly make adjustment to meet the boarding needs of local and non-local students within the resources provided. To his knowledge, conflict existed between local and non-local students in many institutions including the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), CityU and HKUST over the issue. He urged the Administration to immediately review the existing policy and criteria for providing all non-local students with hostel places throughout their studies in Hong Kong.

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37. In response, DS(Ed)1 explained that the Administration had taken into account the knock on implications of the additional year of undergraduate studies starting from the 2012-2013 academic year and the accommodation requirement arising from the increased quota for non-local students in publicly-funded programmes in calculating the shortfall of about 11 000 publicly-funded hostel places. The actual demand for hostel places might be lower than the projected figure, depending on the number of non-local students admitted by institutions. The 20% of the approved student number targets for publicly-funded programme was the maximum number of non-local students that might be admitted by institutions. Institutions would consider their own circumstances and capacity including the availability of hostel places in deciding the number of non-local students to be admitted. DS(Ed)1 said that at present, the Administration had no plan to review the existing policy and criteria for hostel. The Administration would, however, explore alternative options, such as constructing "joint-hostels" for shared use by institutions, to address the problem.

38. The Deputy Chairman agreed on the need to implement supporting measures, including the provision of hostel places for non-local students, to achieve the policy objective of developing Hong Kong as a regional education hub. He, however, cautioned that the provision of hostel places for non-local students should not be at the expense of local students. The Deputy Chairman shared the view of some members that the problem of shortfall should be addressed without further delay. He strongly urged the Administration to set up a high level working group, comprising representatives from departments responsible for finance, planning, lands and works, to examine the subject. The working group should critically review the requirement of student hostel places at various institutions in the next few years and come up with concrete proposals to resolve the problem. DS(Ed)1 agreed to relay the Deputy Chairman's suggestion to the Secretary for Education for consideration.

39. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the existing policy and criteria for calculating the standard hostel provision should not be regarded as discriminating against local students. It was reasonable to provide hostel places for overseas students to facilitate their familiarization with the local conditions in particular during their initial years of studies.

40. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the Administration should not under-estimate the growing dissatisfaction of local students over the unfair hostel policy. To avoid the intensification of conflict between local and non-local students, he considered that the Administration should balance their interests, by providing equal opportunities to stay in student hostels. He suggested that both local and non-local students should be provided with hostels in the first two years of their studies.

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41. DS(Ed)1 responded that non-local students only accounted for 9% of the student population in the UGC sector. Reducing their period of stay in student hostels would not vacate too many hostel places for local students. The Administration would aim to increase the supply of hostel places through various measures as set out in its paper.

42. Responding to Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Professor LEUNG Mee-lee of HKBU said that starting from the 2006-2007 academic year, HKBU had ceased providing non-local students with hostel places throughout their studies in Hong Kong. Non-local students were provided with hostel places in the first two years of their studies. To address the current shortfall, HKBU had also taken some short-term measures, such as by making use of the university's guest-house and renting private residential premises in Kowloon City and To Kwa Wan for the use as hostel units. The monthly fee for such a hostel unit was about \$2,400 to \$2,600.

43. Ms Rebecca CHAN informed members that CityU had amended its allocation criteria recently to the effect that starting from the 2008-2009 academic year, non-local students would be provided with hostel places only in the first two years of their studies.

44. Professor CHING Pak-chung said that on the average, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) admitted some 250 non-local students each year, and the university would, in view of its remote location in the New Territories and in recognition of the education value of hostel life, provide residence for non-local students, exchange students and research postgraduates throughout their studies in Hong Kong. To address the shortfall in hostel places, CUHK had put in much effort to increase the number of hostel places for both local and non-local students through the planning of hostel development projects within the campus. These projects were funded either by the Government or other alternative funding sources. Professor CHING agreed with members that to alleviate the conflict between local and non-local students, the Administration should expedite the planning and construction of new hostels.

45. Dr Albert CHAU said that the University of Hong Kong (HKU) had only pledged to allocate publicly-funded student hostel places to non-local students for the first year of their studies. After their first year, they would be allocated accommodation units but these might not be hostels. Dr CHAU further advised that 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 its publicly-funded hostel places to non-local students, with the remaining to local students.

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46. Noting that some institutions had, on their own initiative, revised the existing policy on allocation of hostel places, Dr Fernando CHEUNG appealed to other institutions to adopt the same approach to cater for the boarding need of local students. He requested the Administration to provide information on the number of hostel places at the various UGC-funded institutions which were not UGC-funded.

Relief measures

47. Mr LI Kwok-ying asked about the measures taken by the Administration to address the current shortfall. Noting that some students were living in private residential units rented by institutions instead of student hostels, he enquired whether the Administration would consider providing rent subsidies to these students to relieve their financial burden.

48. DS(Ed)1 responded that the Government had been encouraging the UGC-funded institutions to explore all possible options, both interim and long-term, to meet the increasing demand for student hostels. Apart from the measures mentioned in paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, the Administration had 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. The suggestion was, however, considered financially not viable by institutions. Against this background, the Administration was liaising with the UGC-funded institutions on the development of "joint-hostels" for shared use by institutions.

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49. Ms Audrey EU asked about the number of students affected by the current shortfall in hostel places, in particular those who were required to hire private accommodation because they had not been allocated hostel places. She also sought information on the number of hostels provided for students studying full-time sub-degree programmes in the UGC-funded institutions.

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50. DS(Ed)1 responded that the Administration did not have information on the number of students required to hire their own accommodation because of the non-provision of student hostel places. He would liaise with the UGC-funded institutions on the availability of such information. DS(Ed)1 explained that under the prevailing criteria for calculating the level of publicly-funded student hostel provision, local students attending full-time, publicly-funded sub-degree programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions were not included. Referring to the case of PolyU cited by Dr Fernando CHEUNG, DS(Ed)1 explained that when the 3 000 hostel places were provided in September 2002, they were not fully taken up by PolyU's undergraduate students. PolyU therefore took measures to improve the occupancy rates by including part-time undergraduate students, taught postgraduate students and sub-degree students as eligible applicants for student hostels. With the increase in the take-up rate by undergraduate students, such a temporary measure ceased to apply.

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51. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was deeply concerned about the inadequacy of hostel places to meet the boarding need of local students. He was given to know that some institutions had made use of funds from private sources to build their student hostels, and these 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 impact of such arrangements which had intensified the conflict between local and non-local students in many institutions. Dr CHEUNG requested the Administration to devise a set of fair and clear criteria for allocation of student hostel places to ensure that all institutions would handle the matter in a fair and reasonable manner.

The motion

52. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion -

"鑒於本地大學學生宿位嚴重不足，本事務委員會促請政府當局除設法增加宿位外，應改變現行宿位分配政策，以保證在大學教育資助委員會資助院校修讀公帑資助課程的本地高級文憑、副學士、學士及研究生至少有一年住宿機會，而非本地生的住宿保證應只限於首兩年。"

(Translation)

"That, in view of the acute shortage of student hostel places in local universities, this Panel urges the Administration to, apart from endeavouring to increase the provision of hostel places, revise the existing policy on allocation of hostel places in order to ensure that local students pursuing publicly-funded programmes, including Higher Diploma, Associate Degree, undergraduate and research postgraduate programmes, in the University Grants Committee-funded institutions are given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for at least one year, while hostel places should be guaranteed for non-local students only in the first two years."

The Deputy Chairman invited views on the motion.

53. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that given the current shortfall, he supported in principle the proposal to increase the provision of hostel places. However, he had reservations about extending the provision of hostel places to students pursuing publicly-funded Higher Diploma (HD) and Associate Degree (AD) programmes without first ascertaining the demand to be generated and the financial implications.

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54. In response to Mr Tommy CHEUNG's concern, Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that according to the existing criteria for calculating the overall provision of publicly-funded student hostel places at the UGC-funded institutions, 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 only. Dr CHEUNG stressed that the motion was intended to convey a message that the Panel considered it necessary for the Administration to apply the same criteria to local and non-local students.

55. While indicating support for the motion, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern about the additional pressure on PolyU and CityU as they each had about 3 000 to 4 000 publicly-funded sub-degree (mainly HD) students. Mr CHEUNG was of the view that the Panel should first aim to narrow the differences between local and non-local students with regard to their eligibility for hostel places.

56. Dr Fernando CHEUNG amended his motion as follows -

"鑒於本地大學學生宿位嚴重不足，本事務委員會促請政府當局除設法增加宿位外，應改變現行宿位分配政策，以保證在大學教育資助委員會資助院校修讀公帑資助課程的本地學生至少有一年住宿機會，而非本地生的住宿保證應只限於首兩年。"

(Translation)

"That, in view of the acute shortage of student hostel places in local universities, this Panel urges the Administration to, apart from endeavouring to increase the provision of hostel places, revise the existing policy on allocation of hostel places in order to ensure that local students pursuing publicly-funded programmes in the University Grants Committee-funded institutions are given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for at least one year, while hostel places should be guaranteed for non-local students only in the first two years."

57. The Deputy Chairman put the motion to vote. Four members voted for, and two members against the motion; and one member abstained. The Deputy Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

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VI. Increase in financial provision for Project Yi Jin

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1793/07-08(07) - (08) and CB(2)1856/07-08(01)]

58. Members noted the background brief on Project Yi Jin (PYJ) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

59. Mr LEUNG Kwan-yuen declared interest as the Chairman of the Vocational Training Council which offered PYJ programme.

Briefing by the Administration

60. DS(Ed)1 briefed members on the Administration's proposal to continue providing funding support for PYJ from the 2008-2009 to the 2011-2012 academic years as detailed in the Administration's paper.

Review on long-term development and positioning of PYJ

61. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed support for the proposal to continue the provision of funding support for PYJ to provide an alternative route and to expand the continuing education opportunities for Secondary 5 leavers and adult learners. Noting that the implementation of the new academic structure would have impact on PYJ, he requested the Administration to review the long-term development and positioning of PYJ under the new academic structure and to include its plan of review in the submission to the Finance Committee.

62. DS(Ed)1 responded that the new senior secondary academic structure would be implemented from the 2009-2010 school year. The Administration was reviewing together with the Federation of Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE) the long-term development and positioning of PYJ under the new academic structure. The Administration would include its plan to review PYJ in its submission to the Finance Committee for consideration at the meeting on 13 June 2008.

63. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned about the positioning of PYJ under the qualifications framework and whether PYJ would be subsumed under the 12-year free education to be provided from the 2008-2009 school year onwards. In his view, PYJ should be part of the 12-year free education.

64. DS(Ed)1 explained that a full certificate of PYJ programme was assessed by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAQV) as comparable to five passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), and was pitched at level 2 under the qualifications framework. The review on PYJ was in progress, and there was a view that should PYJ be continued, a full certificate of the new PYJ programme should be broadly equivalent to the Hong Kong Diploma of

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Secondary Education (HKDSE) qualification under the new academic structure and pitched at level 3 of the qualifications framework. The Administration noted Dr CHEUNG's view on the inclusion of PYJ in the 12-year free education.

65. The Deputy Chairman asked how the new PYJ programme, if any, would be positioned when all students would complete Secondary 6 (S6) with 12-year free education.

66. DS(Ed)1 explained that currently, there were two main streams of view on the long-term development and positioning of PYJ under the new academic structure. The majority view was that as some students might not be able to attain a satisfactory result at the HKDSE, PYJ should be continued to provide an alternative path for these students. However there was also a view that as a range of Applied Learning courses would be offered under the new senior secondary curriculum which would overlap with the PYJ programme with similar emphasis on practical elements, PYJ might no longer be necessary. The Administration would carefully consider the need for PYJ under the new academic structure. As the first student cohort under the new academic structure would complete their senior secondary education and participate in HKDSE in 2012, the new PYJ, if any, should be put in place in the 2012-2013 academic year.

67. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that he would not object to the proposal to continue providing financial support for PYJ for the next four years. He pointed out that although the new senior secondary curriculum would include a range of Applied Learning courses, it was designed to prepare students for HKDSE to pursue university education. Unless there was an overhaul of the education system to follow the Singapore's model under which students were differentiated into two streams leading to academic and non-academic pathways, an alternative pathway should be provided under the new academic structure for those students with less interest in academic subjects who did not wish to attend or could not succeed in HKDSE. In his view, such an overhaul was not desirable. He would therefore prefer the continuation of PYJ after the implementation of the new academic structure. He sought information on the timetable for the review on PYJ.

68. DS(Ed)1 responded that a full certificate of PYJ was currently recognized as five passes in HKCEE and had been accepted by the Government as meeting the entry requirements of 31 civil service grades which required five passes including English Language and Chinese Language in HKCEE. Statistics showed that some 20% to 30% of PYJ graduates would pursue further studies. With the implementation of the new academic structure from the 2009-2010 school year and HKDSE in 2012, the review on PYJ would cover its relation with HKDSE and its position under the qualifications framework. Given the complexity of the issues involved, the Administration would aim to complete the review in the 2009-2010 academic year.

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Articulation for PYJ graduates and senior secondary graduates

69. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that while the funding proposal for continuing the operation of the current PYJ for four years would enable the existing students to obtain a full certificate comparable to five passes in HKCEE, he was concerned about the prospect for these students with the implementation of HKDSE in 2012. He considered that the Administration should provide appropriate articulation programmes for these students to pursue further studies leading to the award of a qualification comparable to five passes in HKDSE.

70. DS(Ed)1 responded that despite the implementation of HKDSE in 2012, the qualification of five passes in HKCEE would continue to be recognized by employers for employment purpose and post-secondary institutions for admission to their pre-associate degree or sub-degree programmes. The Administration would consider the provision of articulation programmes for graduates of the existing PYJ in its review on the long-term development and positioning of PYJ.

71. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that upon the implementation of the new academic structure, most students would complete senior secondary education and participate in HKDSE, instead of leaving schools before completing S6 to pursue an alternative path. To cater for those students who were less successful academically, it could be expected that secondary schools with a higher concentration of such students would provide a wider range of Applied Learning courses. The Administration should provide an alternative path such as a new PYJ for these students to attain a qualification comparable to five passes in HKDSE. DS(Ed)1 noted Mr CHEUNG's views.

72. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered it most important to provide an alternative route for senior secondary school leavers under the new academic structure to achieve a qualification comparable to five passes in HKDSE so that they could pursue higher or continuing education. He asked about the statistics on PYJ graduates pursuing further education.

73. DS(Ed)1 responded that the Administration noted members' concern about the need for an alternative path for senior secondary school leavers to pursue continuing education, and would take this into account in the review. Should a new PYJ be implemented, its qualification would probably be comparable to five passes in HKDSE. According to past statistics, around 40% and 30% of PYJ graduates sought employment and further studies respectively, and some 20% worked part-time and studied at the same time. He would provide written information in this regard.

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Conclusion

74. Concluding the discussions, the Deputy Chairman said that members supported the submission of the funding proposal to the Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting to be held on 13 June 2008.

VII. Any other business

75. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 June 2008