

BRIEF FOR THE PANEL ON EDUCATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053)

The University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Bill 2008

INTRODUCTION

1. The University of Hong Kong (the “University”) is one of the eight local universities funded by the University Grants Committee. The University was established in 1911 through the enactment of the University Ordinance, which was subsequently repealed and replaced in 1958 by the University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053) (the “Ordinance”). Subject to the provisions of the Ordinance, the University is governed in accordance with the provisions of the statutes (the “Statutes”). The Statutes outline matters such as the degrees the University may confer, the governing officers and panels of the University and their respective powers.

2. At the meeting of the Council and the Court of the University held on 29 November 2005 and 15 December 2005, respectively, it was agreed to clarify the role of the Court as the supreme advisory body of the University and the Council as the supreme governing body of the University.

3. At the meeting of the Council and the Court on 5 December 2006 and 15 December 2006, respectively, it was agreed new academic titles be adopted as part of the University’s Human Resource Reform so that the old titles of Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer and Assistant Lecturer be replaced by new academic titles of Chair, Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor.

4. To give effect to the proposed changes, the University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Bill 2008 (the “Bill”) will be introduced as a Member’s Bill into the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) by the Dr. Hon David Li Kwok-po, Pro-Chancellor of the University and a Member of LegCo.

JUSTIFICATION

Roles and Powers of the University’s Court and Council

5. In 2003, the University conducted a review of its governance and management structures, which resulted in the production of a report titled “Fit for Purpose”. Fit for Purpose identified an inconsistency in the role of the Court and the Council as described in Section 7 of the Ordinance and as described in the University Statutes. Further, in reviewing the governance and management structures of the government-funded tertiary institutions in 2003, the Government Audit Commission recommended that the University Grants Committee

request the University to propose appropriate amendments to the Ordinance so as to create consistency with the powers granted in the Statutes. The recommendation was endorsed by the Public Accounts Committee of LegCo. The then Education and Manpower Bureau (“EMB”) requested that the University follow up on the audit recommendation to amend the Ordinance.

6. The Council has obtained advice from Senior Counsel that it is desirable to effect amendments to the Ordinance and the Statutes because there are inconsistencies between Section 7 and the provision of the Statutes concerning the respective powers of the Court and the Council, as well as between Section 7 of the Ordinance and the recommended or actual respective roles of the Court and the Council.

7. The amendments provide that the Court be described as the “supreme advisory body”, whilst the Council be described as the “supreme governing body” of the University. Such amendments will make the description of the role and governance of the Court and Council consistent with some other UGC-funded institutions.

Academic Titles

8. The Bill also provides for the amendment of the Ordinance to streamline the academic titles used by the University so that the academic titles of Teachers comprise Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor and Chair.

9. The University allows staff members holding old academic titles (i.e. Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers) to retain their titles, if they so wish. The transitional provision in the Bill ensures that staff members who decide to retain their old academic titles of Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers continue to enjoy “good cause” protection. Clause 5 of the Bill contains the said transitional provision.

Proposed Changes to the Ordinance

10. A copy of the Bill is at **Annex A**. A comparison table showing the current version of the Ordinance and the proposed changes is at **Annex B**.

The Consultation Process

11. The Court and the Council have met on more than one occasion to consider the subject and are supportive of the proposed amendments set out in the Bill.

12. During the University’s Human Resource Reform exercise, extensive consultation took place with the staff members and the Staff Association regarding changes to the academic titles. Accordingly, the measures in the current Bill are consequential to the Human Resource Reform proposals which were introduced after consultation with staff members and the Staff Association.

13. No objection to the proposed amendment has been received from the Education Bureau and the University Grants Committee. A copy of the letter from the Secretary for Education to the Registrar of the University dated 30 April 2008 is at **Annex C**. On 30 April 2008, the Department of Justice issued a certificate under rule 51(2) of the Rules of Procedure of LegCo. The letter from the Secretary for Education to the Clerk to LegCo dated 9 May 2008 states the

Bill does not relate to public expenditure, political structure, the operation of the Government, or to Government policies, and the President of LegCo has ruled in a letter dated 14 May 2008 that the Bill does not relate to any of the matters referred to in Rule 51(3) and (4) of the Rules of Procedure.

THE BILL

14. The key of provisions of the Bill in **Annex A** are as follows:

- i. **Clause 2** replaces “governing” with “advisory” when referring to the Court and replaces “executive body” with “supreme governing body” in reference to the Council. The role of the Council is clarified by stating that it may exercise all the powers and perform all the duties of the University other than those vested by the Ordinance or the Statutes in some other authority or in an officer of the University.
- ii. **Clause 3** amends the titles of the Teachers and amends the employment status to state clearly the staff who are protected by good cause.
- iii. **Clause 4** amends the Statutes to reflect the amendments to the Ordinance as a consequential amendment.

ENQUIRIES

15. Any enquiries about this brief can be directed to Mr. Andrew Burns at the office of Dr. HON David Li Kwok-po, Member of the Legislative Council, 21st Floor, Bank of East Asia Building, 10 Des Voeux Road, Central, Hong Kong, Tel No.: 3608 8200, Fax No.: 3608 6100, or Mr. Henry Wai, Registrar, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong, Tel No.: 2859 2222, Fax No.: 2546 0456.

Registrar
The University of Hong Kong
4 June 2008

A BILL

To

Amend the University of Hong Kong Ordinance.

Enacted by the Legislative Council.

1. Short title

This Ordinance may be cited as the University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Ordinance 2008.

2. Court, Council and Senate, their constitutions, powers and duties

(1) Section 7(2) of the University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053) is amended by repealing “governing” and substituting “advisory”.

(2) Section 7(3) is amended –

(a) by repealing “executive body” and substituting “supreme governing body”;

(b) by repealing “it shall administer the property and manage the affairs of the University” and substituting “the Council may exercise all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the University other than those vested by this Ordinance or the statutes in some other authority of the University or in an officer”.

3. Officers and teachers, their appointment, powers, duties and emoluments

(1) Section 12(9) is amended by repealing “The teachers shall be the Professors, Readers, Lecturers, and such other persons as may be designated teachers by the statutes. The teachers shall be appointed by the Council.” and substituting “The teachers shall be the Chairs, Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors of the University, and such other persons as may be

designated as teachers by the statutes. The teachers shall be appointed by the Council on such terms as it thinks fit.”.

(2) Section 12(10)(b) is amended by repealing “or probationary” and substituting “or for a fixed term, as stated in his contract of service”.

4. Statutes of the University of Hong Kong

(1) Statute XII of the Statutes of the University of Hong Kong in the Schedule is amended, in paragraph 1, by repealing “the senior lecturers, the assistant lecturers,”.

(2) Statute XIX is amended –

(a) in paragraph 1, by repealing “The Council shall administer the affairs of the University” and substituting “The Council may exercise all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the University”;

(b) by repealing paragraph 2(s) and substituting –

“(s) to do all such acts and things and perform all such duties as may be necessary for or incidental to exercising the powers or performing the duties conferred or imposed on the Council by the Ordinance or the statutes.”.

(3) Statute XXVIII is amended by repealing paragraph 1(1)(b) and substituting –

“(b) the Chairs, Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers, Tutors and Demonstrators of the University;”.

5. Transitional provision

The Council shall not terminate the appointment of a person who was a teacher and entitled to the protection on termination of appointment described in section 12(9) of the University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053) immediately before the commencement of this Ordinance except where after due

enquiry into the facts and after receiving the advice of the Senate on the findings of such enquiry there exists in the opinion of the Council good cause for such termination.

6. Saving

Nothing in this Ordinance shall affect or be deemed to affect the rights of the Central Authorities or the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Basic Law and other laws, or the rights of any body politic or corporate or of any other person except such as are mentioned in this Ordinance and those claiming by, from or under them.

Explanatory Memorandum

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053) ("the Ordinance") to remove inconsistencies between the Ordinance and the Statutes of the University of Hong Kong ("the Statutes") with regard to the roles and powers of the Court and the Council of the University of Hong Kong ("the University"), and to give effect to the adoption of new academic titles as part of the University's human resources reform.

2. Clause 2 amends section 7(2) and (3) of the Ordinance to remove inconsistencies between the Ordinance and the Statutes with regard to the roles and powers of the Court and the Council of the University to the effect that the Court is to be described as the "supreme advisory body" of the University and the Council as the "supreme governing body" of the University.

3. Clause 3(1) repeals the previous academic titles of "Professors", "Readers" and "Lecturers" and substitutes them with the new titles of "Chairs", "Professors", "Associate Professors" and "Assistant Professors". These teachers are entitled to protection against dismissal without good cause, unless they are beyond a retiring age as determined by the Council (see section 12(10)(a) of the Ordinance) or their employment is for a fixed term or is temporary or part-time as stated in the contract of service (see section 12(10)(b) of the Ordinance as

amended by clause 3(2)). However, no person who has been entitled to the protection immediately before the commencement of the Bill when enacted is to be affected (see clause 5).

4. Clause 4 removes references to the old academic titles of “senior lecturers” and “assistant lecturers” appearing in Statute XII of the Statutes in the Schedule to the Ordinance and expands Statute XXVIII of the Statutes to include the new academic titles. The clause also introduces consequential amendments to paragraphs 1 and 2(s) of Statute XIX of the Statutes.

5. Clause 5 is a transitional provision.

6. Clause 6 is a saving provision.

Johnson, Stokes & Master
Solicitors for the
University of Hong Kong

Amendments to the University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053)

Roles and Powers of the University's Court and Council

Existing Ordinance/Statute	Proposed Ordinance/Statute
<p><u>Section 7 Court, Council and Senate, their constitutions, powers and duties</u></p> <p>(2) The Court shall, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and the statutes, be the supreme governing body of the University.</p>	<p>(2) The Court shall, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and the statutes, be the supreme advisory body of the University.</p>
<p>(3) The Council shall be the executive body of the University, and shall provide for the custody and use of the University seal, and subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and the statutes, it shall administer the property and manage the affairs of the University.</p>	<p>(3) The Council shall be the supreme governing body of the University, and shall provide for the custody and use of the University seal. Subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and the statutes, the Council may exercise all the powers, and shall perform all the duties, of the University other than those vested by this Ordinance or the statutes in some other authority of the University or in an officer.</p>
<p><u>Statute XIX Powers of the Council</u></p> <p>1. The Council shall administer the affairs of the University other than those vested by the Ordinance or the statutes in some other authority of the University or in an officer.</p>	<p>1. The Council may exercise all the powers, and shall perform all the duties of the University other than those vested by the Ordinance or the statutes in some other authority of the University or in an officer.</p>
<p>2.(s) to do all such other acts and things as may be requisite to perform any duty which the Court may delegate to the Council or to give effect to the powers conferred on the Council by the Ordinance or the statutes.</p>	<p>2.(s) to do all such acts and things and perform all such duties as may be necessary for or incidental to exercising the powers or performing the duties conferred or imposed on the Council by the Ordinance or the statutes.</p>

Academic Titles

Existing Ordinance/Statute	Proposed Ordinance/Statute
<p><u>Section 12(9)</u></p> <p>The teachers shall be the Professors, Readers, Lecturers, and such other persons as may be designated teachers by the statutes. The teachers shall be appointed by the Council. The Council shall not terminate the appointment of any teacher except where after due enquiry into the facts and after receiving the advice of the Senate on the findings of such enquiry there exists in the opinion of the Council good cause for such termination.</p>	<p>12(9)(a) The teachers shall be Chairs, Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors of the University, and such other persons as may be designated as teachers by the statutes. The teachers shall be appointed by the Council on such terms as it thinks fit. The Council shall not terminate the appointment of any teacher except where after due enquiry into the facts and after receiving the advice of the Senate on the findings of such enquiry there exists in the opinion of the Council good cause for such termination.</p> <p>(Note: The purpose of the above amendments is to list the new academic titles, and to ensure that serving Teachers continue to be protected by good cause notwithstanding the amendments to the Ordinance and the Statutes.)</p>
<p><u>Section 12(10)</u></p> <p>Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (6) and (9), any officer or teacher -</p> <p>(a) who is appointed after or continued in employment beyond a retiring age determined by the Council; or</p> <p>(b) whose employment is temporary, part-time or probationary,</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (6) and (9)(a), any officer or teacher -</p> <p>(a) who is appointed after or continued in employment beyond a retiring age determined by the Council; or</p> <p>(b) whose employment is temporary, part-time or for a fixed term as stated in his contract of service,</p>

<p>may be removed from office in accordance with the terms of his contract of service or on any other lawful grounds, without any reason for such removal being assigned.</p>	<p>may be removed from office in accordance with the terms of his contract of service or on any other lawful grounds, without any reason for such removal being assigned.</p> <p>(Note: The purpose of the above amendment is to state clearly who is protected by good cause.)</p>
<p>Statute XII(1)</p> <p>In addition to the persons designated as such by the Ordinance, the senior lecturers, the assistant lecturers, the appointed Deans of Faculties and the Heads and Deputy Heads of the Institutes, Schools, Centres and Units and other sub-divisions of studies and learning appointed under the provisions of Statute XXV shall be teachers.</p>	<p>In addition to the persons designated as such by the Ordinance, the appointed Deans of Faculties and the Heads and Deputy Heads of the Institutes, Schools, Centres and Units and other sub-divisions of studies and learning appointed under the provisions of Statute XXV shall be teachers.</p> <p>(Note: The purpose of the above amendment is to delete reference to the old academic titles.)</p>
<p>Statute XXVIII 1(1)(b)</p> <p>The professors, readers, lecturers, tutors and demonstrators of the University.</p>	<p>The Chairs, Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Readers, Senior Lectures, Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers, Tutors and Demonstrators of the University.</p>

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30 April 2008

Mr H.W.K. Wai
Registrar
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Wai,

The University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053)

Thank you for your letter of 28 January 2008 on the above subject.

From higher education policy angle, we have no objection to your draft Amendment Bill to set out clearly the roles and powers of the Court and the Council of the University, as well as to give effect to the adoption of new academic titles. In this connection, we note that the Hon David Li will introduce a Members' Bill to the Legislative Council. Please keep us informed of the development and feel free to let us know if we could be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

(Vivian CHEUNG)
for Secretary for Education

教育統籌局已於二零零七年七月一日重新組織為教育局。為免誤會，我們繼續使用舊文具，直至存貨用罄為止。
The Education and Manpower Bureau has been re-organized as Education Bureau since 1 July 2007. To minimize waste, we are using our old stationery while stock lasts.
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EMB 1A

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Forward to Mr. Li on 21/5/08