



12 January 2009

The Hon. Ms. Cyd Ho Sau-lan
Chairman, Panel of Education
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Ho,

Response to Panel on Education's Motion

I am writing to furnish our response to the motion of the Panel on Education to, *inter alia*, urge the councils and administrative arms of UGC-funded institutions to make public the minutes and papers of their meetings.

2. The University has considered the said motion very carefully and a full discussion took place at the Council meeting held on 27 October 2008. First and foremost, the University has always upheld the principle of openness in engaging the University community, including staff, students and alumni, in formulating its strategies and major policies through suitable forms of consultation. Major decisions made by the Council and other administrative bodies have always been communicated to stakeholders through different channels (such as announcements, messages from the presidential officers to the University community, press releases, publications and meetings with stakeholders) in a timely manner. The University is committed to continue with these good practices.

3. Secondly, the University believes that the membership composition of its Council allows the participation of different categories of stakeholders in the formulation of major policies and procedures of the University, and the lay members who constitute the majority of the membership are in the best position to safeguard public interest. (The HKBU Council consists of 18 lay members appointed by the Chief Executive of the HKSAR from different sectors of the community, two elected staff members, two members elected by the Senate, while the President and Vice-Chancellor, vice-presidents, deans and the President of the HKBU Student Union serve



as *ex officio* members.) Staff, students and alumni are also provided with the opportunity to serve on the committees of the University to participate in the decision-making process and provide their views.

4. After carefully balancing the call for greater transparency and the need to exercise prudence in handling sensitive or personal information contained in council documents, the Council decides that in addition to reinforcing its commitment to communicate timely with stakeholders of the University community, decisions made at the Council meetings (except those which are classified confidential) would be posted on the University website for public viewing. This arrangement would avoid any possible contravention to the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance or embarrassment to individuals/parties who are subjects under discussion.

5. I am pleased to advise that the new practice has been instituted and a list of the decisions taken by the Council at its last meeting held on 9 December 2008 is now available on the HKBU website.

Yours sincerely,

Council Chairman

c.c. Prof. Ng Ching-Fai, GBS, President and Vice-Chancellor