

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Comprehensively reviewing the role and functions
of the University Grants Committee”
moved by Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 18 March 2009**

**Motion as amended by Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, Hon Starry LEE Wai-king,
Hon Tanya CHAN, Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye and Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou**

That, following the international trend that more and more countries, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Singapore, etc, have abolished their university grants committee mechanism, this Council urges the Government to comprehensively review the role and functions of the University Grants Committee of Hong Kong, with a view to optimizing the academic quality of local universities as well as the quality of their scientific researches, including:

- (a) complementing the switch to the ‘334’ academic structure, fostering the interface between local universities and the top universities in the world, and strengthening mutual academic exchange and co-operation in scientific researches;
- (b) improving the mechanism for approving research funding, abandoning the vetting criterion of giving emphasis to quantity rather than quality, ensuring academic freedom, and promoting research studies which meet the needs of the local community;
- (c) establishing a Fifth Matching Grant Scheme, continuing to encourage universities to raise funds from the community and their alumni, strengthening the link between universities and the community, and cultivating within the community a philanthropic culture in support of the development of university education;
- (d) allocating more funds to provide subsidized undergraduate places and for the universities to determine the intake of associate degree graduates and the number of undergraduate places that need to be substantially increased after the academic structure reform; and
- (e) promoting the development and construction of campuses under the principle of university autonomy, and developing Hong Kong into the education hub of Asia; and

- (f) supporting Hong Kong's universities to operate higher education institutions in the Pearl River Delta Region and collaborate with mainland education institutions in the area of scientific research, thereby enhancing the quality of these universities' scientific researches, so as to complement the development of Hong Kong into an education hub and nurture talents for the Pearl River Delta Region;
- (g) expeditiously reviewing the effectiveness of the work of the University Grants Committee and, based on the review results, examining the Committee's composition, structure, statutory status, mode of connection with the Government, powers and responsibilities, as well as its mode of regulation over various education institutions;
- (h) in vetting research funding applications, the University Grants Committee or the various education institutions should arrange for the vetting work to be carried out by persons with research experience in the academic fields for which the funding is applied;
- (i) reviewing the existing target that 18% of the relevant age cohort may enrol in publicly-funded undergraduate programmes; and
- (j) through various feasible ways, striving to enhance the corporate governance standard of publicly-funded education institutions and improve their administration, financial and human resources management systems, so as to strengthen the protection of academic freedom and enhance the transparency of the operation of the universities;
- (k) ensuring that universities will not, as enterprises do, set increasing income as their objective;
- (l) promoting knowledge creation, new and high technology as well as research studies which meet the needs of economic development; and
- (m) improving the teaching quality and curricula under the principle of giving priority consideration to nurturing local students, and broadening the international perspective of Hong Kong students;
- (n) adjusting Hong Kong's current development strategy on higher education which has all along emphasized the scientific, commercial and professional disciplines, and giving greater weight to humanities to enable university students to have a more all-rounded perspective and scholastic achievement; and
- (o) assisting the various local universities in exploring other sources of income in addition to government funding, so that the universities can have more sufficient resources to develop their teaching and research work.