

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)385/08-09
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 10 November 2008, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Chairman)
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
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
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king
Hon CHAN Tanya
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
- Member absent** : Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Agenda item IV
Mr Michael SUEN Ming-yeung, GBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Raymond WONG Hung-chiu, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Betty IP
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Dr Catherine CHAN Ka-ki
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Mr Jeremy YOUNG
Political Assistant to Secretary for Education

Agenda item V

Mr Michael SUEN Ming-yeung, GBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Raymond WONG Hung-chiu, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Dr Catherine CHAN Ka-ki
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Mr Jeremy YOUNG
Political Assistant to Secretary for Education

Dr Thomas CHEUNG Kwong-yuen
Director - Development & Educational Assessment,
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Agenda item VI

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

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

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

- Attendance by invitation** : Agenda item VI
Hong Kong Baptist University
Mr Andy LEE Shiu-chuen
Vice-President (Administration) and Secretary
Mr LAM Long-chau
Director of Estates
- Clerk in attendance** : Miss Odelia LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2)6
- Staff in attendance** : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Council Secretary (2)8
Miss Ivy LEUNG
Council Secretary (2)3
Miss Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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- I. Confirmation of minutes**
[LC Paper No. CB(2)192/08-09]
- The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2008 were confirmed.
- II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**
2. Members noted the following papers issued since the last meeting -
- (a) a letter dated 14 October 2008 from Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong to Mrs CHA May Lung Laura, Chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC) concerning salary adjustments in the UGC-funded institutions [LC Paper No. CB(2)91/08-09(01)];
- (b) a response dated 30 October 2008 from Mrs CHA May Lung Laura, Chairman of UGC to Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong's letter dated 14 October 2008 [LC Paper No. CB(2)201/08-09(01)];

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- (c) a paper provided by the Administration on development of a student amenity centre by the Chinese University of Hong Kong [LC Paper No. CB(2)207/08-09(01)];
- (d) a paper provided by the Administration on development of a new academic block and student hostel by Lingnan University [LC Paper No. CB(2)207/08-09(02)];
- (e) a letter dated 29 October 2008 from Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong concerning the governance structure and grievance and complaint mechanism of the UGC-funded institutions [LC Paper No. CB(2)219/08-09(01)];
- (f) a submission from the Hong Kong Federation of Students concerning the governance structure and grievance and complaint mechanism of the UGC-funded institutions [LC Paper No. CB(2)219/08-09(02)];
- (g) a response from the University of Hong Kong dated 28 October 2008 concerning the governance structure and grievance and complaint mechanism of the UGC-funded institutions [LC Paper No. CB(2)219/08-09(03)]; and
- (h) a paper provided by Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yea concerning the Chinese translation of "critical thinking" [LC Paper No. CB(2)222/08-09(01)].

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)205/08-09]

Item for the next meeting

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for 8 December 2008 -

- (a) recurrent funding for the UGC-funded institutions in the 2009-2010 to 2011-2012 triennium and establishment of Research Endowment Fund; and
- (b) development of the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination system and further improvement in the examination processes.

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Items for future meeting

4. The Chairman drew members' attention to the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion and the dates for discussion on the various items.

Governance structure and complaints handling mechanism for the UGC sector

5. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that he had received requests from university staff associations and student unions calling upon the Panel to discuss the response of the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) on the proposal concerning the establishment of an elected independent inter-institutional complaints committee. He enquired whether the subject could be put on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the Panel.

6. Dr Priscilla LEUNG expressed support for the discussion on the complaints handling mechanism for the UGC sector. She pointed out that over the past few years, numerous disputes between staff and management of the UGC-funded institutions had not been resolved satisfactorily, with the result that the parties concerned had resorted to legal actions or had sought help from the Panel or the media. She considered the establishment of an inter-institutional complaints committee a solution to the problem and beneficial to all the parties concerned.

7. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Clerk said that pursuant to the decision made at the last meeting, the Secretariat had written to each of the eight UGC-funded institutions requesting them to provide a written response to the motion passed by the Panel and the views expressed on the subject of governance structure and complaints handling mechanism for the UGC sector at the meeting on 17 July 2008. So far, the University of Hong Kong had responded and indicated that HUCOM had considered the proposal of the establishment of an inter-institutional complaints committee and HUCOM Secretariat had conveyed the views of the institutions to UGC. The Clerk also said that the Administration had been informed of the Panel's intention to discuss the subject upon the receipt of the responses from UGC/the Administration and the institutions. The Chairman advised the Clerk to follow up the matter with the Administration.

Preparation for implementation of the new academic structure

8. Ms Audrey EU suggested that given the imminent implementation of the new senior secondary (NSS) academic structure in the 2009-2010 school year, the Panel should discuss the progress of the Administration's preparation work and invite the stakeholders including teachers and parents associations to give views. She opined that the Administration should provide a paper for the Panel's consideration before the date for discussing the subject was fixed. Members

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agreed to include the subject on the list of outstanding items for discussion.

IV. Closure of secondary schools as a result of class restructuring under the new senior secondary academic structure

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)205/08-09(01) and (02)]

9. Members noted the background brief on class restructuring of secondary schools prepared by the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat.

Briefing by the Administration

10. Secretary for Education (SED) briefed members on the measures to stabilize school development for facilitating the implementation of the NSS academic structure in the wake of student population decline in the recent years as set out in the Administration's paper. He highlighted that having considered the development options and the number of secondary schools with insufficient enrolment to operate three Secondary One (S1) classes, the Administration had provided another two new development options to support the under-enrolled schools. He stressed that the Education Bureau (EDB) would continue to discuss with the concerned schools on the way forward.

Options for under-enrolled schools

11. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong noted that schools with insufficient enrolment to operate three S1 classes might continue to operate junior secondary classes under the Per Capita Subvention Mode. On their completion of S3, the cohort of students concerned would be offered S4 places in other subsidized secondary schools through a central placement mechanism. He pointed out that it was not easy for them to adapt to the new schools. According to the Administration, there were some 9 000 secondary school drop-outs in a school year; and some 6 000 S5 graduates had failed in all subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). Schools adopting the Per Capita Subvention Mode would be more ready to admit these students should they wish to resume or continue studies. To facilitate these students to pursue studies and to enable the students of schools adopting the Per Capita Subvention Mode to complete secondary education in the same schools, Mr CHEUNG requested the Administration to consider extending the Per Capita Subvention Mode to senior secondary classes.

12. SED clarified that the 9 000 students referred to by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong included students who quitted schools for various reasons. The figure also included a large number of students who changed schools because of change of residence. He referred members to one of the new development options under which schools with less than three S1 classes for the first time might apply for operating practical courses in collaboration with post-secondary

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institutions or professional or vocational bodies. EDB had worked out the factors for approving applications for such collaborations, and would announce the details later.

13. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong enquired whether the Administration would provide opportunity to students to complete secondary education in the same schools irrespective of the mode of operation of the schools.

14. SED responded that whether students could complete secondary education in the same schools would depend on the wish of the schools concerned to continue operation, subject to the fulfillment of certain requirements. EDB would arrange placement for students in schools adopting the Per Capita Subvention Mode to study S4 in other subsidized schools. For under-enrolled schools, they could consider the various development options including joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme.

15. Ms Audrey EU requested the Administration to provide the projected primary and secondary school student populations in different districts in the coming six years. She expressed concern about the impact of a declining student population on schools with a large enrolment of Band 3 students. She pointed out that given student diversity, there was a need for such schools. Notwithstanding the provision of the development options, some of these schools would be closed down because of insufficient enrolment. She sought information on the arrangements, if any, to enable students, in particular those with lesser academic ability to continue their studies in the same schools or other schools located in the same districts.

16. SED pointed out that the extent of decline in student population at primary and secondary levels varied from district to district. Where possible, EDB would arrange transfer of the affected students to schools located in the same district. However, this might not be feasible in some cases. As the three schools with insufficient enrolment in the 2008-2009 school year were all located in Tai Po, EDB would encourage the two aided schools concerned to merge so that their students could continue their senior secondary education in Tai Po. SED agreed to provide the projected primary and secondary student population by districts in the next six years, if available.

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17. Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered the adoption of consistent long-term policies essential for the provision of quality education. She cited examples to highlight the adverse effects of school closure on teachers and students. She was disappointed at the closure of New Territories Heung Yee Kuk (NTHYK) Southern District Secondary School to whom both teachers and students had developed a strong sense of belonging. She pointed out that the development of quality teachers and schools took time, and once a school was closed down, both the hardware and software would be wasted. She stressed that experienced teachers were invaluable assets in education, and surplus teachers should be

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retained in the education sector by way of redeployment after appropriate training. Given the trend of increase in the local birth rate in recent years, the primary student population would increase in five to seven years. She urged the Administration to review the class restructuring of secondary schools under the NSS academic structure from a long-term perspective, taking into account the adverse impact of school closure and the fluctuations in student population in the years to come.

18. SED responded that at present, there were some 400 secondary schools of which less than 10 were encountering the problem of under-enrolment. Given the small proportion, it would not be difficult for experienced surplus teachers to seek a teaching post in other schools. The NTHYK Southern District Secondary School was a government school and its teachers were civil servants who had been transferred to other government schools. He pointed out that school sponsoring bodies could arrange transfer of teachers among the schools under their sponsorship.

19. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung called on the Administration to reduce the number of students per class for calculating approved S1 classes to 30 expeditiously to relieve the pressure of school closure. Noting that the three secondary schools which had failed to recruit sufficient students for operating three classes in the 2008-2009 school year were all located in Tai Po, he sought information on the time allowed for schools to consider the merger option and the detailed arrangements.

20. SED responded that the relaxation of the number of students to 30 per class for calculating approved S1 classes in the 2009-2010 school year was worked out having regard to the available manpower and resources. It would be practically difficult to achieve the reduced class size earlier than scheduled. As regards the development options for the schools in Tai Po with insufficient enrolment, EDB had separately discussed with the principals and the sponsoring bodies concerned to explore the possibility of merging with other schools. More flexibility had been built in the merger option to facilitate the merging of under-enrolled schools. In gist, schools operated by the same sponsors but located at different districts could also be merged. In general, EDB would allow two to three years for the schools to prepare and complete the merging process, subject to further discussion with the schools concerned.

21. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether the Administration could assist under-enrolled schools which had admitted a large number of students with special educational needs (SEN) to become special schools providing education for such students, should the schools wish to. These schools would then be provided with the resources for special schools. He quoted a school in Tseung Kwan O which had admitted a large number of students with specific learning difficulties and wished to become a special school catering for the needs of these students.

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22. SED pointed out that the provision of integrated education for students with SEN to learn and interact with other students in ordinary schools and classes was implemented after extensive consultation. Any change to the policy to revert the provision of education for students with SEN in special schools had to be thoroughly discussed. SED said that EDB was ready to examine the issue with members at an appropriate forum.

Resources

23. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that education should be student-oriented and the planning for its provision should be long-term. Regrettably, the Administration had resorted to school closure to resolve its planning mistake for having failed to take into account population changes. The measures introduced by the Administration to stabilize school development were, indeed, destabilization measures without regard to the interests of students and teachers who had to change schools. These measures were designed solely for administrative convenience. Referring to the measures to stabilize the teaching force including the Early Retirement Scheme for Secondary School Teachers and a five-year transitional period for absorption of surplus teachers in aided schools, Mr WONG considered these an insult to the teaching force as surplus teachers implied that they had lesser ability. He criticized the Administration for not acceding to the request of stakeholders to implement small class teaching (SCT) to resolve the problem of declining student population.

24. SED responded that the provision of education had all along been student-oriented and the Administration had relaxed the criteria for approving classes in secondary schools. The basis for calculating the approved S1 classes for schools with surplus teacher(s) as a result of the September headcount would be reduced gradually from 35 students per class to 30 as from the 2009-2010 school year. He pointed out that given a declining student population, it was inevitable that the number of classes in some secondary schools would be reduced. SED stressed that although the reduction of secondary classes would save some resources, class restructuring was not for the purpose of saving resources. The savings arising therefrom would be used to support the implementation of the NSS academic structure, under which all students would be provided with six-year free secondary education. In addition, additional resources would be required for the provision of four-year undergraduate programmes.

25. Mr WONG Yuk-man maintained the view that the purpose of implementing class restructuring was to save resources. With the declining student population, the savings should be deployed to improve the quality of education.

26. Mr Tommy CHEUNG noted paragraphs 15 and 16 of the

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Administration's paper which stated that the savings arising from the decline in student population would be re-deployed to support the various initiatives under the 334 structure; and taking into consideration the projected economic downturn and fiscal constraint in the next few years, there would be little room for further support measures to be introduced. He was concerned whether class restructuring was the means to save resources for the implementation of the 334 structure and whether the projects committed for the UGC-funded institutions for the purpose would be affected.

27. SED responded that the Administration had previously estimated savings of about \$900 million arising from a decline in student population. However, according to the latest estimate, such a target would unlikely be achieved. It was therefore necessary to save resources in areas warranted. Should there be difficulty in redeploying sufficient resources for the implementation of the 334 structure, EDB would have to make difficult decisions on allocation of resources among the competing priority in education. Nevertheless, those projects concerning the UGC-funded institutions that had already been commenced would not be affected.

28. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong noted with concern that the implementation of the new academic structure would rely on the redeployment of savings arising from class restructuring. Under such circumstances, the school sector could hardly maintain stability with a target to save \$900 million. He asked whether the Administration would consider using the various education funds to support the implementation of the NSS academic structure, instead of relying on reduction of classes and closure of schools to obtain savings.

29. SED replied that the Administration could not use the various education funds to finance the recurrent cost for the implementation of the 334 structure as they were established for designated non-recurrent purposes.

30. Mr Abraham SHEK said that the quality of education was crucial to the success of Hong Kong, and resources should not be the sole consideration. He opined that every school had its specific mission, vision and circumstances, and should not be closed down for the sake of ensuring effective use of resources. He asked whether the Administration would consider adopting SCT to retain the primary and secondary schools with under-enrolment. In his view, class restructuring could save resources in the short term, but would jeopardize the quality of education in the long term.

31. SED responded that about 70% of aided primary schools had opted to implement SCT so far. The Administration had no plan to implement SCT in secondary schools at the present stage, and had relaxed gradually the basis for calculating the approved S1 classes for schools with surplus teacher(s) as a result of the September headcount from 35 students per class to 30 as from the 2009-2010 school year. In addition, schools had adopted small group teaching

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for different subjects in the light of students' needs and abilities. SED stressed that the Administration had implemented various measures to enhance the quality of education, and SCT should not be the only means. He added that the Director of Audit and the Public Accounts Committee had recommended cost-effective use of school places and education resources, and EDB had acted in accordance with the recommendations.

32. Mr Abraham SHEK said that notwithstanding the gradual reduction of student number in calculating approved S1 classes, it was not a policy on SCT and schools would still be anxious about closure.

33. SED reiterated that the Administration had categorically stated in writing the gradual reduction of student number in calculating approved S1 classes in the next few years, and the Administration had yet to decide on SCT for secondary schools.

Practical courses

34. The Chairman enquired about the sharing of cost between secondary schools and post-secondary institutions, professional or vocational bodies for operating practical courses. She was concerned that tuition fees or other fees might be charged on students for attending these courses. She sought information on whether fee-charging on these courses would be regulated and the channel for complaints in this regard.

35. Deputy Secretary for Education (4) (DS(Ed)4) explained that the practical courses offered by schools in collaboration with post-secondary institutions, professional or vocational bodies were different from Applied Learning (ApL) courses under the NSS academic structure. Students should not be required to pay tuition fees for attending practical courses, but might be required to pay the material and transportation costs on a need basis. Since any charging of fees by secondary schools would be subject to EDB's approval, EDB could monitor the situation. As regards the sharing of cost for operating practical courses, DS(Ed)4 said that it would vary for different practical courses and for different schools, depending on the nature of the courses, the mode of collaboration and the manpower market.

36. Mrs Regina IP sought information on practical courses that would be offered and the distinction between practical courses and ApL courses. DS(Ed)4 responded that schools might collaborate with post-secondary institutions or professional/vocational bodies to offer practical courses as alternative choices to those students who were less academically inclined. Such practical courses should provide multiple pathways for students to pursue higher level studies or to join the workforce after secondary schooling. Examples of the practical courses included Maritime Studies, Physical Fitness, Network Management, etc. Deputy Secretary for Education (5) (DS(Ed)5) supplemented that ApL courses

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placed equal emphasis on practical and theoretical aspects of studies. Practical courses would enrich the scope of ApL courses, providing more choices for students.

Non-local intake at secondary levels

37. Professor Patrick LAU enquired about the viability of recruiting non-local students to secondary schools in the light of the policy commitment to develop Hong Kong into a regional education hub.

38. SED responded that the subject had not been considered before as the concern about the declining secondary student population only arose in the recent years. He pointed out that unlike non-local students admitted to the UGC-funded institutions, students admitted to secondary school were below the age of 18 and it was necessary to sort out all the associated issues such as local accommodation and support measures before consideration could be given to attracting non-local students to attend secondary schools in Hong Kong.

39. Permanent Secretary for Education (PSED) supplemented that Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and private independent schools could recruit non-local students under the existing policy. Non-local students who were interested to study in Hong Kong normally aimed at entering more popular secondary schools. Those secondary schools with insufficient enrolment were unlikely the target schools for non-local students.

V. Progress of promotion of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education qualification

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)215/08-09(01) and (02)]

40. Members noted the background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat entitled "Recognition and articulation of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education qualification".

Briefing by the Administration

41. SED highlighted the work done by the Administration in promoting the local and international recognition of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) qualification as detailed in the Administration's paper.

Recognition of Applied Learning courses

42. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern about on-going discussion on the recognition of ApL courses by the UGC-funded institutions under the HKDSE examination with the Administration. He noted a complaint from a student who had completed an ApL course on tourism but was informed that the

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course was not recognized under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) for admission purpose. He stressed that the student could not meet the minimum requirement for admission under the JUPAS if the ApL course was not recognized as one of the subjects.

43. DS(Ed)5 explained that ApL courses were currently at the piloting stage and were offered for S4 and 5. The Administration was discussing with the universities on the recognition of ApL under the NSS curriculum. She noted that some faculties in certain institutions might have informally contacted providers offering ApL courses indicating that they would recognize ApL for admission purpose in future. EDB had issued a circular to schools in September 2008 which stated, among others, that the assessment and accreditation of ApL and the recognition of ApL in the context of the new academic structure (the 334 structure) were being discussed with the UGC-funded institutions and the details would be promulgated in 2010. DS(Ed)5 stressed that the benchmarking and recognition of ApL followed the same procedures as other subjects to be offered under NSS.

44. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that successful completion of one quality-assured ApL piloting course was recognized as comparable to one HKCEE subject pass for admission to S6. Students who had been admitted to S6 on the basis of their attainments in ApL had been misled to believe that they could seek admission under the JUPAS. However, EDB, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), JUPAS Office or the UGC-funded institutions could not advise on the recognition of ApL for admission under the JUPAS. Mr CHEUNG was concerned that the Administration had promoted ApL courses but it transpired that these courses were not recognized for admission to the UGC-funded institution programmes. He asked how the Administration would follow up the matter given that the deadline for application under the JUPAS for the 2009-2010 school year was 2 December 2008.

45. DS(Ed)5 explained that ApL courses were currently recognized for the purpose of admission to S6 and appointment to civil service. As the target students of ApL were S4 and 5 students, they might have difficulties in completing the information required for application for admission under the JUPAS. EDB had been following up the matter with the JUPAS Office.

46. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that the matter brought up by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong reflected the lack of interface of basic education reform with the university programmes. She pointed out that even if ApL were recognized by universities for admission purpose, individual faculties and departments had their own requirements and enjoyed autonomy in student admission. As far as she knew, many faculties and departments would unlikely accept ApL. Problems of the same nature had arisen in the case of mother-tongue teaching, and some faculties and departments had never accepted students receiving

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Chinese as the medium of instruction in secondary education. She called on the Administration to improve communication with the UGC-funded institutions on preparation for the implementation of the new academic structure.

47. DS(Ed)5 explained that the ApL courses, previously known as the career-oriented studies, were designed to cater for the needs of students who were less successful in academic studies. The pilot ApL courses were operated within the existing academic structure and would have to be assessed together with other subjects under the NSS curriculum and assessment frameworks. EDB had established the Liaison Group on 334 Interface Issues in 2004 to maintain close communication with the UGC-funded institutions on matters relating to entry requirements and the interface between new senior secondary and four-year undergraduate curriculum under the 334 structure. The recognition of ApL, as well as the existing HKCEE and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) subject achievements would be discussed by the Liaison Group.

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48. The Chairman echoed Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's view, and said that many students might be affected. She requested the Administration to provide a written response on the matter within the week. She said that upon the receipt of the Administration's response, the Panel might hold a special meeting to follow up the matter.

International recognition

49. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan sought information on the Administration's objective in seeking international recognition of the HKDSE qualification, and the progress of the studies on the benchmarking of HKDSE against other international qualifications such as those in the United Kingdom (UK).

50. Director - Development & Educational Assessment/HKEAA (D(D&ES)) responded that there would be five levels of results from Level 1 to 5 in HKDSE, with the top and the next top performance represented by 5** and 5* respectively. On the basis of the curriculum and assessment guides for the 24 NSS subjects which had been finalised in early 2008, HKEAA was working on the exemplars and level descriptors to facilitate international benchmarking by overseas educational organizations. He pointed out that HKEAA had sent all the relevant information to the three main agencies in the UK including the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The study to be conducted with the UCAS aimed to set up a point system in the UCAS tariff for HKDSE results. The first round of results was expected to be available in the last quarter of 2009.

Levels of achievements

51. Professor Patrick LAU enquired about the rationale for adopting a

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grading system from Level 1 to 5 in HKDSE, instead of following the existing system of grades A to E in HKCEE and HKALE which were adopted by international examination bodies. He also asked for the minimum levels of results in HKDSE for admission to the four-year undergraduate programmes.

52. D(D&ES) explained that unlike the existing HKALE which was taken by about one-third of the secondary school graduates, HKDSE would be attended by all senior secondary school graduates with a wider diversity in learning outcomes. It was therefore necessary to design a broad grading system in HKDSE to provide information about the actual achievement of students and enable monitoring of standards of attainment of students over time. The delineation of 5** and 5* awards was purported to facilitate selection decisions and to give recognition to outstanding students. As regards the minimum entry requirements for the four-year undergraduate programmes, HKEAA was conducting simulation exercises on the minimum requirements under the existing and the new grading systems. The HUCOM considered that the awards of Level 3 in English and Chinese, and Level 2 in Mathematics and Liberal Studies in HKDSE would likely be the minimum requirements of core subjects for admission purpose.

Other learning experiences

53. Ms Starry LEE asked how students would be assessed in their other learning experiences under the NSS assessment system. She considered it necessary to establish an objective system of assessment in this regard.

54. DS(Ed)5 responded that to facilitate assessment of students' all-round development, assessment of students' "other learning experiences" was incorporated in the NSS curriculum and assessment framework to reflect students' performance in non-academic areas such as arts, sports and music as well as community services and job-related experiences. The achievements in "other learning experiences" would be recorded in the Student Learning Profile and this would facilitate the UGC-funded institutions in student selection and employers in staff recruitment. In addition, students might provide a self-description in their learning profiles. Training and reference materials were provided to teachers concerning assessment of student's learning outcomes in different areas; and some schools had established their own systems for recording students' performance in specific areas.

Review of first-year-first-degree places

55. Ms Starry LEE was concerned about the double cohort in the 2012-2013 academic year, and asked whether the provision of first-year-first-degree (FYFD) places for that year would be reviewed.

56. PSED explained that in the double cohort academic year, 14 500

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three-year and 14 500 four-year undergraduate places would be provided for students taking the HKALE and HKDSE examinations respectively. As the provision of additional FYFD places would involve significant public resources, this would have to be thoroughly discussed in the community.

Follow-up

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57. Mr Abraham SHEK requested the Administration to provide a paper to explain the reasons for adopting the new grading system in HKDSE. D(D&ES) agreed.

58. The Chairman suggested that the Panel should revisit the subject when the results of the studies conducted with UCAS and other international agencies were available. Members agreed.

VI. Baptist University Road campus development, Hong Kong Baptist University

[LC Paper No. CB(2)205/08-09(03)]

59. Under Secretary for Education (USED) briefed members on the proposed capital works project for the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) to implement the Baptist University Road Campus Development (the Project) at an estimated cost of \$987.3 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices as set out in the Administration's paper. He highlighted that the Project would provide additional space of some 19 700 square metres in net operational floor area (NOFA) within HKBU's campus for implementation of the 334 academic structure and to meet existing space shortfall.

60. Mr Tommy CHEUNG noted that the Administration had earmarked funding for the UGC-funded institutions to carry out 12 capital works projects for the implementation of the 334 structure. He asked whether there was an estimated budget for each of the UGC-funded institutions for that purpose, and whether the current estimated cost of \$987.3 million for the Project was within the estimated budget for HKBU.

61. Deputy Secretary-General (1), University Grants Committee (DSG1(UGC)) responded that the UGC-funded institutions had examined their space and facility requirements for implementing the 334 structure, and UGC recommended that 12 capital works projects had to be carried out for the purpose. The Administration had earmarked funding for each of the projects, and the estimated cost of the Project under consideration was within the earmarked funding. The Administration had estimated a total cost of \$3.4 billion in September 2004 prices for the 12 capital works. Depending on when the proposals were submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for consideration, the estimated cost for individual projects might be different from

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the original estimates, for example, because of refinement of project scope and rising labour and material costs. She assured members that the Administration had earmarked sufficient funding for the 12 projects.

62. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that his query had not been clarified. He was concerned that should there be a fixed amount of funding for the 12 projects, those projects which were submitted to PWSC for consideration earlier would have an advantage over other projects.

63. DS(Ed)1 explained that on the basis of the latest estimate, the Administration had earmarked sufficient funding for the 12 capital works projects. He pointed out that one of the projects had been endorsed by PWSC at an estimated cost of about \$20 million higher than the original estimate. The papers on the proposals for the development of a student amenity centre of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a new academic block and student hostel of Lingnan University were circulated to members for consideration on 4 November 2008. The proposals for the remaining seven projects would be submitted to PWSC and the Finance Committee (FC) for consideration within the current and the next legislative session.

64. USED added that the estimated cost for the 12 projects was around \$3.4 billion in 2004 prices. The estimated cost for individual projects had been revised to reflect changes in price levels with the passage of time. The Administration had earmarked sufficient funding for the 12 projects, and the timing for submission of individual projects to PWSC for consideration would not impact on the funding earmarked for the other projects. USED further said that since the Project had not been endorsed by PWSC/FC and its budget had not been approved, the question as to whether it had exceeded the approved budget did not arise.

65. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the Liberal Party did not object to the Project.

66. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong sought information on the original and latest estimated total costs of the 12 projects, the original and the latest estimated costs of the Project and whether any increase in costs would be shouldered by the institutions or the Administration. He recalled that the estimated cost for the Multi-media Building of the City University of Hong Kong had increased substantially as the institution had taken a long time to decide on the design, and the additional cost incurred had to be paid from the public purse.

67. DSG(1)(UGC) responded that based on the latest forecast, the total estimated cost of the 12 projects for implementation of the 334 structure would increase from the original estimate of about \$3.4 billion to around \$4.9 billion in 2008 prices. The original estimates for part of the works in Phase I and II developments of the Project were about \$240 million in September 2005 prices

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and about \$343 million in September 2006 prices respectively. She pointed out that the estimates for capital works projects were updated annually.

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68. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested the Administration to provide written information on the original and latest estimates of each of the 12 projects, the reasons for any increase in the estimated costs and the parties concerned for shouldering the additional costs. The Chairman said that the information should be made available to members before the relevant PWSC meeting. The Administration agreed.

69. Ms Starry LEE expressed concern about the space required for constructing additional campus buildings and facilities for the implementation of the 334 structure and the policy commitment to develop Hong Kong into a regional education hub. As a number of the institutions were located in urban areas including the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, City University of Hong Kong and HKBU, she asked whether EDB would consider providing land sites outside the campuses of the institutions for construction of additional buildings and student hostels.

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70. USED responded that the Administration would continue to search and identify appropriate sites for the construction of buildings and hostels for use by the higher education sector. One of the potential areas was the Lok Ma Chau Loop. As for HKBU, the Project would be carried out within the existing University campus in Kowloon Tong. The Project would involve the demolition of seven existing low-rise blocks, construction of a new 13-storey main building and a three-storey Annex Block on an existing open carpark, and construction of a footbridge to link the main building and the Annex Block. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide written information on the land sites identified for the construction of additional facilities and buildings required for the UGC-funded institutions in support of the new academic structure.

71. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong in principle supported the Project for the implementation of the 334 structure. He was concerned that scarce urban land resources in HKBU's campus had not been fully utilized as the existing seven blocks were low-rise. He asked whether there would be any low-rise blocks left after the completion of the Project.

72. Mr Andy LEE Shiu-chuen, Vice-President (Administration) and Secretary of HKBU, explained that the seven existing low-rise blocks were constructed for temporary use in the 1990s in the development of the Shaw campus. The occupation permits for these blocks were also temporary. Under the Project, all the low-rise blocks would be demolished.

73. Referring to the site plan for the Project, Professor Patrick LAU asked for the reasons for not locating the Annex Block adjacent to the main building at the

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vacant site at the junction of the Renfrew Road and the Baptist University Road, hence obviating the need for constructing the footbridge.

74. Mr LAM Long-chau, Director of Estates of HKBU, explained that there were underground railway installations and facilities beneath the vacant site in question. Should the Annex Block be built on the site, the construction costs would be extremely expensive.

75. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed support for the Project in principle. However, he was of the view that more information on the Project should have been included in the Administration's paper such as those requested by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong. He was concerned whether the implementation of the new academic structure necessitated the whole Project or only part of it. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the paper should also have included information concerning the NOFA unit cost and the construction floor unit cost per square metre as compared with similar developments in the market.

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76. The Chairman expressed reservations about the need to construct a footbridge over the Baptist University Road to link the three-storey Annex Block with the main building. In her view, the traffic in Baptist University Road was not busy. She considered it necessary to use public money prudently, as the estimated cost of the Project had increased substantially from about \$600 million to \$987.3 million in MOD prices.

77. Mr Andy LEE Shiu-chuen explained that HKBU had examined the need for the construction of the footbridge, and concluded that it was necessary to provide a safe and convenient pathway from the Annex Block to the podium of the main building from which students could access other university buildings and facilities. The main building would connect with the Li Promenade of the Shaw campus, being the pedestrian spine, to become the centre point of the campus for enhanced interaction between teachers and students and for student activities.

78. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that given the prevailing financial crisis, the Administration, UGC and HKBU should re-consider the need for the footbridge from the perspective of prudent utilization of public money.

79. The Chairman considered it necessary for the Administration to provide written information concerning the need and the cost for the footbridge. Mr Abraham SHEK echoed the view of members on the need for the provision of detailed information on the Project and the other projects of the UGC-funded institutions for the implementation of the new academic structure.

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80. Concluding the discussions, the Chairman said that members did not object to the submission of the proposal for the Project to PWSC for consideration on 15 December 2008. However, the Administration should

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provide all the information requested by members for PWSC's consideration.

VII. Any other business

81. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:40 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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