



香港中文大學職員協會
STAFF ASSOCIATION OF
THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
香港 新界 沙田 SHATIN, N.T., HONG KONG

電話 TEL.: 2603 6600
傳真 FAX.: 2603 6363

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1. It is universally recognized that academic freedom is a cornerstone for an informed and enlightened public in a democracy and knowledge society; and university autonomy is central to it.
2. Article 137 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region stipulates that local educational institutions continue to enjoy autonomy and academic freedom.
3. It should be noted that university autonomy has its confines and it has been affirmed in Hong Kong through court decisions that no organization will be granted dictatorial power by a legislative body in a democracy.
4. Therefore, the term “university autonomy” cannot be employed to clothe decisions contrary to public accountability and accepted social norms.
5. Transparency in administrative affairs is essential in preventing “university autonomy” from degenerating into “administrative dictatorship”.
6. Lord Sutherland, in his report to the UGC of Hong Kong (Mar. 2002), while proposing organizational changes to enhance university performance, stresses the importance of an independent appeal body (para. 3.27) in achieving the aims of the changes recommended.
7. The function of the non-academic staff of a university is to provide support to quality teaching and research; and reasonable employment protection and benefits are necessary in maintaining a quality staff, academic and non-academic alike.
8. To protect the legitimate rights of our colleagues and the interests of the Hong Kong society, the Staff Association of the Chinese University of Hong Kong would like to join the academic community in its demand for transparency and an independent appeal body.
9. The Hong Kong Government is also urged to perform its constitutional duty of maintaining academic freedom through true university autonomy.