

The PolyU's comment on  
Aspiration for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong  
Presented at  
Legislative Council, Panel on Education Meeting, March 14, 2011

We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide comments for the report entitled "Aspiration for the Higher Education Systems in Hong Kong". We like to make comments in three areas which are of particular interest to PolyU, Internationalization (recommendation 9-18), Role differentiation (recommendation 27-28) and Institutions' relationships with their self-financing operation and efficiency (recommendation 34), as follow:

1. Internationalisation (recommendations 9 - 18)

We are fully supportive of the recommendations for internationalisation. The increase of hostel accommodation by the Government (recommendation 13) is particularly relevant since the lack of hostel accommodation is a bottleneck for the recruitment of international students.

2. Role differentiation (recommendations 27 - 28)

We support role differentiation between UGC-funded institutions. However, it is important to ensure that when the role of an institution does not lead to an unfair limitation on the institution to obtain its fair share of resources in teaching and research. For example, PolyU's role in research is identified to be "application oriented" and "aims to be internationally competitive its areas of research strength". In ensure our "international competitiveness", we believe very strongly that we need to engage in basic research, particularly in areas which are keys to development of application (e.g. nanotechnology, biotechnology, energy, environment, etc.). UGC must therefore make an effort to ensure that the reviewing process for research and teaching resources (e.g. selection of reviewer, setting up criteria of reviews, etc.) is formulated with this understanding. Otherwise, we have a concern that role differentiation would be misinterpreted as placing lower value to education programmes and research that have application values.

3. Institutions' relationships with their self-financing operations and efficiency (recommendation 34)

PolyU is not ready to accept the recommendation 34 that "The community college operations of UGC-funded institutions should be completely separated from their parent institutions within three years of the acceptance of this recommendation." PolyU has been careful in keeping a separation between the community college operation (i.e. Hong Kong Community College) and that of the PolyU proper. The financial accounting systems are independent, and the campuses are also separate. The construction of the two HKCC campuses was financed by the Government loans which were undertaken by PolyU.

It should be noted that in 2010/11, about 81.6% of HKCC graduates articulated into one of the universities in Hong Kong, and 42.1% of HKCC graduates (590 in headcounts) were admitted to PolyU

undergraduate degree programmes. It is a proven established alternative path for students who cannot be admitted to UGC-funded programmes. Due to the close relationship with PolyU, HKCC is able to attract strong enrolment and thus assures its ability to repay the loans. A complete separation of HKCC from the PolyU proper would probably harm HKCC's ability to attract a similar level of student intake and adversely affect its ability to repay the loans. In view that a complete separation of HKCC from the PolyU proper would create unnecessary uncertainties, it is unwise to interrupt HKCC's operation as a component within PolyU at this time.