

Legislative Council: Panel on Education

Meeting on March 14, 2011

Comments on the “Report on Higher Education Review”

- by Professor Joseph Hun-wei Lee

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Madame Chairman, Honorable LegCo members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit views on this important report. I will mainly speak on highlight extracts of our written submission: on overall methodology, internationalization, and mainland strategy.

HKUST in general has mixed views on the Report. While some recommendations on topics such as internationalization and some new funding initiatives are welcome, others such as the proposed research funding and research student number allocation procedures, as well as direction change in terms of role differentiation have caused considerable concern.

Given the importance of the Report and its impact on universities, insufficient time and effort has been made in consulting the principal stakeholders – the institutions themselves. Some of the ideas concerning research funding and research student allocation are not very clear because those inside the system have not been given sufficient time to respond in the early stages of discussions.

In terms of methodology, HKUST believes that the principal responsibility for undertaking such reviews of the higher education system should rest with local members of the higher education community perhaps advised by overseas experts. This is a plea for recognition that Hong Kong higher education is now fully mature and most certainly able to shape its own destiny.

On internationalization: HKUST especially welcomes Recommendation #11 (additional funding to UGC to fund internationalization initiatives); as well as #13 (to increase hostel accommodation for local and non-local students). In fact we are of the view that the government should consider putting in even more resources for initiatives that promote international exchange and collaboration to increase the international perspectives of the students.

On mainland strategy: we feel that the Report overall gives insufficient weight to Mainland matters. For example, Hong Kong government financial support and incentive for collaboration in projects with sister Mainland organisations should be greater. It is also suggested that some matching fund could be considered by the Government as incentive for researchers to collaborate with Mainland partners.

Thank you.