



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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17 July 2012

Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Amy Yu)

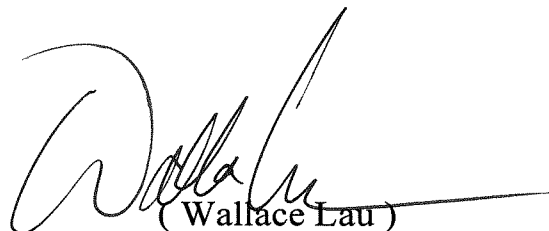
Dear Ms Yu,

**Panel on Education
Follow-up to meeting on 12 March 2012**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 12 March 2012, the Chairman requested the Administration to co-ordinate with the University of Hong Kong (HKU), the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and provide information on the measures to be taken by these universities to protect and enhance academic freedom of their staff and students.

We understand that HKUST has since written to the Panel Chairman direct on the requested information. I enclose herewith the requested information provided by HKU and HKBU and should be grateful if you could help circulate to Members.

Yours sincerely,



(Wallace Lau)

for Secretary for Education



Enclosure

cc. Secretary-General, University Grants Committee
(Attn: Mrs Dorothy Ma)

**Information provided by the University of Hong Kong on
Safeguarding Academic Freedom**

(Translation)

Academic freedom is a core value of The University of Hong Kong (HKU) and is in its lifeline and tradition. All teachers and students of HKU own the right to academic freedom.

As early as in 2003, HKU stipulated a set of clear policies to safeguard academic freedom, provide a clear definition of "academic freedom" and set out specific principles for the protection of academic freedom. These policies ensure that teachers and students enjoy the right to pursue academic truth and engage in rational debates, criticisms and discussions, while understand their corresponding responsibilities. Teachers and students, as well as the community can learn about the policies on HKU's website at http://www0.hku.hk/acad_freedom/.

On the other hand, the University also has in place a well-established mechanism to deal with complaints from staff and students, including complaints about interference with academic freedom. Such a mechanism could ensure that all complaints would receive a fair and equitable treatment and investigation. It would also help protect the complainant by ensuring that they would not be subject to retaliation by lodging a complaint.

In addition, the HKU Council endorsed a policy on whistle-blowing last month to further encourage staff, students and other persons to lodge complaints in relation to the University's mishandling of affairs or inappropriate behavior or conduct on the part of its staff.

On the whole, HKU firmly believe that academic freedom is closely related to the protection of the University's freedom. It protects the autonomy of students on their studies, course selection and academic activities. It also protects the freedom of teachers on teaching, research and publications. If there is no academic freedom, universities would

not be able to achieve excellence, let alone making significant accomplishments and contributions. Therefore, HKU would make every effort to uphold academic freedom.

**Information provided by the Hong Kong Baptist University on
Safeguarding Academic Freedom**

(Translation)

The Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) is determined to safeguard academic freedom, freedom of speech and institutional autonomy. It also holds dear core values such as the rule of law and personal privacy. HKBU would continue to stand firm behind these core values.

Building on the premise of academic freedom, HKBU advocates the governing of the university by professors. The Senate, as the highest academic decision-making body, comprises academic staff and student representatives. All important academic decisions must be discussed and endorsed by the Senate, which is consistent with practices in renowned universities around the World.

In respect of teaching, academic staff in HKBU is free to decide on their own teaching methods and materials in accordance with broad academic policies endorsed by the Senate. In the course of conducting academic researches, academic staff in HKBU can determine on their own the research topics, research methods, working partners, publication channels and publication time, without being subject to any review or intervention. Staff and students are free to participate in a variety of academic activities.

The assessment of academic staff is based on the criteria of academic, research and service quality. Factors that are not related to academic work will not be considered.

The University also respects the freedom of speech - academic staff and students are free to express their views in within and outside the campus of HKBU. The "Democracy Wall" which allows students and staff to express their views is administered by the Students' Union which is operated independently from the University.