



**D Dong's Response to the Legislative Council concerning the
Over-enrollment of Certain Self-financing Sub-degree programs**

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1. Introduction of D-DONG

D-DONG is one of the few professional youth institutions in Hong Kong. It was established by a group of high-calibre young people in 2010. D-DONG is an elitist institution; all the members are carefully chosen in order to meet the demanding requirement of the organization.

D-DONG focuses on issues that are related to youth culture and policies. We release research reports regularly. The research are conducted in the most serious and professional manner. Since 2010, we had released over 10 study reports, which were widely reported by the media. In June 2012, D-DONG has its first overseas research team stationed in England.

D-DONG is eager to enhance public awareness of youth problems and youth issues, to make policy recommendations that are beneficial to the young people, and to encourage the healthy growth of Hong Kong politics. We also encourage young people to contribute to society and participate in various community activities. D-DONG is the ideal place for them to experience the joy of contributing to Hong Kong, China and the international community.

2. Background

Lingnan Institute of Further Education and the Community College of Lingnan University were reported to enroll excessive number of students. Investigation carried out by the University put the blame of mismanagement on some members of senior management.

Our Position

- We believe that the incident reflects the lack of centralized monitoring body and the lack of a clearly-defined policy goal.
- We accept that given the self-financing principle a university-led inquiry is reasonable.

3. Insufficiency of Sub-degrees

3.1 Limited progress had been made in the popularization of post-secondary education before 1997, in comparison with the primary and secondary stages. To cater with the needs of students who cannot pursue university studies, the Government provided vocational training for them.

However, when Hong Kong has consolidated its knowledge-based economy, the HKSAR Government expanded the sub-degree sector, so as to provide the necessary training for students.

- 3.2 Most would agree with an expansion in the post-secondary education, but its direction of development is worth our attention as well. We observe a lack of recognition for sub-degrees in the society, and members of the general public might regard sub-degree qualifications much inferior to higher ones.
- 3.3 We accept that sub-degrees are not bachelor or higher degrees, but what we demand the Government to review is its role in post-secondary education. Among sub-degree qualifications, higher diploma programs are regarded as vocational-oriented, but associate degrees depict too many similarities with the degree courses; therefore, such requires a Government review. In this regard, graduates of associate degrees fail to benefit as expected from the qualification they acquired.
- 3.4 For example, both degree and associate courses provide business management-related programs. Employers might intend to employ a degree holder instead of associate degree graduates. As a result, many associate degree students regard a place in university as their only target, and this reinforces the inferior label.
- 3.5 Lacking a clearly-defined policy goal, even if sub-degree courses live up to the relevant standards, sub-degree holders, associate degree graduates in particular, fail to receive the proper recognition for their qualification. There has always been saying that sub-degree programmes are offered by some institutes to generate extra income. We cannot rule out the possibility that some institutes offer courses with financial considerations.

4. Suggestions

- 4.1 We urge the Education Bureau to review the development of sub-degree in local education. We believe that sub-degree programs of non-professional nature should not provide similar course content with degree courses; it is suggested that a higher proportion of general education can enhance the competitiveness and recognition of sub-degree qualifications.
- 4.2 There should be a centralized quality assurance body, in order to reduce the inferior stereotype. Effective quality monitoring can give the public confidence.