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Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP
Chairman
Panel on Education
Legislative Council
Unit 1617, 16/F, Concordia Plaza
No.1 Science Museum Road
Tsim Sha Tsui
Kowloon

Dear Dr Lam,

**City University of Hong Kong Response to the
Report on Governance in UGC-funded Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong
and Research Funding**

1. Report on Governance in UGC-funded Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong

City University of Hong Kong (“CityU”) notes the release of the Report with the view to enhance university governance.

In general, CityU has been already moving in a similar direction in the past few years. During this period, our Council has been working closely with the University to deliver its duties in accordance with the University Ordinance and Statutes. The Council has played a vital and constructive role in deliberating upon and approving the University’s Strategic Plan 2015–2020, which can be viewed at http://www.cityu.edu.hk/provost/strategic_plan/.

Our Council members, representing different sectors, have contributed to fruitful planning and constructive policy decisions. We have organised orientation activities for new members to improve their understanding of their responsibilities and of the University’s operations and its latest strategic developments. Concerning the accountability framework, we have taken appropriate actions to address the UGC’s Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) and Cost Allocation Guidelines (CAG) for UGC-funded and Non-UGC-funded Activities distributed to institutions in this financial year.

In terms of the scheme of delegation, the University also published and regularly updated the document *Manual of Authorities* (latest version: 31 July 2015) covering governance, Council, staffing and financial matters. CityU’s Internal Audit Office is charged with duties to review specific risk-based themes of its operation. The Council and its Audit Committee have discussed this and relevant issues over the past years.

We support the initiatives to enhance university governance. We expect the UGC will conduct a thorough study on the accountability framework and mechanism, key performance indicators for Councils to consider, and the regular review of university governance, drawing upon relevant policies and practices from the international academic community. We expect such a process would be transparent with all institutions fully consulted at all stages. Action and implementation plan will have to be agreed between the UGC and the institutions.

2. Research Funding from UGC and the RGC

With an aim to achieve progressively greater competition in the allocation of research funding and the RPg student places, the UGC introduced six methods (Methods (a) through (f)) to allocate the RPg places, beginning in the 2012/13 academic year. This process has been running smoothly, and we are heartened by UGC's confirmation that the allocation of the RPg places via these methods will continue in the 2016-19 triennium.

The current methodology of linking the allocation system of UGC-funded RPg places to actual performance in research will ensure that RPg places will be tied to each institution's research performance as a whole.

As a matter of fact, allocation of quotas according to the five competition-based methods (Methods (a) through (e)) is a direction that motivates universities to strive to conduct world-leading research (4* in Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) terms). Thus, CityU advocates the continuation of the process started in 2012 to progressively phase out the non-competition-based Method (f) in the coming five years (i.e., reducing it gradually from 49% to 0%).

While we understand that the allocation of RPg places for 2016/17 has taken into account the results of the latest RAE, information on how the results of the 2014 RAE were evaluated, interpreted and used by UGC in the allocation of RPg student places in 2016/17 and thereafter was not revealed to institutions. We hope that the formula used by RGC in converting RAE findings to the allocation of RPg places can be made available to institutions to ensure complete transparency in the process.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact Ms Terry Lam at 3442 5228 or by email at lam.terry@um.cityu.edu.hk.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,



Arthur B. Ellis
Provost