



An Open Letter to Members of Legislative Council Panel on Education

Members of the Legislative Council Panel on Education,

Regarding the Meeting of the Panel on Education held today, we have the following concerns and demands:

1. Inappropriate arrangement of the meeting

It has been a common practice that when a member submits a suggested list of attendees who are the stakeholder groups for the meeting, the Chairman shall take the advice and invite them to attend the meeting accordingly. As agenda III in today's meeting which is "Issues related to the University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded sector in respect of - (b) the report on Governance in UGC-funded Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong", is said to have a profound impact on the tertiary education sector. Apart from the universities' management, students who are the most affected population under the reform of the university governance, shall have the right to participate and their opinions shall be respected equally too. However, we and student representatives from other institutions were not allowed to join the meeting and our voices were shut out. We deem that such arrangement is unreasonable and unacceptable.

2. The UGC report attends to trifles and neglects the essentials

Restructuring the governance in tertiary institutions is imminent. The UGC report had long been submitted to the Education Bureau in September last year, it was not until March this year did the Bureau endorse and release the report. With regard to its lackluster content, the report highlighted six recommendations, focusing on the power and responsibilities of the council members, training for the members, establishment of a written accountability framework and a risk register. It even repeated the past recommendation of having a review in every five-year time. These recommendations only scratch the surface of the reform. These recommendations do not only reflect the lack of sincerity to put forth the reform but also are considered as a failure to address the key concerns from various parties, including the Chief Executive as ex-officio Chancellor, the composition of the Council and the selection method of Council members, etc. Therefore, it is stressed that the UGC report should never serve as the only basis for reform or the progress would be stagnated.

The Panel on Education has the full responsibility in monitoring the government to implement reform on university governance. The issues of the governance of higher education covered in this report are of utmost importance, the chairman is obligated to ensure different stakeholders that they could have equal and adequate opportunity to participate in the discussion on education issues. Therefore, we demand the Panel on Education to call for a special meeting or public hearing to include opinions from different sectors as to make up for the shortcomings of the UGC report and facilitate the long-term development of tertiary education in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong University Students' Union  
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