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The Hon Margaret Ng
Rm 116 New Henry House
10 Ice House Street
Central
Hong Kong

Dear

Review of legal education

I am pleased to inform you that the first stage of the proposed comprehensive review of legal education will begin in the New Year.

Since July this year, a Working Group (the membership of which is at **annex 1**) has been discussing the way to carry out the review. The Working Group has agreed that the review of legal education should be carried out in two stages, namely, a consultancy stage followed by a further study by a Review Panel. Throughout both stages, the members of the Working Group will act as Steering Committee to oversee the work being done.

First stage

The first stage of the review will be conducted by two overseas consultants, and will be mainly financed by a Services Support Fund grant. The application for funding was originally made by the Law Society, but eventually the Bar Association, the University of Hong Kong, and City University became co-applicants.

The two consultants who have been selected, and who have agreed to provide their services, are –

1. Mr Chris Roper
Director
Centre for Legal Education
Sydney
2. Professor Paul Redmond
Dean, Faculty of Law
The University of New South Wales

The stated objective of the project is to improve both the quality and efficiency of the provision of legal services to the public and other consumers of legal services in Hong Kong, including international investors:

- by setting benchmarks for improved standards in the education and training of lawyers in Hong Kong from undergraduate studies through to post-admission professional training; and
- by obtaining recommendations for change to the legal education and training system to effect improved standards.

----- The terms of reference of the first stage of the review are at **annex 2**, and the timetable for implementing the project is at **annex 3**. The project will be co-ordinated in Hong Kong by the Law Society's Director of Standards and Development.

Second stage

After the consultancy is finished, it is intended to establish a high-powered Review Panel consisting of 4-5 local and overseas experts (but no representative from the legal profession or Universities). This Panel will consider the report of the consultants, and any other material it sees fit, and make final recommendations. Funding for this second stage will be sought in due course.

----- The scope of the second stage of the review is set out at **annex 4**.

Briefing of the consultants

Members of the Steering Committee will initially be providing the consultants with factual and non-controversial background material on legal education in Hong Kong. When the consultants come to Hong Kong in January next year, arrangements will be made for them to meet members of the Steering Group, and also representatives of the following bodies –

- the Education and Manpower Bureau
- the University Grants Committee
- the Consumer Council
- the Coalition of Hong Kong Service Industries
- law teachers in business schools at universities other than Hong Kong University and City University
- students, both LLB and PCLL, at both universities
- trainee solicitors groups, eg the Trainee Solicitors Association
- the Policy Research Institute
- Student Unions at Hong Kong University and City University
- the Chamber of Commerce
- Executive Departments of Government
- the Young Legal Professionals Association

Please let me know whether you would also like to meet the consultants in January, and whether the LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services would like to be involved in this exercise at the initial stage, or at a later stage.

If there is any further information I can provide in respect of this project, please give me a call.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(R Allcock)
Solicitor General (Ag)
Chairman of the Steering Committee

Annex 1

Composition of the Working Group on Review of Legal Education

Mr Robert Allcock	Solicitor General (Ag.)	(Chairman)
Mr Clive Grossman, SC	Council Member, Hong Kong Bar Association	
Mr Alan K K Leong, SC	Council Member, Hong Kong Bar Association	
Mr Anthony Chow	President, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Mr Patrick Moss	Secretary-General, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Ms Margaret Hill	Director of Standards and Development, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Mr Lester Huang	Council Member, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Professor Albert Chen	Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong	
Mr David Smith	Acting Dean, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong	
Mr Wilfred Tsui	Judiciary Administrator	
Mr Harry Mak	Deputy Director of Legal Aid	
Ms Michelle Li	Principal Assistant Secretary, Education and Manpower Bureau	
Mr Dominic Lai	Senior Government Counsel	(Secretary)

Annex 2

Terms of Reference

1. The aim of the preliminary review is, in the light of best international practice and having regard to the unique characteristics of Hong Kong:
 - (a) to assess the current system of legal education and training in Hong Kong, including an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses;
 - (b) to advise on the requirements of a legal education and training system best capable of meeting the challenges of legal practice and the needs of Hong Kong society into the 21st century and how these challenges and needs can be met by the legal education and training system;
 - (c) to provide a set of benchmarks for measuring the quality and standard of legal education and training in Hong Kong so as to ensure that those entering the legal profession receive the best legal training for the maintenance or improvement of professional standards;
 - (d) to provide suggestions and alternative models for a reformed system of legal education and training in Hong Kong; and
 - (e) to make recommendations for improvements in the system of legal education and training in Hong Kong, including reforms of the existing system or the introduction of an alternative model.
2. The preliminary review will encompass:
 - (a) all stages of the legal education and training of legal professionals in Hong Kong, including the detailed components and content of undergraduate education, vocational training (including articles and pupillage as well as the professional stage of university legal education) and post qualification continuing legal education; and
 - (b) legal education for those persons who intend to pursue a career in areas other than legal practice.

Annex 3

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE**Phase 1: December 1999/January 2000**

- Analysis of background documents by the Consultants
- Initial briefing of the Consultants by the Steering Committee

Phase 2: February to April 2000

- Writing of the issues paper and preparation of the brief for the survey of manpower needs and future direction of legal education and training
- Finalisation of the distribution list for the issues paper

Phase 3: May 2000

- Wide distribution of the issues paper with an invitation to make submissions (with a deadline by the end of June)

Phase 4: July to August 2000

- Perusal and consideration of responses to the issues paper and * survey results
* subject to availability

Phase 5: September 2000

- Conducting meetings and discussions with those who have made submissions and other relevant parties

Phase 6: October to December 2000

- Preparation of the draft report and recommendations

Phase 7: January to February 2001

- Discussion of the draft report and recommendations between the Consultants and the Steering Committee and significant other parties
- Finalisation of the draft report and recommendations
- Submission of the final report and recommendations to the Steering Committee (latest date for submission of the report: 28 February 2001)

Scope of Review

The aim of the review is to advise on what are the needs of Hong Kong society for law graduates and trained legal practitioners and how such needs can be met into the twenty first century, on how the existing system of legal education in Hong Kong can be improved, on how to ensure that those entering the legal profession receive the best legal training to maintain or improve professional standards and on how to ensure that legal education offered and available is appropriate to the demands of society.

The review will encompass all aspects of legal education and of the training of legal professionals from undergraduate law degree, through vocational training leading to a professional legal qualification to post qualification continuing legal education; and legal education for those with careers in areas other than legal practice.