

**The Academic Staff Association of the Hong Kong Institute of Education  
Submission to LegCo Panel on Education on  
Funding Cuts for University Grants Committee-funded Institutions**

We understand that, in the face of current budget problems, the Government needs to review the level of university funding. However, we urge extreme caution when deliberating cuts to university funding, lest short-term solutions irrevocably damage the territory's long-term sustainable development.

It is scarcely necessary to repeat the platitude that the most important asset of the territory is its human resources. Investment in education is all the more crucial to Hong Kong's long-term development as a knowledge-based economy. There are already indications that Hong Kong is losing hold as being an economic and human capital leader in the region. This in and by itself should warrant the government committing more resources to education, including higher education, not less.

Furthermore, the proposal to stop subsidizing associate degree and higher diploma programmes is heart-breaking news to those of our youngsters who for one reason or another cannot pursue university studies and/or whose families are not well off. Many of those in most need will have to defer higher education studies. This will no doubt exacerbate the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Not long ago the Chief Executive of the HKSAR pledged to increase higher education provisions to cover 60 percent of our youngsters. Even more recently, he assured the public that no pains would be spared to fund education. We hope the Government will honour this pledge.