

By fax and mail

25 June 2003

Dr. Hon. Yeung Sum  
Chairman, LegCo Panel on Education  
3/F, Citibank Tower  
3 Garden Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Dr. Yeung

**OBJECTION TO CITY UNIVERSITY'S CLOSURE OF AD PROGRAMMES**

Understanding that the Legislative Council's Panel on Education is going to hold a special meeting on 30 June to look into the whole issue, we are writing to express the views of the sub-degree alumni whom we represent.

We, the Executive Committee members of the Alumni Associations of the Division of Commerce, the Division of Computer Studies, the Division of Language Studies and the Division of Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong, have learnt from Mingpao Daily on 17 May 2003, that City University of Hong Kong has decided to close down the Associate Degree (AD) programmes when the public funding is withdrawn. We are greatly disappointed and grieved by this decision.

The College of Higher Vocational Studies with its different divisions under it have been offering government-funded sub-degree programmes, formerly Higher Diploma programmes repackaged into Associate Degrees, for 18 years since 1984. Over the years, a huge number of highly-qualified professionals have been trained to serve both the private and public sectors after the professional training they obtained from these highly-valued programmes, much thanks to the dedication of the highly qualified academic and supporting staff. The decision made by the University, however, will lead unfairly to a depreciation in the value of the programmes as they will be labelled as dying ones, and at the same time will wipe out the years of effort and experience of all the lecturers and supporting staff as well.

We understand that such a decision may be made to resolve the problems arising from the funding cut. However, it will affect adversely future students and the Hong Kong community at large. This is, in fact, a lose-lose situation for all parties and stakeholders. The University is losing its valuable assets -- quality programmes and dedicated staff -- the future students are losing great opportunities of receiving good sub-degree education, we are losing a reference base for our qualifications, our faculties will lose good students as many of our sub-degree graduates are admitted to read the second year of a first degree programme upon their sub-degree graduation. Indeed, all programmes offered by the College of Higher Vocational Studies, and more importantly, their graduates have been well received by employers and other tertiary institutions. This speaks volume of the market value of the programmes.

In fact, Professor H K CHANG, our honorable President himself said to us in a past congregation, "Only when you have a good knowledge base can you adsorb new knowledge and learn how to make a proper judgement in a new situation." That said, it is impossible for students to adsorb new knowledge and learn how to make a proper

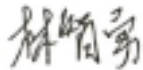
judgement in a new situation unless they have a good opportunity to build a sound knowledge base such as the ones that we had from City University. Should all or most of these valuable Associate degree programmes offered by the College of Higher Vocational Studies be closed down, future students will have no choice but to study those “market driven”, commercially oriented associate degree programmes run by other local organizations, which may have little guarantee of their quality. Is this what the Legislative Council, which is made up of high powered public figures with a vision in tertiary education wish to see? In fact, such a decision is detrimental to the future of sub-degree education, the future of students and to Hong Kong in the long run, particularly in its transition to a knowledge economy.

As Alumni of City University, we are proud of the University, proud of being graduates of our respective divisions. We have a strong sense of belonging to our respective programmes, divisions and to our University. We know our programmes and divisions are proud of us. We hope our University is proud of us as well. However, the decision made by our University will destroy the pride and the sense of belonging we have because it will wipe out our base, our reference point, which is what we don't want to experience; and it will wipe out the opportunities for future students of receiving a good education after missing out from degree programmes, like the ones that we had, which is what we don't wish to see.

We have benefited from an excellent education, which has provided a strong foundation for us to move onto another stage of our lives. We do not wish to see the future students deprived of such fine educational opportunities, even though the closure of these programmes will not affect the worth of our qualifications, as our University Management claims. We feel that making our voice heard, speaking up for the fine education we received, to help defend it, keep it, pass it down to the next generation, is what we, beneficiaries of such fine education, should do, to say the least, in order to return some of the good things that we have obtained from our community.

For the sake of ourselves, the University, future students, and our community, we wish to voice our strong objection to the decision made by the University. We therefore implore you, as responsible and honourable Legislative Councillors, to do something to ensure that this highly unreasonable and deplorable proposal will not be put into effect!

Yours sincerely



Division of Computer Studies Students and Alumni Saving AD Courses



The Organizing Committee of the  
Division of Language Studies Alumni Association



CityU Accountancy (Division of Commerce) Alumni Association Ltd



CityU Community Service Management (Division of Social Studies) Alumni