



香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

From the President and Vice-Chancellor

校長：吳清輝教授

Prof. Ng Ching-Fai
BE(Chem), MSc, PhD

Ref.: PDO/0307/118

14 July 2003

Ms. Dora WAI
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Wai,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
results of value for money audits (Report No. 40)**

**Chapter 8: University Grants Committee funded institutions –
Governance, strategic planning and financial and performance reporting**

In response to your letter dated 27 June 2003 on the captioned subject, please find enclosed the completed form providing information on the attendance rates of external and internal members at Council meetings of this University for the indicated periods.

2. As has been pointed out in your letter, the ordinance of this University has stipulated that the University Council should be so composed that there is a majority of external members. The number of regular Council meetings scheduled in each year is four. In order to enable all external members (and internal members as well) to attend all Council meetings, the dates of these scheduled meetings are fixed one year in advance and Council members notified accordingly so that they can set aside the time. Notwithstanding this, it is perfectly understandable that the external members, being leaders and senior executives in their own professions, often have to adjust their schedules to respond to urgent task. So there is in practice no sure way to effectively guarantee that at every meeting the attendance is such that external members will constitute a majority of all members present.

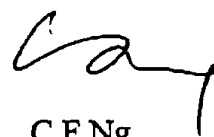
3. Having said that, experience has shown clearly that when there are divided views on an important issue being debated by the Council, the situation in most cases is that the group which supports the issue is made up of both external and internal members, and similarly for the group which opposes the issue. In other words, it is the substance of the issue being debated which counts most, and thus it may be somewhat simplistic to infer from a mechanical interpretation of the attendance data that there is an over-reliance on internal members whenever the number of external members present does not constitute a majority.

4. In that connection, it is worth mentioning that unlike similar bodies in other organizations, a university council is so constituted that the external members serving on it are not appointed (by the Government) to represent specifically the interests in the university of certain groups of people. On that understanding, the HKBU Council has been conducting its decision-making mainly through building consensus at meetings rather than depending too heavily on the counting of votes.

5. One final point – the HKBU ordinance has set out explicitly the procedure for conducting the discussion and decision making of any matter for which a Council member (whether internal or external) has a pecuniary or personal interest. This is further elaborated in the guidelines of procedure adopted by the Council. According to the pertinent procedure, such a Council member will be required to withdraw from the meeting or refrain from voting.

6. I trust you find this response in order. If there is any point to clarify, please contact my colleague, Mr. P K Chiu (Director of General Administration) at 3411 7950 (phone), 2338 7644 (fax) or pkchiu@hkbu.edu.hk (email), in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



C F Ng
President & Vice-Chancellor

Name of institution: Hong Kong Baptist University

Attendance rates of external and internal members at Council meetings

Date of meeting	Total no. of Council members	External member		Internal member		
		No. of external members present at the meeting	$\frac{\text{No. of external members present at the meeting}}{\text{No. of Council members present at the meeting}} \times 100\%$	No. of internal members present at the meeting	$\frac{\text{No. of internal members present at the meeting}}{\text{No. of Council members present at the meeting}} \times 100\%$	
2000-01 (July 2000 to June 2001)						
(1)	19 October 2000	30	9	43%	12	57%
(2)	14 December 2000	30	14	54%	12	46%
(3)	15 March 2001	32	14	48%	15	52%
(4)	14 June 2001	31	9	37%	15	63%
(5)						
(6)						
2001-02 (July 2001 to June 2002)						
(1)	13 December 2001	31	10	42%	14	58%
(2)	25 March 2002	33	11	44%	14	56%
(3)	20 June 2002	33	10	45%	12	55%
(4)						
(5)						
(6)						
2002-03 (July to November 2002)						
(1)	No meetings held during the period.					
(2)						
(3)						
(4)						
(5)						
(6)						

Remark: Please photocopy this form for use if the space provided is insufficient