

**For discussion
on 20 October 2003**

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Future provision of associate degree programmes
in the City University of Hong Kong**

Background

The Legislative Council Panel on Education discussed the above issue at its meeting on 30 June 2003 and would like to follow up the discussion in October 2003.

Panel meeting on 30 June 2003

2. At the meeting on 30 June, the Panel passed the following motion –

“That the Government is called upon to provide resources to assist the City University and Polytechnic University in continuing their provision of existing sub-degree programmes to perform the educational duties they have been shouldering since the founding of the institutions.”

3. At the same meeting, the Council Chairman of City University of Hong Kong (CityU) requested the Administration to consider –

- (a) providing an across-the-board 75% subvention to CityU’s existing sub-degree programmes;
- (b) providing a suitable site for CityU to operate a community college for provision of both subsidized and self-financing sub-degree programmes in the long run; and
- (c) providing funding support for the construction of the campus and facilities essential for the smooth operation of CityU’s future community college.

The Administration's response

4. Following the Higher Education Review, the University Grants Committee (UGC) has set up an independent specialist group to review the existing UGC-funded sub-degree programmes offered by CityU and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU). The review was done according to the principle that while sub-degree programmes should in general be self-financing, programmes requiring high start up and maintenance costs, those meeting manpower needs or regarded as endangered species, should remain publicly-funded. The UGC, based on the recommendations of the specialist group, finalised the plan for withdrawal of subvention and informed the affected institutions of the UGC's decision in May 2003.

5. As the withdrawal plans for both CityU and PolyU were drawn up by the independent specialist group based on the same objective criteria, and that views of the affected institutions had been taken into account in the process, in response to paragraph 3(a) above, the Administration does not see any justification to provide arbitrarily an across-the-board level of subvention for CityU's existing sub-degree programmes.

6. As for paragraphs 3(b) and (c) above, the Administration is committed to assisting self-financing institutions in the provision of post-secondary programmes. Assistance in the form of land grant at nominal premium, and interest-free loans for the construction of campus, etc. is available. Like other education providers offering self-financing programmes, CityU is welcome to submit applications to the Government in accordance with the established procedures.

7. We understand that the Working Group on Associate Degree Programmes set up by the CityU Council to study the financial viability and related issues of offering self-financing Associate Degree programmes in CityU will issue its draft report for consultation shortly. The Administration will keep in view CityU's final plans on the way forward, and will provide assistance as appropriate.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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