

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1655/10-11
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 14 March 2011, at 4:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon WONG Yuk-man
- Members absent** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item V

Mr Kenneth CHEN Wei-on, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Mable CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Dr CHEUNG Kwok-wah
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum
Development), Education Bureau

Ms IP Ling-bik
Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Commission
& Planning), Education Bureau

Agenda item VI

Mr Kenneth CHEN Wei-on, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Amy WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education),
Education Bureau

Mr Michael V Stone, JP
Secretary-General, University Grants Committee
Secretariat

Mrs Dorothy MA CHOW Pui-fun
Deputy Secretary-General, University Grants
Committee Secretariat

Attendance by invitation : Agenda item VI

Vocational Training Council

Dr Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen
Chairman

Vocational Training Council Academic Staff Association

Mr Albert LI Sau-sang
President

Hong Kong Institute of Technology

Ms Joy SHI Mei-chun
President

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

Professor Kevin Thompson
Director

Federation of Hong Kong Higher Education Staff Association

Professor SHUM Ka-ping
Chairperson

Hong Kong Baptist University

Professor Franklin LUK
Vice-President (Academic)

Mr Raymond HO Man-kit
Sai Kung District Council Member

Vocational Training Council Teachers' Association

Ms Joyce LI Wai-ying
JEC-Secretary

City University of Hong Kong

Professor Arthur Ellis
Provost

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Professor CHENG Yin-cheong
Vice-President (Research and Development)

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Professor Walter W YUEN
Vice President (Academic Development)

City University of Hong Kong Staff Association

Dr John TSE Wing-ling
Chairperson

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor Benjamin W WAH
Provost

Hong Kong College of Technology

Dr CHAN Cheuk-hay
President and Principal

The Open University of Hong Kong

Professor Danny WONG Shek-nam
Vice President (Academic)

Hong Kong Shue Yan University

Ms Andrea Hope
Associate Academic Vice-President

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Professor Joseph LEE
Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

Mr FUNG Wai-wah
President

Staff Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Mr NG Chok-ki
Treasurer

The Chinese University of Hong Kong Employees General Union

Miss Emily NG Hiu-chun
President

Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association

Dr Joseph LEE
Chairman

The Teachers' Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor WONG Chong-kim
President

Students' Union, The Open University of Hong Kong

Mr CHAN Hoi-fai
Financial Secretary

The University of Hong Kong

Professor J G Malpas
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President

Hong Kong Federation of Students

Mr YEUNG Yik-keung
Representative

Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers

Mr WU Siu-wai
Vice Chairman

Civic Party

Miss Karen MAK
Member

Young Civics

Mr Justin CHIN
Member

Committee on Education Policies of the Democratic
Party

Mr LI Yiu-kee
Deputy Spokesman of Education Policies

League of Social Democrats

Mr YEUNG Ke-cheong
Policy Researcher

Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and
Hong Kong Design Institute Joint Students' Union

Mr Alex WU Chun-yeung
President

The Council of Hong Kong Non-Profit Making
Tertiary Institutions

Dr CHUI Hong-sheung
Chairman

Education Concern Group

Mr CHAN Chung-yau
Chairman

The Confederation of Tertiary Institutes Staff Unions

Professor MA Shu-yun
Representative

Clerk in attendance : Ms Amy YU
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

Staff in attendance : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

Ms Judy TING
Council Secretary (2)6

Ms Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1211/10-11 and CB(2)1235/10-11]

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 December 2010 and 10 January 2011 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1206/10-11(01)]

2. Members noted the letter dated 4 March 2011 from the Secretary for Education concerning the funding proposal for an alteration and conversion project for St. Paul Co-education College at 33 MacDonnell Road, Central (LC Paper No. CB(2)1206/10-11(01)).

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11 and LC Paper No. CB(2)1239/10-11(01)]

3. Members agreed to discuss the item of "Review of Examination Fee Remission Scheme" proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for 11 April 2011 at 4:30 p.m.

Debundling of textbooks and teaching and learning resources for pricing

4. The Chairman said that at the last Panel meeting on 14 February 2011, members considered it necessary to discuss the debundling of textbooks and

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teaching and learning resources for pricing and suggested that textbook publishers, school representatives and relevant stakeholders be invited to give views on the subject. At the request of the Panel, the Administration had provided an information paper on the progress of the matter to the Panel before the meeting. In view of the Administration's intention to implement the policy from the 2011-2012 school year, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the subject be discussed at the next regular meeting. Members also agreed to the list of the organizations proposed to be invited to give views on the subject which was tabled at the meeting.

Class reduction in secondary schools

5. The Chairman referred members to the joint letter dated 8 March 2011 from Ms Cyd HO, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung (LC Paper No. CB(2)1239/10-11(01)) requesting the Panel to discuss the policy issues arising from the incident concerning class reduction in the King's College. The Chairman suggested discussing at the next regular meeting the progress of the implementation of the class reduction scheme, including the concerns raised in the joint letter and the reported excessive class reduction. She invited members' view on the proposal.

6. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che said that he was particularly concerned about whether the powers and remit of School Management Committees ("SMC") were being respected. He suggested that the parties involved in the incident be invited to the meeting.

7. Mr KAM Nai-wai opined that class reduction and the powers of SMC were separate issues. He considered it necessary to clarify whether the decision on participation in the class reduction scheme rested with the relevant school sponsoring body or SMC.

8. The Chairman said that Panels should discuss policy matters and should not normally deal with individual cases. She suggested that the powers and remit of SMCs could be discussed in the context of the progress of the implementation of the class reduction scheme. The Administration would be requested to provide in its discussion paper information on the powers and remit of SMCs.

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong concurred with the Chairman that issues arising from the Kings' College incident should be discussed in the context of the implementation of the class reduction scheme. Members could raise their concerns about the incident during the discussion on the subject.

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10. Members agreed to discuss at the next regular meeting the progress of the implementation of the class reduction scheme. Members also agreed that the Secretary for Education should be invited to the meeting to explain the relevant policy matters and answer members' questions. The Chairman said that the Administration would be requested to provide a paper reporting on the progress of the class reduction scheme, including issues relating to the reported excessive class reduction, the powers and remit of SMC and the relevant policy matters to facilitate members' discussion at the next regular meeting.

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IV. Way forward for following up issues relating to Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools

[Chapter 1 of Part 8 of Public Accounts Committee Report No. 55 - Administration of the Direct Subsidy Scheme and Governance and Administration of Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools and LC Paper No. CB(2)1239/10-11(02)]

11. The Chairman said that at the meeting on 14 February 2011, members agreed that the Panel should discuss the way forward for following up issues relating to Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") schools after Members had expressed their views at the motion debate on the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC") Report on the Administration of the DSS and Governance and Administration of DSS Schools at the Council meeting of 2 March 2011. Having regard to the PAC Report and Members' views expressed at the motion debate, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the Panel's discussion on the subject should focus on the following four main areas -

- (a) school fee remission/scholarship schemes;
- (b) student admission;
- (c) revision of school fee; and
- (d) governance, administration and financial management of DSS schools.

12. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong opined that, to facilitate a more fruitful discussion by the Panel on the subject, the Administration should be requested to provide a written response to the specific recommendations made by Members at the motion debate. He suggested and members agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a summary of the major recommendations made by Members at the motion debate for the Administration's response.

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13. Noting that the Administration had appointed a Working Group in February 2011 to review systemic issues relating to the DSS Scheme, members agreed to consider the appropriate timing for discussion of the subject after enquiring with the Administration on the progress of work of the Working Group.

V. Progress of support measures for non-Chinese speaking students

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1213/10-11(01), CB(2)1213/10-11(02) and CB(2)1258/10-11(01)]

14. Members noted the updated background brief entitled "Education for non-Chinese speaking students" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(02)) prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat and the submission from Hong Kong Unison Limited dated 10 March 2011 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1258/10-11(01)) concerning support measures for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students.

Briefing by the Administration

15. Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the progress of support measures for NCS students and the steps forward to strengthen the efforts in supporting the learning and teaching of NCS students in mainstream schools and in enhancing the articulation opportunities of NCS students, as detailed in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(01)).

Support in Chinese learning

16. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that there were currently a few hundred NCS students studying in the Vocational Training Council ("VTC"). While they were the top performers among ethnic minority students, most of them were not proficient in Chinese. He suggested that these students be supported to become mentors of NCS students to share their experience of learning the Chinese Language and to help members of their ethnic groups integrate into the community.

17. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that there should be a Chinese Language benchmark examination with appropriate programmes for ethnic minority students to attain the required qualifications in Chinese Language for further studies and employment. The benchmark examination should be divided into different levels to facilitate NCS students to obtain the qualifications in stages.

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18. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong further said that many teachers were of the view that the earlier the ethnic minority children learned the Chinese Language, the better they would integrate into the community. He urged the Administration to encourage ethnic minority children to learn the Chinese Language in kindergartens.

19. US(Ed) shared the view that it was important for NCS students to have an early start in learning the Chinese Language, say, in kindergarten so that they would be able to adapt to the mainstream Chinese Language curriculum as early as possible. To further support NCS students, the Administration had piloted a three-year project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS students in the 2011-2012 school year. The Administration would evaluate the effectiveness of the project taking into consideration the feedback of schools, NCS students and other stakeholders.

20. Miss Tanya CHAN said that some parents of the English Schools Foundation ("ESF") schools had expressed concern about the substantial increase in ESF's tuition fee over the past few years. Despite the high tuition fee, some parents had to send their children to ESF schools as their children could not learn in Chinese. While they could afford the tuition fee for their first child, it might not be the case for their second or third child. She requested the Administration to address the concern of these parents.

21. While appreciating the Administration's efforts in enhancing support to NCS students, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che opined that attending after-school remedial classes once or twice a week was not adequate in helping NCS students learn Chinese since most parents were not able to offer support to their children in this regard. He wondered if outreach services to ethnic minorities might be considered.

22. US(Ed) replied that the Administration had in recent years strengthened its efforts in enhancing communication with NCS parents. To facilitate NCS parents in understanding the local education system and support measures for NCS students, the Administration had published the NCS Parent Information Package with translation into major ethnic minority languages and organized talks on school choice for NCS parents every year. In addition, the four support service centres for ethnic minorities operated by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau provided information on community services including education services, translation services and courses on learning the Chinese Language to facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities into the community. The Administration would continue to strengthen its work in enhancing communication with NCS parents.

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23. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung shared the view that as a long term measure, NCS students should start learning Chinese in kindergarten or at junior primary school levels. For those NCS students who had a late start in learning Chinese, after-school remedial classes could help enhance their learning of the Chinese Language. He wondered if students might lose their interests in attending these classes if they were conducted in their own schools, considering that they had already spent the whole day at school. In his view, students should be given the choice of attending after-school classes held in other venues, as the change of environment might boost their interest in learning. He suggested that the Administration could consider engaging different organizations in offering after-school remedial classes to provide more options and flexibility for NCS students in choosing a venue which best suited them with a view to enhancing their interest and motivation in attending the classes. For instance, they could choose a venue near their home or to attend the classes with their friends from other schools.

24. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che opined that NCS students might enjoy the after-school remedial classes more if their parents could join them in attending the classes. He suggested allowing NCS parents to attend these classes and exploring the feasibility of providing subventions to non-governmental organizations to operate district-based classes.

25. US(Ed) clarified that NCS students were free to choose after-school programmes at their own schools or other venues operated by the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres commissioned to the University of Hong Kong. Indeed, some NCS students in non-designated schools attended these programmes held in other schools. He added that the Administration would examine critically the need for more venues as suggested by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che.

Pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language

26. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed support for the proposed pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language to enhance NCS students' employability, hence providing them with a wider choice of employment. He urged the Administration to take the lead in recognizing the qualifications acquired from the proposed pilot scheme to set a good example to other employers.

27. Mr Andrew LEUNG, in his capacity as Chairman of VTC, said that VTC had admitted quite a number of ethnic minority students among the post-secondary education providers. Of the 600 planned places in VTC's vocational and educational training programmes for ethnic minorities in

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2010-2011, about 400 places had been taken up. Most of the NCS students enrolled in service related courses such as hospitality. He was confident that they would have no difficulty in finding employment after graduation. VTC also provided ethnic minority students with vocational Chinese Language and English Language courses to help them enhance their language proficiency. He further said that VTC was working with EDB to develop on-line vocational English enhancement courses and would also explore the feasibility of developing on-line Chinese enhancement courses. NCS students would benefit from such courses. He added that VTC would be happy to provide more support to the ethnic minority students if necessary.

28. US(Ed) agreed that VTC should capitalise on its experience in workplace Chinese Language courses for NCS students. He added that the programmes of the proposed pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language would be designed to be trade-specific to be pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework with validation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications ("HKCAAVQ"), which could provide a reference for employers.

29. The Chairman said that many NCS students from grassroot families had taken up low-paid jobs. She expressed concern about their opportunities for upward social mobility and sought information on the employment statistics of NCS graduates from VTC. Mr Andrew LEUNG said that while he did not have such information on hand, it was his understanding that the employment rate of VTC NCS graduates was good. US(Ed) agreed to provide relevant information after the meeting.

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30. The Chairman welcomed the pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language. She stressed that it was important for the Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, to demonstrate its commitment to offering employment opportunities to ethnic minorities. She enquired about the civil service posts for which ethnic minority students who had completed the Workplace Chinese Language programmes were eligible to apply should these programmes be pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework with validation by HKCAAVQ as proposed by the Administration.

31. US(Ed) explained that the pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language would be designed to be trade-specific. As the pilot scheme was only at the planning stage, the Administration would consult the relevant trades and the Civil Service Bureau in fleshing out the implementation details. The Administration would report to the Panel on the details of the pilot scheme. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the civil service posts for which ethnic minority students on completion of

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the Workplace Chinese Language programmes could apply when it further reported to the Panel on the pilot scheme.

Designated schools and school placement arrangements for NCS students

32. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for increasing the number of designated schools. In his view, there should be two types of designated schools to cater for the different needs of ethnic minority students. One type of designated schools should be those admitting mainly students of ethnic minorities, while the other should admit a certain number of NCS students only. In respect of the latter, special support should be rendered to help ethnic minority students learn Chinese.

33. US(Ed) responded that there were currently a total of 28 designated schools and no ceiling had been set on its number. The Administration was open-minded on the number of designated schools having regard to the needs of NCS students and wish of schools to become designated schools. In 11 of the designated schools, the number of NCS students constituted more than 70% of the total number of students. As for the remaining 17 designated schools, the percentage of NCS students varied, ranging from 10% to 70%. The Administration would consider Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's views on designated schools.

34. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that given the limited number of schools suitable for ethnic minority students, some of them had to travel a long distance to schools. To his knowledge, some NCS students living in Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun went to schools in Chai Wan. Not only did they have to spend a long time in travelling, but they also had to bear high transportation expenses. He pointed out that more and more ethnic minority families were living in public rental estates in the New Territories such as Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun. The Administration should review its existing school nets and school placement arrangements for ethnic minority students in the upcoming school year taking into account such demographic changes to facilitate ethnic minority students to enroll in schools near their home.

35. Deputy Secretary for Education (2) ("DS(Ed)2") responded that the Administration had been keeping track of the number of ethnic minority students enrolled in local schools every school year. In response to NCS parents' wish to send their children to local schools, the Primary One and Secondary One student allocation systems had been revamped to the effect that NCS students could choose schools in their own net alongside the local parents and they were also given access to the schools traditionally admitting a large number of NCS students. Some NCS parents might prefer to send their

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children to designated schools. There were two (one primary and one secondary) designated schools in Tuen Mun but four (2 primary schools and 2 secondary schools) in Yuen Long including Tin Shi Wui where there was a relatively larger population of ethnic minorities.

36. Referring to the distribution of designated schools, Mr WONG Yuk-man said that there were no designated schools in areas such as Tai Po, Shatin and Tsuen Wan, and that some NCS students might need to travel a long distance to schools. He also expressed concern about the lack of clarity in the criteria to become designated schools. To his knowledge, a primary school had applied to become a designated school a number of times in the past five years but all its applications had been rejected by the Administration on different grounds. He remarked that some schools might admit NCS students in order to avoid closure for under-enrollment of students and was concerned that inadequate support would be provided to NCS students of these schools when the threat of school closure was over.

37. US(Ed) responded that school choice of NCS parents should be acknowledged. In fact, NCS students had equal opportunities for admission to public sector schools under the existing student allocation systems. NCS parents would normally take into consideration the Chinese proficiency of their children when choosing designated schools.

38. DS(Ed)2 said that the criterion of becoming a designated school was that the schools concerned should be able to provide a full curriculum. The Administration would also take into account the number of NCS students the schools had admitted, the spread of NCS students in the districts, and the capability and readiness of the schools to partner with EDB in the development of reference materials for the teaching and learning of NCS students and share their experience with other schools admitting NCS students. The Administration was positive towards having more schools to become designated schools.

NCS students with special educational needs

39. Miss Tanya CHAN said that local schools might not be able to provide NCS students with special educational needs ("SEN") with proper education because of language barrier. She expressed concern about the adequacy of school places in special schools for NCS students with SEN and sought information on the number of such students on the waiting list for admission to special schools.

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40. DS(Ed)2 elaborated on the provision of ESF schools for enhanced support for NCS students with SEN. In addition to a special school with 30 primary school places and 30 secondary school places, the Administration had allocated a block sum of money to ESF starting from the 2002-2003 school year to enable ESF to provide some 30 additional places for enhanced support for students with SEN in a few of its mainstream schools. She added that in the upcoming review of the subvention arrangements for ESF, the Administration would discuss with ESF the mode of subvention for provision of support to NCS students with SEN in the ESF system.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) Examination

41. Mr WONG Yuk-man pointed out that changes had recently been introduced to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) ("GCSE (Chinese)") Examination taken by many local NCS students. The new GCSE (Chinese) Examination involved school-based assessment ("SBA") and therefore would only be offered to candidates of schools which had registered as sub-centres of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA"). There was concern that private candidates would not be able to sit for the examination under the new system. He considered it necessary for the Administration to collaborate with the schools concerned to render assistance to private students to complete SBA and take part in the GCSE (Chinese) Examination.

42. US(Ed) said given that SBA was an important component of modern public examinations, the examination authorities concerned would take account of the private candidates and make appropriate adjustments to the assessments, like what HKEAA did in handling the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education. DS(Ed)2 informed that the HKEAA had been liaising with the examination board of GCSE(Chinese) in this regard.

VI. Report on the Higher Education Review 2010

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1213/10-11(03), CB(2)1213/10-11(04), CB(2)718/10-11(04) and CB(2)602/10-11(01)]

43. Members noted the background brief entitled "Report on the Higher Education Review 2010" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(04)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Oral presentation by deputations

VTC

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(05)]

44. Mr Andrew LEUNG, in his capacity as Chairman of VTC, presented the views of VTC as detailed in its submission.

VTC Academic Staff Association

45. Mr Albert LI Sau-sang said that in recent years, there were a growing number of VTC graduates aspiring to pursue further studies in universities. However, he was concerned that VTC graduates did not have equal access to publicly-funded degree places as the University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions tended to give priority consideration to graduates of their affiliated community colleges. He stressed that admission should be based on applicants' academic achievements and not the community colleges from which they graduated. He considered this unfair and unjust, depriving young people of equal opportunities for further studies. He called on the Administration to implement as soon as possible an effective mechanism for credit accumulation and transfer to allow not only lateral, but also vertical movement in order that graduates of Associate Degree ("AD") programmes could compete fairly for UGC-funded degree places on the basis of academic achievements.

46. Mr Albert LI Sau-sang further said that it was important to ensure a level playing field for institutions. He urged the Administration to establish expeditiously a unified quality assurance mechanism for self-financing and AD programmes offered by different institutions, which was crucial to the enhancement of the quality of these programmes.

Hong Kong Institute of Technology

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1304/10-11(01)]

47. Ms Joy SHI Mei-chun presented the views of Hong Kong Institute of Technology as detailed in its submission.

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts ("HKAPA")

48. Prof Kevin Thompson said that he would present the interim statement of HKAPA on the Higher Education Review Report 2010 ("the Report") pending full discussion of its Council. On the observation in the Report concerning the proposed transfer of the responsibility for overseeing the

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funding for HKAPA from the Home Affairs Bureau to UGC, he said that HKAPA welcomed opportunities for dialogue but noted that it was not among the 40 recommendations in the Report. HKAPA recognized that joining UGC would impact on its institutional functions, infrastructural capacity and activities. At the current stage, HKAPA could not determine the extent to which the existing UGC funding formula would apply. It would make a formal response when a concrete proposal was put forward in this regard.

49. Prof Kevin Thompson further said that HKAPA was committed to fulfilling a unique role in higher education in Hong Kong and its societal contribution to arts and cultural development. It was steadfast in holding the quality and rigour of its academic portfolio, and the necessary degree of independence and autonomy. He stressed that through rewarding teaching excellence, the establishment of communities of practices, role differentiation and quality assurance, the diversity and coherence of the post-secondary sector would be enhanced.

Federation of Hong Kong Higher Education Staff Association
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1442/10-11(01)]

50. Prof SHUM Ka-ping presented the views of Federation of Hong Kong Higher Education Staff Association as detailed in its submission.

Hong Kong Baptist University
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1442/10-11(02)]

51. Prof Franklin LUK presented the views of Hong Kong Baptist University as detailed in its submission.

Mr Raymond HO Man-kit, Sai Kung District Council Member

52. Mr Raymond HO Man-kit expressed the view that discussion on the development of higher education should involve not only the stakeholders in the higher education sector but also the community at large. He further said that according to a survey, the total number of degree and sub-degree places, including both private and publicly-funded ones, had increased by about 30% to 35% since 1997. Nonetheless, the salary of undergraduates had dropped. In his view, this was the result of an over-supply of degree and sub-degree places, leading to devaluation of these qualifications.

53. Mr Raymond HO Man-kit pointed out that the Lion Rock Institute, of which he was a policy researcher, had all along been promoting the implementation of a higher education voucher system to replace the existing

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system of direct subsidies to institutions. He pointed out that for the publicly-funded degree places, the unit cost of subsidy provided by the Administration ranged from some \$200,000 to over \$1 million per student. As regards institutions in the self-financing post-secondary sector, the Administration had been providing subsidies in the form of land grant and loans. He opined that the Administration should implement a voucher system, with a value in the range of \$200,000 to \$300,000 per student, with a view to allowing students to choose the institutions that suited them best, regardless of whether they were local or overseas institutions.

VTC Teachers' Association

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1340/10-11(01)]

54. Ms Joyce LI Wai-ying referred members to the views of VTC Teachers' Association as set out in its submission.

City University of Hong Kong ("CityU")

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(06)]

55. Prof Arthur Ellis presented the views of CityU as detailed in its submission.

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(07)]

56. Prof CHENG Yin-cheong presented the views of The Hong Kong Institute of Education as detailed in its submission.

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1283/10-11(01)]

57. Prof Walter YUEN presented the views of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University as detailed in its submission.

CityU Staff Association

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1279/10-11(01)]

58. Dr John TSE Wing-ling presented the views of City University of Hong Kong Staff Association as detailed in its submission.

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The Chinese University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(08)]

59. Prof Benjamin WAH presented the views of The Chinese University of Hong Kong as detailed in its submission.

Hong Kong College of Technology
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1442/10-11(03)]

60. Dr CHAN Cheuk-hay presented the views of Hong Kong College of Technology as detailed in its submission.

The Open University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1304/10-11(02)]

61. Prof Danny WONG Shek-nam presented the views of The Open University of Hong Kong as detailed in its submission.

Hong Kong Shue Yan University
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1239/10-11(03)]

62. Ms Andrea HOPE presented the views of Hong Kong Shue Yan University as detailed in its submission.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1304/10-11(03)]

63. Prof Joseph LEE presented the views of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology as detailed in its submission.

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1340/10-11(02)]

64. Mr FUNG Wai-wah presented the views of Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union as detailed in its submission.

Staff Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1279/10-11(02)]

65. Mr NG Chok-ki presented the views of Staff Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong as detailed in its submission.

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*The Chinese University of Hong Kong Employees General Union
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1279/10-11(03)]*

66. Miss Emily NG Hiu-chun presented the views of The Chinese University of Hong Kong Employees General Union as detailed in its submission.

*Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1442/10-11(04)]*

67. Dr Joseph LEE presented the views of Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association as detailed in its submission.

*Teachers' Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1258/10-11(02)]*

68. Prof WONG Chong-kim presented the views of Teachers' Association of The Chinese University of Hong Kong as detailed in its submission.

*Students' Union, The Open University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1283/10-11(02)]*

69. Mr CHAN Hoi-fai presented the views of Students' Union, The Open University of Hong Kong, as detailed in its submission.

*The University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1279/10-11(04)]*

70. Prof J G Malpas presented the views of The University of Hong Kong as detailed in its submission.

Hong Kong Federation of Students

71. Mr YEUNG Yik-keung said that the Hong Kong Federation of Students was disappointed with the Report's recommendation that the current arrangements concerning the role of UGC remained appropriate and that it would not be necessary to make significant changes to the structure or functions of UGC. He pointed out that through its control on the allocation of funding among institutions, UGC could directly influence the governance and administration of its funded institutions, and the development of higher education in Hong Kong as a whole. He further said that its members were appointed by the Chief Executive and its operation was controlled by the

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Education Bureau. In his view, UCG wielded too much power and a comprehensive review on its structure and functions was long overdue.

Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1279/10-11(05)]

72. Mr WU Siu-wai presented the views of Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers as detailed in its submission.

Civic Party
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1283/10-11(03)]

73. Miss Karen MAK presented the views of Civic Party as detailed in its submission.

Young Civics
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1283/10-11(04)]

74. Mr Justin CHIN presented the views of Young Civics as detailed in its submission.

Committee on Education Policies of the Democratic Party

75. Mr LI Yiu-kee expressed reservation about the proposal of allocating more research funding on a competitive basis which, in his view, would further divide the higher education sector as small and private institutions would not be able to compete on an equal footing with the large and well established ones. He also considered that the Report had failed to address the problem of heavy teaching load of young academic staff, which left them little time to pursue research activities, thus affecting their promotion opportunities. He added that the proposed competitive research funding regime would lead to deterioration of teaching quality as institutions would be driven to focus even more resources on research rather than teaching.

League of Social Democrats
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1213/10-11(09)]

76. Mr YEUNG Ke-cheong presented the views of League of Social Democrats as detailed in its submission.

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*Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and Hong Kong Design Institute
Joint Students' Union*
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1304/10-11(04)]

77. Mr Alex WU Chun-yeung presented the views of Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and Hong Kong Design Institute Joint Students' Union as detailed in their joint submission.

The Council of Hong Kong Non-Profit Making Tertiary Institutions
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1258/10-11(03)]

78. Dr CHU Hong-sheung presented the views of The Council of Hong Kong Non-Profit Making Tertiary Institutions as detailed in its submission.

Education Concern Group

79. Mr CHAN Chung-yau expressed the view that the Administration should put in more resources to facilitate the articulation of AD students to higher education.

The Confederation of Tertiary Institutes Staff Unions
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1279/10-11(06)]

80. Prof MA Shu-yun presented the views of The Confederation of Tertiary Institutes Staff Unions as detailed in its submission.

The Administration's response

81. US(Ed) thanked UGC for setting up the Higher Education Review Group ("Review Group") to conduct a comprehensive review on higher education in Hong Kong. Upon receipt of the Report in December 2010, the Administration had organized consultation forums to solicit the views of the UGC-funded institutions and self-financing post-secondary institutions on the recommendations of the Report. He also thanked the deputations for their views and their attendance at the meeting. The Administration would consider the views from stakeholders carefully and intended to come to a view for implementation within 2011.

82. US(Ed) noted the concerns expressed by some deputations about the proposed allocation of research funding. He pointed out that the Administration had been increasing its financial commitment to research in recent years, as evidenced by the establishment of the \$18-billion Research Endowment Fund in 2009. He further pointed out that unlike many other

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advanced economies such as Japan and Singapore where the private sector was the major driver in research expenditure, the research funding for local institutions came mainly from the Government. He stressed that given the limited resources, it was important to ensure the utilization of research funding in the most effective manner.

Response of UGC

83. Secretary General/UGC ("SG/UGC") noted that many deputations had commented on the level of research funding in Hong Kong in general and the Review Group's proposal to transfer funding from the research portion of the Block Grant to the Research Grants Council ("RGC"). As pointed out in the Report, the level of research funding in Hong Kong, which was about 0.7% to 0.75% of gross domestic product, was low by international standard. It was important to make the best use of the limited research funding; hence, the Review Group's recommendation that research funding should be allocated on a more competitive basis. He highlighted that in places where research had flourished, research funding was allocated in a highly competitive way. He stressed that the Review Group had not proposed a radical change; it had only proposed to transfer about \$1.3 billion (i.e. approximately 12% of the Block Grant) from the research portion of the Block Grant to RGC as on-costs over a period of nine years. The transferred funds would be returned to the Heads of Institutions for purposes such as research infrastructure and staffing costs and would not be used as additional funding for individual research projects under RGC.

84. SG/UGC further said that he was fully aware of the concern about the impact of the proposed research funding on the institutions, particularly for the institutions the curricula of which were principally in humanities and social sciences subjects. UGC had already announced measures under RGC to improve the way to assess humanities and social sciences research projects, such as extending the teaching relief scheme to all subjects under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel ("the Panel"), setting up senior fellowship scheme under that Panel and the Early Career Scheme for young staff under all disciplines. The method of allocating the on-costs would also take into account the fact that humanities projects generally attracted less funding than science projects. He believed that these moves were in line with the world trend.

Research funding

85. Prof Patrick LAU said that he had strong view on the Report's recommendation concerning allocation of research funding. He opined that

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the existing research funding allocated to universities was already inadequate, and was concerned that the recommendation would worsen the problem. He considered that the Panel should further discuss the issue of research funding at another meeting.

86. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared that she was an Associate Professor of CityU. She said that she had received views from many academic and non-academic staff of different institutions expressing grave concern about the proposed transfer of a significant portion of funds from the research portion of the Block Grant to RGC for competitive bidding. They were concerned that the proposal would result in unhealthy competitions and undermine the operation of the institutions. She stressed the need for UGC to listen to the views of the frontline staff of universities. She added that many students also expressed concern that the proposal would lead to substantial increase in tuition fee. She echoed the view that the Panel should further discuss the allocation of research funding recommended in the Report.

87. Having regard to the significant bearing of the proposed allocation of research funding on the direction of the higher education sector, Mr Abraham SHEK shared the view that the Panel should further discuss the matter at meetings in future.

88. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the inequitable allocation of research funding affected not only the operation of universities but also local young academic staff of universities. He had received complaints from local young academic staff about discrimination as they were not given opportunities to conduct research. He called on UGC to allocate a reasonable portion of the research funding to local young academic staff. He echoed the concern raised by the Teachers Association of CUHK that the institutions had placed more emphasis on research than teaching. He pointed out that in some cases, professors who had won research awards were relieved from teaching duties. He considered that a mechanism should be in place to rectify the problem.

89. US(Ed) responded that the balance between teaching and research and arrangements relating to research work of young academic staff were matters within the autonomy of individual institutions.

90. SG/UGC said that there was always tension between teaching and research which was common around the world. The Report recommended that the institutions should focus more on teaching. He concurred with US(Ed) that it was for individual institutions to strike a proper balance between teaching and research and to ensure that performance in both areas were duly taken into

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account in the assessment procedures for promotion. On opportunities for young academics, SG/UGC said that an Early Career Scheme under RGC had just been introduced. The Scheme would benefit all newly appointed academics, both local and non-local ones.

91. Mr Abraham SHEK said that the primary purpose of university education was to nurture young people to be educated persons. He enquired how the recommendations in the Report would help achieve this purpose.

92. SG/UGC said that the Review Group had pointed out in Chapter 1 of its Report that apart from the transmission of academic and professional knowledge, another important task of universities was to provide whole-person education to students. The UGC-funded sector had done a lot of work to promote whole-person education, which was greatly facilitated by the move to a four-year undergraduate programme.

93. Mr Abraham SHEK said that some deputations had expressed concern that the proposed allocation of research funding would drive institutions even further to chase after research funding and to place less focus on teaching. In his view, the primary role of a teacher was to impart knowledge and values to students, rather than doing research. In his view, the proposed allocation of research funding ran counter to the purpose of providing whole-person education to students.

94. SG/UGC responded that the Report had emphasized very strongly the need for excellence in teaching. In the current Academic Development Proposals exercise, UGC had requested the institutions to place a strong emphasis on teaching and learning. He added that for teaching staff who were concerned that their institutions had focused too much on research, they could make use of the Report to persuade their institutions to place an adequate focus on teaching.

95. US(Ed) said that the Report had a substantial coverage on the importance of teaching and learning. He assured members that the Review Group was committed to the development of whole-person education in Hong Kong.

Self-financing degree and sub-degree programmes

96. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the Administration should learn from the bitter lesson on the excessive supply of sub-degree programmes and consider amending the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinances (Cap. 320) to regulate the entry and exit requirements of self-financing degree programmes

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with a view to ensuring the quality as well as a balanced supply and demand of these programmes.

97. US(Ed) responded that having regard to the rapid developments of the higher education sector over the past 10 years, such as the change from a three-year to four-year undergraduate programme and the substantial increase in the number of self-financing degree and sub-degree programmes, it was the Administration's plan to review the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance, particularly the provisions concerning the regulation of degree programmes offered by self-financing education providers.

98. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong further said that the Administration should consider subsidizing self-financing degree and sub-degree programmes in the form of vouchers so that needy students who were not admitted to publicly-funded institutions could be subsidized in their pursuit of quality degree and sub-degree programmes in self-financing institutions or private universities.

99. US(Ed) responded that the Administration provided publicly-funded financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to needy students enrolled in publicly-funded as well as self-financing post-secondary programmes. In addition, as reported to the Panel at its meeting on 14 February 2011, the Administration had proposed to set up the Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme ("SPSS") under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to grant scholarships to students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree or degree programmes at non-profit-making institutions. The administration of SPSS would take reference from the HKSARG Scholarship Fund which provided scholarships for students enrolled in publicly-funded degree and above programmes.

Separation of community college operations of UGC-funded institutions from parent institutions

100. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong recalled that a number of institutions including CityU and Lingnan University had applied for loans under the Start-up Loan Scheme for post-secondary education providers for the construction of new buildings for the operation of their sub-degree programmes. He criticized that the Administration had on the one hand granted loans to the UGC-funded institutions to construct new buildings for their sub-degree programmes but the Report had on the other hand recommended the complete separation of the operations of these sub-degree programmes from their parent institutions within three years of the acceptance of the recommendation. He said that the proposed separation would create

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great difficulties for CityU and Lingnan University and requested the Administration to resolve the difficulties faced by the institutions.

101. US(Ed) responded that the Start-up Loan Scheme provided flexible arrangements to institutions and the Administration would consider the applicants' financial viability in assessing the applications. He assured members that the Administration would continue to discuss with the institutions on the issue of the separation of community college operations from their parent institutions.

Contract staff

102. Referring to the submission of CityU Staff Association, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern that contract staff accounted for some 50% of the total number of staff in many institutions, including CityU, Lingnan University, the Hong Kong Institute of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Baptist University. The same was also true for VTC, where the duration of contracts for contract staff ranged from as short as three months to one year. He said that contract staff were being discriminated against in terms of remuneration and fringe benefits and the large percentage of contract staff had affected staff morale. He enquired whether the Administration would consider implementing a policy to allow contract staff who had been employed by a university for three to six years to become substantive staff.

103. US(ED) responded that staff employment was a matter within the autonomy of individual institutions. EDB considered it inappropriate to take part in staffing matters of the institutions and had never been involved in such matters. SG/UGC agreed with US(ED)'s view.

Role of UGC

104. Mr Albert HO said that UGC was set up as an independent body responsible for offering impartial advice to the Government on the funding of higher education in Hong Kong, while EDB was responsible for the formulation of education policies. However, it appeared to him that UGC had now taken on a different role and had attempted to influence the policy and direction of higher education and the governance of individual institutions through the allocation of funding. He stressed that any changes in the direction of the higher education sector should be effected through the formulation of policies by EDB having due regard to academic freedom and institutional autonomy. He sought clarification on the positioning of UGC.

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105. US(Ed) responded that as the Administration considered it inappropriate for it to allocate funding directly to post-secondary institutions, UGC was set up to play the role of an intermediary between its funded institutions and the Government to act as a buffer to protect academic freedom and institutional autonomy. UGC comprised academics and community leaders who were appointed in their personal capacities. UGC's main function was to give objective and impartial advice to the Secretary for Education on the funding and development of higher education in Hong Kong. He added that it was for Secretary for Education to decide on the recommendations in the Report. In considering the recommendations in the Report, the Administration would strive to strike a balance between the views of different stakeholders and come to a consensual view on the matter.

Consultation with stakeholders and the way forward

106. While recognizing that the Review Group comprised eminent overseas academics and its recommendations were made in the light of relevant overseas experience and practices, Mr Albert HO considered it necessary to conduct a policy impact analysis to assess the feasibility of the recommendations and their implications on students, staff and the operation of the institutions. He was told by some staff in the institutions that the consultation on the Report had only involved the senior management of the institutions. He stressed that the release of the Report should only be a starting point for discussion and stressed the importance for the Administration to gauge the views of different levels of staff in the institutions before coming to a decision on the Report's recommendations.

107. SG/UGC said that the Review Group had made a lot of efforts to consult widely and locally before drafting the Report. The Review Group had invited views from the stakeholders and had received written views from over 30 organizations and individuals. During the consultation process, four public sessions were held to gauge the views of relevant stakeholders including students and staff of the institutions. The Chairman of the Review Group had also held face-to-face discussions with many key stakeholders in the post-secondary education sector.

108. The Chairman said that the major concerns raised by the deputations included allocation of research funding, the proposed separation of the operation of community colleges from their parent institutions, quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms and the need for a review of the existing regulatory regime for the higher education sector. She shared the view that the Report provided only a starting point for discussion and the Administration should fully consult all stakeholders, including staff unions,

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different levels of staff members and students, before coming to a decision on whether and how to take forward the recommendations in the Report which had significant implications on the development of the higher education sector. She sought information on the consultation to be conducted by the Administration with different stakeholders on the Report.

109. US(Ed) responded that since the publication of the Report, the Administration had been meeting with different levels of staff in the institutions, from frontline teaching staff to management, to explain the Report and seek their views thereon. He assured members that the Administration would continue to do so in the upcoming months before coming to its view on the recommendations in the Report.

110. Mr Albert HO considered it necessary for the Panel to further discuss the Report and the views of the deputations with the Administration at another meeting. Mr Abraham SHEK said that the discussion would be more fruitful if the Administration could provide a detailed response to the views and concerns of the deputations. To facilitate the Panel's further discussion on the Report, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide a detailed written response to the views and concerns expressed by the deputations. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the Report be included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

Admin

Clerk

VII. Any other business

111. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:48 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 May 2011