

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)740/18-19
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 4 January 2019 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon IP Kin-yuen (Chairman)
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kuok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai

Hon AU Nok-hin
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

Member attending : Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Tanya CHAN

Public Officers attending : Agenda Item III

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Professor James TANG
Secretary-General
University Grants Committee

Miss Winnie WONG
Deputy Secretary-General (1)
University Grants Committee Secretariat

Mr Ronald LING
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)
Education Bureau

Agenda item IV

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Rex CHANG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Professor James TANG
Secretary-General
University Grants Committee

Agenda item V

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Secretary for Education

Mrs Michelle WONG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mr Benjamin YUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Professional Development and Training)
Education Bureau

Ms Louise SO
Principal Education Officer (School Administration)
Education Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Ms Angel WONG
Chief Council Secretary (4)4

Staff in attendance : Miss Mandy NG
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

Action

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)366/18-19(01) -- Information paper provided by the Education Bureau concerning the progress of the School-based Professional Support Programmes financed by the Education Development Fund in the 2017-2018 school year)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

Action

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19 -- List of follow-up actions)

Items for discussion at the next regular meeting

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting on 1 February 2019 at 10:45 am:

- (a) Planning for the provision of primary and secondary school places in the light of student population and related stabilization measures;
- (b) 3272ES – A 30-classroom secondary school at Site KT2e, Development at Anderson Road, Kwun Tong; and
- (c) Life-wide Learning Grant.

3. The Chairman advised that organizations of school heads would be invited to exchange views with members during discussion of item (a) above. Moreover, the end time of the February meeting would be extended from 12:45 pm to 1:00 pm to allow sufficient time for discussion.

(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, item (c) above had been removed from the agenda for the February meeting.)

Proposed items for discussion at future meetings

4. In response to the Deputy Chairman's request to discuss the education-related recommendations in the Report of the Task Force on Prevention of Youth Suicides, the Chairman advised that the subject would be discussed at the regular meeting in March 2019 the earliest.

5. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan requested the Panel to discuss issues relating to vocational and professional education and training, and review of the implementation of life planning education (i.e. items 37 and 14 on the List of outstanding items for discussion ("the List")). The Chairman advised that the review of the implementation of vocational and professional education and training was scheduled for discussion in May 2019. He would arrange with the Deputy Chairman the schedule for discussing items including life planning education on the List.

Action

Consultation on overseas duty visit

6. The Chairman advised that 19 members had responded to the circular further issued by the Secretariat to seek members' views on overseas duty visit. A majority of members considered it necessary to conduct a duty visit to Finland to study its renowned education system. He would discuss the arrangements with the Deputy Chairman and the Secretariat and inform members in due course.

III. Eighth Matching Grant Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19(02) -- Updated background brief on the Matching Grant Schemes prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

7. Before proceeding to discussion, the Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure, which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. He reminded members to declare interest, if any, in the subject under discussion.

Briefing by the Administration

8. Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to launch the eighth round of Matching Grant Scheme ("MGS") with an amount of \$2.5 billion for the publicly-funded post-secondary education sector, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19(01)].

Discussion

Coverage of the eighth round of Matching Grant Scheme

9. Dr Helena WONG noted with grave concern that self-financing sub-degree operations and approved post-secondary colleges, which had participated in previous rounds of MGS, would be excluded from the eighth round of MGS. She considered this arrangement not in line with the recommendation of the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education to maintain the prevailing binary system of sub-degree education at large. Moreover, as each round of MGS covered different institutions, she sought information on the criteria for selecting participating institutions. Mr MA Fung-kwok was

Action

worried that the exclusion of smaller self-financing institutions, such as Chu Hai College of Higher Education and Hong Kong Shue Yan University, from the eighth round of MGS would impede their development.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)544/18-19(01) on 19 February 2019.)

10. US(Ed) explained that the seventh round of MGS for application by self-financing degree-awarding institutions was still in progress and would operate until 31 July 2019. Also, the commitment of the seventh round of MGS had yet to be allocated to the institutions fully. To contemplate whether another round of MGS would be launched for these institutions, the results of the seventh round would be reviewed upon its completion. In fact, a new Research Matching Grant Scheme with a total of \$3 billion would be launched for local degree-awarding institutions, including self-financing institutions. Notwithstanding US(Ed)'s explanation, Dr Helena WONG and Mr MA Fung-kwok urged the Administration to formulate concrete measures to help the self-financing institutions raise donations after the seventh round of MGS had completed.

Distribution of matching grants

11. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Mr CHU Hoi-dick, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr AU Nok-hin and Mr Gary FAN noted that the donations secured and matching grants received by individual institutions in the first six rounds of MGS widely ranged from \$4,886 million to \$10 million and from \$1,820 million to \$10 million, as revealed in Annex B to the Administration's paper. They were deeply concerned that several renowned institutions, such as the University of Hong Kong ("HKU"), The Chinese University of Hong Kong ("CUHK"), were more capable of raising funds and had captured a dominating share of the matching grants.

12. US(Ed) advised that the Administration had made reference to members' concerns over the previous rounds of MSG when working out the details of the eighth round of MGS. To ensure a fair chance of securing matching grants amongst institutions, there would be a "ceiling" (i.e. \$600 million) and a "floor" (i.e. \$60 million) for the provision of matching grants to each institution. The "ceiling" served to prevent several institutions with strong fund-raising capabilities from capturing a dominating share of the matching grants at the expense of smaller or relatively younger institutions. In addition, unlike the previous two rounds of MSG which lasted for two years, the duration of the eighth round of MGS was three years so as to allow smaller and relatively younger institutions more time to gear up their fund-raising capabilities and networks. On members' concern that smaller institutions would not benefit from MGS fairly, US(Ed) explained that fund-raising capabilities were not necessarily related to the size of institutions. In fact, there was no great difference in the percentage of matching grants secured by large and small institutions in relation to their

Action

recurrent grants. For instance, the percentage of Lingnan University was about 20% whereas that of HKU was about 19%.

13. Mr MA Fung-kwok pointed out that the extended duration of the eighth round of MGS would impact on the amount of matching grants for institutions with strong funding-raising capabilities. In his view, it would only take institutions with strong fund-raising capabilities two years or less to secure the maximum amount of government matching grants. The extended duration would in effect "penalize" these institutions because additional donations secured would not be matched thereafter. US(Ed) made it clear that the Administration had no intention to "penalize" institutions with strong fund-raising capabilities by extending the duration. To ensure a fair chance of securing grants among all participating institutions under the eighth round of MGS, a "ceiling" (i.e. \$600 million) and a "floor" (i.e. \$60 million) had been set for the provision of matching funds under the eighth round of MGS.

14. To ensure a fair distribution of matching grants amongst institutions, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr AU Nok-hin and Mr Gary FAN considered there a need to assist the smaller and younger institutions to tap more private donations. Mr MA urged the Administration to explore measures to encourage institutions to solicit donations. Dr CHIANG suggested that the Administration should set a minimum grant of, say \$60 million which was the "floor", to ensure that each institution would get such amount of grant even if it failed to secure donations of \$60 million. Dr CHEUNG supported Dr CHIANG's suggestion and further proposed that the Administration should adjust the "ceiling" from \$600 million to \$300 million and the "floor" from \$60 million to \$150 million so as to help smaller and younger institutions. Instead of the proposed \$1 for \$1 matching ratio, Mr AU proposed a higher matching ratio, that was, \$2 government grants for every \$1 of private donation secured, for all smaller or younger institutions or for individual institutions on a need basis. Mr CHU Hoi-dick was of the view that it would be more effective to support smaller or younger institutions by turning MGS recurrent.

15. US(Ed) explained that the Administration would allocate sufficient recurrent grants to each institution for operation. MGS was launched to help the sector diversify its funding sources and foster a philanthropic culture in the community. The operation of the participating institutions would not be affected regardless of the amount of grants they received under MGS. On members' suggestions of relaxing and adjusting the matching formula, US(Ed) advised that in setting the aggregate "ceiling" and "floor" for the eighth round of MGS, due consideration had been given to the amount of private donations secured by participating institutions in previous rounds of MGS. Adjusting the "ceiling" and "floor" might cast no impact on the fund-raising results but result in unmatched grants by the end of the eighth round of MGS. Nevertheless, the Administration took note of members' concerns for future consideration.

Action

16. Dr Helena WONG expressed objection to the proposed matching formula that funding under the guaranteed minimum which had yet to be matched by the institutions concerned would be opened up for allocation to match donations of other institutions above the "floor" on a first-come-first-served basis by the end of the eighth round of MGS. She was worried that HKU would get most of the remaining matching grants and held a strong view that the Administration should adopt other alternative arrangements, for instance, by allocating unmatched grants to institutions on a proportionate basis.

17. Mr HO Kai-ming declared that he was a council member of CUHK. He enquired whether institutions with high level of financial reserves would still be eligible for matching grants. US(Ed) advised that Education Bureau ("EDB") would not claw back any unexpended matching grants. Institutions might retain any unspent matching grants, in addition to the reserve accumulated from their recurrent grants for future use. Retention of unspent matching grants would not have any impact on the amount of recurrent grants allocated to institutions.

18. Mr HO Kai-ming further remarked that donors would be more inclined to make donations which resulted in naming of campus buildings, and hence institutions with large campus areas for capital works projects would be easier to attract more donations. US(Ed) advised that donors had different reasons to make donations and naming of buildings was only one of them. According to the figures on hand, donations secured by participating institutions had been designated for multiple uses.

Use of matching grants and disclosure of donations

19. Dr Junius HO in principle supported the launch of the eighth round of MGS. However, he considered it inappropriate for institutions to use the matching grants for establishing scholarships or constructing campus buildings because funds were available from the Administration. Instead, institutions should be required to use the matching grants for research enhancement. US(Ed) explained that unlike private donations for matching, government matching grants should not be used for implementing capital works projects and providing bursaries to avoid "double subsidies". Regarding research support, a \$3-billion Research Matching Grant Scheme would be launched to ensure sustainable research funding.

20. Dr CHENG Chung-tai was concerned whether the uncertain prospects of the global economy would have an impact on the donations secured by institutions. He was of the view that donations solicited by institutions of which donors were mainly enterprises in the United States of America or Mainland China might be reduced in the coming two to three years. He enquired whether the Administration had grasped a thorough understanding of the donation sources of participating institutions, and whether it had been aware of any changes in the amount of donations received by institutions recently. US(Ed) responded that the

Action

Administration would not categorize donations by donors' background. The duration of the eighth round of MGS was extended after taking into account a basket of factors, such as the launch of the new Research Matching Grant Scheme, uncertainty of global economy, the community's ability to make donation as a whole, etc. The Administration envisaged that \$2.5 billion matching grants of the eighth round of MGS would be fully allocated to participating institutions upon its completion.

21. Mr CHU Hoi-dick noted that institutions were required to disclose publicly in their annual accounts the aggregate amount of donations/grants received and requested the Administration to provide a breakdown of the amount and donor of each donation, and corresponding matching grant received by each institution since the fourth round of MGS when submitting the funding proposal to the Finance Committee ("FC"). He also enquired whether the Administration had required the institutions to sign any undertakings with the donors.

22. US(Ed) responded that as institutions were only required to disclose publicly the aggregate amount of donations and grants received and income generated, as well as the total amount of expenditure from the donations and grants broken down into broad category of purposes, the Administration had no breakdown of donors of donations received by the institutions. Regarding agreements between donors and institutions, institutions had the autonomy to solicit, accept and use donations, and had established their own internal guidelines for handling donations. Before accepting donations, an institution would duly consider the donor's wish and the purpose of the donation to ensure that they were in line with its role and mission. The Administration would not interfere so long as the institutions had adhered to the operating terms and conditions of MGS. US(Ed) supplemented that the eighth round of MGS would not be submitted to FC as a separate single item for approval. Instead, like the seventh round, the financial implications arising from the eighth round of MGS would be included in the draft Estimates of Expenditure 2019-2020.

IV. Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded universities

(File Ref.: EDB(HE)CR 2/2041/17 -- Legislative Council Brief issued by the Education Bureau

LC Paper No. CB(4)384/18-19(01) -- Submission from Hon IP Kin-yuen)

Briefing by the Administration

23. The Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the recurrent funding for the University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded universities in the

Action

2019-2020 to 2021-2022 triennium ("2019-2022 triennium"), details of which were set out in the Legislative Council Brief [EDB(HE)CR 2/2041/17].

Declaration of interest

24. Dr Helena WONG declared interest as an academic staff of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Mr HO Kai-ming declared interest as a Council member of CUHK. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared that she was teaching at the CityU. Mr AU Nok-hin declared interest as an academic staff of CUHK.

Discussion

Provision of undergraduate places

25. Noting the Administration's estimate that there would be sufficient publicly-funded and self-financing first-year first-degree ("FYFD") intake places for all secondary school leavers meeting minimum entrance requirements for university admission, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the definite timeline for achieving such target and the respective numbers of publicly-funded and self-financing FYFD intake places to be provided. Furthermore, he made reference to the number of secondary school graduates who had attained the threshold of "3322" for university education in 2018, which was 21 264, and suggested the Administration to consider increasing the number of UGC-funded FYFD intake places from the current 15 000 to at least 20 000 per annum. Mrs Regina IP expressed disappointment with the minimal increase in the number of UGC-funded FYFD intake places over the past 10 years and urged the Administration to increase the provision of UGC-funded FYFD intake places in all disciplines.

26. SED advised that in view of the declining student population, the Administration estimated the number of candidates taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination would drop to some 40 000 in 2022. Assuming that the performance of these candidates was maintained at the current level, around 16 000 candidates would meet the minimum university entrance requirements. Coupled with the measures implemented to increase subsidized higher education opportunities, such as the provision of 5 000 UGC-funded senior year places for sub-degree graduates, 3 000 places under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors and a non-means-tested annual subsidy of around \$30,000 for students pursuing self-financing undergraduate ("Ug") programmes, it was expected that all secondary school leavers meeting the minimum university entrance requirements could have access to Ug education with some form of Government subsidizations by 2022. The Administration therefore did not have plan to increase the number of UGC-funded FYFD intake places before 2022.

Action

27. While acknowledging the benefit of internationalization of the higher education sector, Ms Claudia MO expressed concern that Mainland students made up the largest group of non-local students at universities. She opined that UGC-funded FYFD intake places used to admit Mainland students should have been used to admit more local students. Mr AU Nok-hin pointed out that in the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC") Report No. 67, UGC was recommended to encourage universities to attract more non-local students in particular those other than Mainland students so as to have true internationalization.

28. SED clarified that the annual 15 000 UGC-funded FYFD intake places were solely for admitting local students. On the view that UGC-funded FYFD intake places should be increased, the Administration's stance had been given in his reply to Mr CHAN Chi-chuen. On concern as to whether self-financing FYFD intake places should be increased, SED advised that the Administration was studying the recommendations in the report of the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education and would take follow-up actions as appropriate.

29. Dr Priscilla LEUNG was pleased to note that CityU would collaborate with the Cornell University of the United States to launch an UGC-funded Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine programme with effect from the 2019-2020 academic year, and suggested increasing its number of student intake places progressively in view of the growing demand for veterinary services.

30. Mrs Regina IP opined that CityU should raise public awareness of the academic requirements for becoming a veterinarian. In general, veterinarians must achieve competency in handling not only small pets such as dogs and cats, but also wild animals, pigs, horses, cattle, marine animals etc. To enable members to better understand the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine programme, Mrs IP requested the Administration to provide the Memorandum of Understanding between CityU and the Cornell University. Moreover, she did not want the establishment of any licensing examination system for non-locally trained veterinarians.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)544/18-19(01) on 19 February 2019.)

Additional places in healthcare disciplines

31. Mr MA Fung-kwok noted that the number of healthcare-related FYFD intake places would be increased by 150 in the 2019-2022 triennium while the overall UGC-funded FYFD intake places would remain at 15 000 per annum. He supported the Administration to increase the number of healthcare-related FYFD intake places to cater for public needs, however, he enquired whether there would be a corresponding reduction in UGC-funded FYFD intake places in other disciplines and if so, the disciplines involved and criteria adopted for such a reduction.

Action

32. The Chairman expressed dissatisfaction to the possible corresponding reduction of 150 FYFD intake places in other disciplines in order to increase 150 FYFD intake places in healthcare disciplines. He wondered whether the cancellation of the astronomy programme of HKU several years before was made in response to the increase in FYFD intake places in disciplines under manpower planning. He considered reduction in non-manpower-planned disciplines demoralizing and unfair. The Administration should increase the overall FYFD intake places from 15 000 to 15 150 in the 2019-2022 triennium and give due consideration to future reduction of places in non-manpower-planned disciplines.

33. SED explained that when deciding whether overall UGC-funded FYFD intake places should be increased, the Administration would take into consideration factors including expected population change, future development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector, measures implemented to increase subsidized higher education opportunities, etc. If necessary, adjustment might be made to the indicative student number targets allocated to universities to provide additional UGC-funded FYFD intake places to meet changes in manpower needs in the long-term. Individual universities also enjoyed institutional autonomy to allocate their total student numbers target across various programmes. In fact, universities would review periodically the allocation of student places in the light of their respective strategic objectives and the needs of society.

34. The Deputy Chairman was concerned as to whether the additional 150 places in healthcare disciplines could fully address the acute problem of healthcare manpower shortage and whether medical FYFD intake places would need to be further increased. SED advised that EDB would seek the views of the Food and Health Bureau and take into account the findings of the "Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development" in determining the number of healthcare-related UGC-funded FYFD intake places for each triennium.

35. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan enquired about the financial implications arising from the additional places in healthcare disciplines. SED advised that as a result of the increase in UGC-funded FYFD and taught postgraduate ("TPg") intake places in the relevant healthcare disciplines, there would be additional funding requirements in other areas such as student financial assistance in the form of grants and loans and clinical placements at hospitals. For student financial assistance, the full year effect would be \$2.3 million per annum and for clinical placements at hospitals, the full year effect would be \$2.5 million per annum.

36. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan further pointed out that many university students had to borrow loans to pay for the tuition fees and as a result, were in heavy debt. She called on the Administration to, for example, grant tax exemption to these graduates to alleviate their debt burden. SED advised that financial assistance in

Action

the form of grant and/or loan was provided to needy students under the relevant schemes. The interest rates for student loans were low and loan borrowers could start loan repayment one year after completion of their studies. Nevertheless, the Administration would continue to explore improvement measures to reduce the repayment burden of student loan borrowers.

Provision of research postgraduate places

37. Dr CHENG Chung-tai referred to the student number targets set out at Annex A of the Administration's paper and sought explanation on why the number of research postgraduate ("RPg") intake places of all UGC-funded universities in the 2019-2022 triennium was declining. Dr Helena WONG shared similar concern and enquired about the allocation mechanism for RPg places. SED and Secretary-General/UGC explained that the number of UGC-funded RPg places (across year of study) would remain at 5 595 for each year of the 2019-2022 triennium. As agreed with the eight UGC-funded universities, UGC-funded RPg places were distributed to them according to the established allocation methods, including the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme ("HKPFS"), universities' performance in application to Research Grants Council schemes, results of the Research Assessment Exercise ("RAE"), evaluation of RPg programmes, etc. As shown at Annex A, a certain number of RPg places had yet to be allocated and were subject to the results of HKPFS and RGC funding schemes in the next few years. Ultimately, all 5 595 RPg places would be allocated to the eight UGC-funded universities.

38. Dr Helena WONG requested the Administration to provide the number of RPg places requested by and allocated to each UGC-funded institution per annum for the 2019-2022 triennium. Also, in view that the number of RPg places varied greatly among the eight UGC-funded universities, Dr WONG enquired about the measures taken/to be taken by UGC to avoid concentration of RPg places in a few universities.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)544/18-19(01) on 19 February 2019.)

39. Mr HO Kai-ming agreed that universities should admit RPg students on a merit basis regardless of their place of origin. However, he considered it necessary to attract more local and overseas students (other than Mainland students) to undertake RPg programmes. The Deputy Chairman remarked that many local students did not pursue RPg studies because of uncertain career prospects and requested the Administration to address students' concerns.

40. SED advised that the Administration had been making tremendous efforts in attracting more local students to pursue RPg studies, such as the provision of tuition waiver for all local students enrolled in UGC-funded RPg programmes since the 2018-2019 academic year. More new resources to support research

Action

development would be provided, enabling the universities to flexibly deploy funding to engage RPg students in research activities. In addition, initiatives had been implemented to encourage RPg students to develop in different career fields outside the academic arena. The Administration would continue to collaborate with universities to encourage more overseas students to undertake RPg programmes in Hong Kong.

Teaching and research resources

41. Mr HO Kai-ming pointed out that local universities had difficulties in recruiting professoriate staff members and urged the Administration to provide universities with additional resources for attracting top scholars from overseas. SED advised that the Administration attached importance to enriching the talent pool in Hong Kong. The Administration would continue to discuss with the UGC-funded sector measures to attract overseas talents to Hong Kong. Meanwhile, as local universities had recorded financial surplus, it seemed that their difficulty in looking for high caliber academics was not attributed to resource constraints alone.

42. Mrs Regina IP relayed the views of some professors that few world renowned professors were willing to come to teach in Hong Kong because the environment for conducting research was unfavourable, for example, the research centres/laboratories in universities were too small and the equipment were outdated. She urged the Administration to subsidize universities to construct new research centres/laboratories with modern facilities.

43. Mr Michael TIEN opined that teaching and research performance were equally important to universities. UGC should ensure a balanced development in teaching programmes and research projects in UGC-funded universities, and consider developing a teaching assessment exercise to assess the output of teaching to encourage quality teaching. Moreover, he pointed out that RAE was conducted every six years to assess universities' research outputs of staff members, regardless of their years of service. For example, if a staff member in University A completed several research projects during the six-year assessment period and left for University B, the research outputs would be counted towards the total research outputs of University B rather than University A. Given such, some universities "purchased" staff members of strong research output when RAE was conducted in order to obtain more research funding. To his understanding, the United Kingdom had amended its related research funding allocation criteria. In his view, the Administration should consider reviewing the assessment criteria of RAE to address the problem. SED took note of Mr TIEN's views and stressed that the UGC-funded sector regarded both teaching and research were of equal importance.

44. Mr AU Nok-hin held a strong view that the Administration should avoid fragmentation of teaching posts in universities so as to maintain a stable teaching force and safeguard the quality of university education.

Action

Funding arrangement

45. Noting the recommended Cash Limit for the entire UGC-funded sector for the 2019-2022 triennium was \$20.2 billion each year, representing an increase of 12.8% as compared with \$17.9 billion for 2018-2019, Mr CHU Hoi-dick requested the Administration to provide a breakdown of the increase of 12.8% by necessary price and pay adjustments, changes in student numbers, top-up funding for additional UGC-funded FYFD and TPg intake places in healthcare disciplines, and changes in student unit costs as weighed by the relative cost of different levels of study.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)544/18-19(01) on 19 February 2019.)

46. Mr AU Nok-hin opined that the Administration should follow up the recommendations relevant to the funding arrangement of UGC made in the Director of Audit's Report No. 67. SED advised that the proposal of recurrent funding for the 2019-2022 triennium was not meant to respond to the Director of Audit's and PAC Reports No. 67. The Administration and UGC had taken follow-up actions to the Reports and provided responses to the Legislative Council according to the prevailing procedures.

47. The Chairman sought clarification on whether the financial implications arising from the recurrent funding for UGC-funded institutions in the 2019-2022 triennium would be included in the Estimates of Expenditure of the respective financial years. SED responded in the affirmative.

(At about 12:15 pm, the Chairman directed that the meeting be extended for 15 minutes to 1:00 pm.)

Motions

48. The Chairman referred members to the two motions respectively proposed by Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Mr AU Nok-hin, and two motions proposed by Dr Helena WONG (wording of the motions in **Appendices I to IV**).

49. The Chairman put the motion moved by Mr CHAN Chi-chuen to vote. Twelve members voted for the motion, no member voted against and one member abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

50. The Chairman put the motion moved by Mr AU Nok-hin to vote. Six members voted for the motion, no member voted against and seven members abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

51. The Chairman put to vote the first motion moved by Dr Helena WONG. Thirteen members voted for the motion, no member voted against and one member abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

Action

52. The Chairman put to vote the second motion moved by Dr Helena WONG. Thirteen members voted for the motion, no member voted against and no member abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

V. Extension of Retirement Age for Newly-joined Aided School Teachers

(LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

53. SED briefed members on the Administration's proposal to extend the retirement age of teachers who were newly appointed to teaching posts within the approved staff establishment of aided schools ("newly-joined aided school teachers") to 65 and the key elements of the proposed legislative amendments to the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), the Grant Schools Provident Fund ("GSPF") Rules (Cap. 279C) and the Subsidized Schools Provident Fund ("SSPF") Rules (Cap. 279D). Details of the proposal were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19(03)].

Discussion

Extension of retirement age for newly-joined aided school teachers

54. While supporting the proposal to extend the retirement age of newly-joined aided school teachers to 65, Mr LAU Kwok-fan considered it necessary to retain experience and expertise of serving teachers and principals. Due to the prevailing complicated procedures for application of extension of service, he suggested allocating additional resources for schools to create new posts for engaging retired principals as consultants to help develop successors.

55. SED explained that the proposal had struck a good balance of the needs of both of the experienced and young teachers. There was no plan to create new posts for serving principals reaching the age of 60 at the present stage. In fact, incumbent principals should equip the management levels in their schools well and devise good succession plans for the schools to meet their operational needs. Currently, some schools would invite retired principals to be honorary consultant or a member of the school management committee for retaining experience and expertise. He nevertheless took note of Mr LAU's view for consideration.

56. Mr HO Kai-ming was disappointed that the new retirement age did not apply to serving teachers and was not convinced that the extension of the service of serving teachers to 65 would lead to promotion blockage for younger teachers.

Action

He recalled that similar concern had been raised in examining whether or not to extend the retirement age of serving civil servants and they were allowed to retire at 65 eventually. Hence, serving aided school teachers should be allowed to choose to retire at 65. SED explained that the proposal placed emphasis on the career development and prospect of the teachers, including in-service young teachers and potential candidates who would join the teaching career in the future. As there would not be staff shortage in the education sector in the near future, allowing the serving teachers to retire beyond 60 might affect the entry and career prospect of young teachers. Mr HO Kai-ming was not convinced and strongly urged EDB to allow serving teachers to choose to retire at 65 so as to align with the civil service arrangement.

57. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan expressed support to the direction of the new initiative. However, he was worried that teachers with bad performance would take advantage of the new initiative to stay for five more years, blocking injection of new blood and affecting teaching effectiveness. SED stressed that the proposal aimed at extending the retirement age of newly-joined aided school teachers across the board, and smoothing out the planning and succession of the teaching career as a whole instead of focusing on some individual cases. With a view to improving the performance of individual teachers, EDB would explore measures such as strengthening teachers' professional development for bettering the quality in education. Mr CHEUNG urged EDB to discuss with the school sector ways to improve teacher performance.

58. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan further enquired about the prevailing arrangement for teachers reaching the retirement age in the middle of a school year. SED advised that a teacher of an aided school would continue his/her service up to the end of the school year in which he/she attained the age of 60. In response, the Chairman pointed out that a teacher of a government school was required to retire on the age of 60 even if it fell within a school year. To avoid adverse impact on students, he urged Administration to review the retirement arrangement for teachers of government schools.

Provident fund arrangement

59. Mr Gary FAN considered it unfair to lengthen qualifying year of continuous contributory service for a higher Government donation rate by two years under the proposed adjustment to GSPF and SSPF for newly-joined aided school teachers. Also, as EDB envisaged that the new initiative would not create additional pressure on government expenditure, he was worried that the Government donation would be reduced and amount of Government donation receivable when newly-joined teachers retired at 65 would be lower than that of their in-service counterparts.

60. SED explained that in designing and adopting a higher retirement age for civil servants, the provident fund contributory period of civil servants and the

Action

arrangements for Government donation had been adjusted so that the burden of public finance would not be increased. The proposed adjustments to GSPF/SSPF were in line with such a principle. As the retirement age of newly-joined aided school teachers was five years beyond that of the serving teachers, the qualifying year of continuous contributory service for a higher rate of Government donation was increased by two years accordingly. In fact, the overall Government donation to GSPF/SSPF for these newly-joined teachers would not decrease. In response to Mr Gary FAN's request, EDB would provide a comparison of a teacher's contribution and the Government donation under the existing arrangement and the proposed adjustment to GSPF/SSPF after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)524/18-19(01) on 12 February 2019.)

61. Dr Helena WONG supported extending the retirement age of newly-joined aided school teachers. She asked whether there would be any penalty for retiring before 65, such as reducing the accrued benefits attributable to GSPF/SSPF. Principal Assistant Secretary (Professional Development and Training) advised that as stipulated in the related legislation, no penalty would be imposed for early withdrawal of GSPF/SSPF because of retirement before the age of 65. Nevertheless, the accrued benefits that the teachers could obtain from the related GSPF/SSPF would vary in accordance with their years of continuous contributory service. SED supplemented that the accrued benefits that the eligible teachers could obtain from GSPF/SSPF was governed by the existing rules that were applicable to the serving teachers who would retire at 60. The arrangement would remain unchanged when the new retirement age of 65 became effective. While it was up to the teachers concerned to decide on when they would withdraw the funds from GSPF/SSPF, they had to follow all the related provisions as stipulated in GSPF/SSPF Rules.

62. The Chairman concluded that the Administration would prepare for the drafting of the law amendments and make submission of the Amendment Bill later this year.

VI. Any other business

63. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:16 pm.

教育事務委員會
Panel on Education

在 2019 年 1 月 4 日的會議上
就議程項目"大學教育資助委員會資助大學的經常撥款"通過的議案
Motion passed under the agenda item
"Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded universities"
at the meeting on 4 January 2019

議案措辭

鑒於教資會建議 2019-2020 至 2021-2022 年教資會資助第一年學士學位課程學額仍維持每年 15 000 個，這數目仍遠低於符合基本大學入讀條件的中學畢業生人數，令大量符合基本入讀大學條件的中學畢業生未能入讀公帑資助的大學學位課程，本委員會要求當局應盡快研究將教資會資助第一年學士學位課程學額增至至少 20 000 個，以確保本地院校可為絕大部份符合基本大學入讀條件的中學畢業生提供教資會資助的大學學士學位學額。

(陳志全議員動議)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

Given the University Grants Committee's ("UGC") recommendation to maintain the number of UGC-funded first-year first-degree ("FYFD") places for the 2019-2020 to 2021-2022 triennium at 15 000 per annum which is still far lower than the number of secondary school graduates meeting general university admission requirements, many of these graduates were not admitted to publicly-funded university degree programmes as a result. This Panel urges the Administration to explore expeditiously the increase in the number of UGC-funded FYFD places to at least 20 000 to ensure that local institutions can provide UGC-funded university undergraduate places to the great majority of secondary school graduates meeting general university admission requirements.

(Moved by Hon CHAN Chi-chuen)

教育事務委員會
Panel on Education

在 2019 年 1 月 4 日的會議上
就議程項目"大學教育資助委員會資助大學的經常撥款"通過的議案
Motion passed under the agenda item
"Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded universities"
at the meeting on 4 January 2019

議案措辭

本會要求教資會研究設立專款專項撥款，鼓勵大學聘任教職員編制穩定，減少大學教師職位零散化，保障大學教育質素。

(區諾軒議員動議)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

This Panel urges UGC to explore the setting up of a dedicated fund to encourage universities to maintain a stable teaching staff establishment and alleviate the fragmentation of university teaching posts, so as to safeguard the quality of university education.

(Moved by Hon AU Nok-hin)

教育事務委員會
Panel on Education

在 2019 年 1 月 4 日的會議上
就議程項目 "大學教育資助委員會資助大學的經常撥款" 通過的議案
Motion passed under the agenda item
"Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded universities"
at the meeting on 4 January 2019

議案措辭

鑒於大多數副學士畢業生均選擇繼續升學，本委員會要求當局研究增加副學位持有人升讀教資會資助高年級學士學位銜接學額，由每年 5 000 個增加至 7 000 個，以協助副學士畢業生完成學士課程。

(黃碧雲議員動議)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

Given that a majority of sub-degree graduates opt for further studies, this Panel urges the Administration to explore the increase in the number of UGC-funded senior year undergraduate intake places for articulation of sub-degree holders from 5 000 to 7 000 per annum to help sub-degree graduates finish undergraduate programmes.

(Moved by Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan)

教育事務委員會
Panel on Education

在 2019 年 1 月 4 日的會議上
就議程項目"大學教育資助委員會資助大學的經常撥款"通過的議案
Motion passed under the agenda item
"Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded universities"
at the meeting on 4 January 2019

議案措辭

本委員會促請政府研究在 2019-2020 至 2021-2022 的三年撥款內，以現有 15 000 個學額為基線，在不影響「非人力規劃範疇」學額下，額外增加超過 150 個屬於「人力規劃範疇」的醫療學科學額，使總資助學額相應增至不少於 15 150 個。

(黃碧雲議員動議)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

This Panel urges the Government to adopt the existing 15 000 places as the baseline and explore the increase in the number of "manpower-planned" healthcare-related places by over 150 without affecting the number of "non-manpower-planned" places under the funding for the 2019-2020 to 2021-2022 triennium, so that the total number of UGC-funded places will be correspondingly increased to a minimum of 15 150.

(Moved by Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan)