

To: The Panel on Education of the Legislative Council (Legco)

RE: New resources to further support the research conducted by the higher education sector and the funding policy of the Research Grants Council

RGC-earmarked grants such as grants from the General Research Fund (GRF) are currently counted twice in the competitive allocation of the research portion of the UGC Block Grant: once directly, and once indirectly as part of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). As a result, publicly-funded universities in Hong Kong are pressuring their academic staff members to apply for as many RGC grants as possible, for example, by making regular and/or successful application a condition for contract renewal or promotion. This creates a perverse incentive to apply for such grants even when they are not necessary, or when they might form an impediment to the successful completion of ongoing research. The end result is that public resources are wasted on an annual basis. I would therefore like the Panel to consider the possibility of a different, more efficient funding policy that emphasizes output rather than input.

Yours sincerely,

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