

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)553/20-21
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 6 November 2020, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP

Hon Alvin YEUNG
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Member attending : Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP

Members absent : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP

[According to the announcement made by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government on 11 November 2020 pursuant to the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Qualification of the Members of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Kenneth LEUNG, KWOK Ka-ki, Dennis KWOK Wing-hang and Alvin YEUNG were disqualified from being a member of LegCo on 30 July 2020.]

Public Officers attending : Agenda item V

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Esmond LEE, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Agenda item VI

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Derek LAI
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)
Education Bureau

Mr Louis LEUNG
Deputy Secretary-General (1)
University Grants Committee Secretariat

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Mr Eric NG
Vice-President (Administration) and University Secretary

Professor WONG Kam-bo
Director
School of Life Sciences

Mr FUNG Siu-man
Director
Campus Development Office

Mr LI Sing-cheung
Deputy Director
Campus Development Office

The University of Hong Kong

Professor Alfonso NGAN
Acting Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Mr Eddie YIU
Senior Assistant Director
Estates Office

Mr Albert CHAN
Director (Architect)
Wong & Ouyang (HK) Ltd

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

Staff in attendance : Mr Matthew LOO
Assistant Secretary General 4

Miss Wincy LO
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Rachel WONG
Council Secretary (4)4

Miss Winnie CHENG
Senior Legislative Assistant (4)1

Miss Emma CHEUNG
Senior Legislative Assistant (4)3

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

Mr Griffin FUNG
Legislative Assistant (4)7

Miss Emma LAM
Clerical Assistant (4)4

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I. Election of Deputy Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel. Mr WONG Kwok-kin nominated Ms Alice MAK and the nomination was seconded by Ms YUNG Hoi-yan. Ms Alice MAK accepted the nomination.

2. Dr Helena WONG nominated Mr IP Kin-yuen and the nomination was seconded by Mr Kenneth LEUNG. Mr IP Kin-yuen accepted the nomination.

3. As there was no other nomination, the Chairman proceeded with the election and announced a vote by secret ballot. Of the members present for voting, 25 voted for Ms Alice MAK and 16 voted for Mr IP Kin-yuen. The Chairman declared Ms Alice MAK elected as Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

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II. Application for late membership

(LC Paper No. CB(4)42/20-21(01) -- Letter dated 21 October 2020 from Hon LEUNG Che-cheung)

4. At members' request, the Chairman put to vote as to whether Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's application for membership should be accepted and directed that the voting bell be rung for five minutes to notify members of the voting. Mr Jeremy TAM claimed a division. The following 24 members voted for the acceptance of late membership:

Mr Abraham SHEK, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Ms Starry LEE, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Dr Priscilla LEUNG, Mr WONG Kwok-kin, Mr Paul TSE, Mr Michael TIEN, Mr Frankie YICK, Mr MA Fung-kiwok, Ms Alice MAK, Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Ir Dr LO Wai-kiwok, Mr Jimmy NG, Dr Junius HO, Mr Holden CHOW, Mr Wilson OR, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr CHAN Chun-ying, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Mr Vincent CHENG and Mr Tony TSE.

The following 15 members voted against:

Mr James TO, Prof Joseph LEE, Ms Claudia MO, Mr WU Chi-wai, Mr Charles Peter MOK, Mr Kenneth LEUNG, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Dr Helena WONG, Mr IP Kin-yuen, Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr Andrew WAN, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting, Mr SHIU Ka-chun, Mr KWONG Chun-yu and Mr Jeremy TAM.

Dr CHENG Chung-tai abstained. The Chairman declared that Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's application for late membership was accepted in accordance with Rule 23 of the House Rules.

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)817/19-20(01) -- Letter dated 5 June 2020 from Hon Tony TSE concerning the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education

LC Paper No. CB(4)817/19-20(02) -- Letter dated 12 June 2020 from Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU

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Suk-yea concerning the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education

LC Paper No. CB(4)817/19-20(03) -- Administration's written response dated 14 July 2020 to the letter dated 5 June 2020 from Hon Tony TSE concerning the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education

LC Paper No. CB(4)817/19-20(04) -- Administration's written response dated 14 July 2020 to the letter dated 12 June 2020 from Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yea concerning the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education

LC Paper No. CB(4)893/19-20(01) -- Letter dated 20 May 2020 from Hon IP Kin-yuen concerning the mechanism of question setting of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

LC Paper No. CB(4)893/19-20(02) -- Letter dated 20 May 2020 from Hon Elizabeth QUAT concerning the mechanism of question setting of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

LC Paper No. CB(4)893/19-20(03) -- Administration's written response dated 9 September 2020 to the letter dated 20 May 2020 from Hon IP Kin-yuen concerning the mechanism of question setting

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of the Hong Kong Diploma
of Secondary Education
Examination

LC Paper No. CB(4)893/19-20(04) -- Administration's written response dated 9 September 2020 to the letter dated 20 May 2020 from Hon Elizabeth QUAT concerning the mechanism of question setting of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination)

5. Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

IV. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)72/20-21 -- List of outstanding items for discussion)

6. The Chairman advised that four letters proposing discussion items for future meetings had been received from Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Ms Elizabeth QUAT, Mr IP Kin-yuen and Dr Junius HO respectively. The list of outstanding items for discussion ("the List") had been updated and circulated to members.

(Post-meeting note: The letters were issued to members via LC Paper Nos. CB(4)110/20-21 (01) to (04) on 6 November 2020.)

7. Mr Michael TIEN and Mr IP Kin-yuen urged for early discussion of item 41 on the List, i.e. Duty visit to Finland. Ms Claudia MO requested for discussion of item 35 on the List, i.e. Teaching and learning of English language.

8. Mr IP Kin-yuen urged for discussion on items 3 and 32 on the List, i.e. Governance of University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions and proposed Members' Bill to amend the University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1053) and Update on the implementation of new kindergarten education policy, particularly the establishment of a salary scale for kindergarten teachers.

9. Mr Holden CHOW and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan suggested that the Education Bureau ("EDB") should brief the Panel on the mechanism for handling complaints about teachers' professional misconduct, including whether the names of teachers committed professional misconduct should be made public and how the public could make complaints against teachers. Mr IP Kin-yuen was of the

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view that the existing mechanism in handling/investigating complaints against teachers should be improved to prevent unfairness to teachers.

10. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung urged the Panel to discuss issues relating to the monitoring of school-based teaching materials of the Liberal Studies subject. Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan considered that EDB should monitor all teaching materials.

11. Mr KWOK Wai-keung suggested that national education should be strengthened by including it in early childhood education. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan suggested that the Panel should be briefed on when and how national education and national security education would be implemented.

12. Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan urged for early discussion of school bullying. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung proposed the Panel to discuss issues relating to the opening up of school facilities for hire to outside organizations.

13. In view of the numerous cases of student withdrawal reported by elite schools, Dr Helena WONG suggested that EDB should discuss the reasons for the withdrawal and its impact on the school sector. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the stringent security measures implemented by universities to restrict public access to campuses.

14. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed concern that Hong Kong's universities had dropped in international rankings. She suggested that UGC and relevant universities should be invited to brief the Panel on the University Accountability Agreements which contained performance indicators.

15. Dr Helena WONG and Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered it necessary to discuss how to safeguard professional autonomy and academic freedom in the education sector.

16. In view of the large number of discussion items on the List, the Chairman said that special meetings might be held to deal with pressing issues, such as school bullying and care of students in special schools.

V. The Government's follow-up actions on the recommendations from the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training

(LC Paper No. CB(4)72/20-21(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

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Briefing by the Administration

17. The Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the Government's follow-up actions on the recommendations made by the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training ("VPET"). Details of the briefing were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)72/20-21(01)].

Discussion

Promotion of VPET in secondary schools

18. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered improvement in Applied Learning ("ApL") courses necessary for better promotion of VPET in secondary schools. He pointed out that due to practical difficulties, many students did not enroll in ApL courses. For instance, ApL courses only conducted in a few remote locations on weekends. Grassroots students in particular could not afford the transportation expenses incurred. Some courses even clashed with other extra-curricular activities. Moreover, the contents of some ApL courses (such as ApL in Aviation Studies) were too theoretical, falling short of students' expectations. As a result, students taking ApL subjects accounted for less than 10% of the student population. He suggested that the Administration might make reference to the success of the dual system in countries such as Finland, Germany, etc. in implementing VPET.

19. Mr SHIU Ka-chun opined that the public perceived VPET as inferior to other academic articulation pathways because the Administration did not attach importance to it. For instance, the disparate reporting system of the assessment results of candidates of senior secondary subjects and ApL subjects in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination ("HKDSE Examination"). The results of senior secondary subjects were reported at five levels from Level 1 to Level 5 plus two sub-groups of Level 5* and Level 5** while ApL results at three levels of "Attained", "Attained with Distinction (I)" and "Attained with Distinction (II)" with the highest level only comparable to Level 4. Also, ApL subjects were only offered to Secondary Five and Six students. To change the public's perception of VPET, the Administration might consider offering ApL subjects at Secondary Four, as for senior secondary subjects.

20. SED stressed that the Administration's policy supported the parallel development of VPET and academic routes so as to provide multiple and flexible education pathways for young people with different aspirations and abilities. As regards ApL courses, he agreed to the need of enhancement and advised that improvement had already been made. In the past, results of ApL courses were only reported in two levels. Starting from the 2018 HKDSE Examination, the reporting of students' performance in ApL courses had been further refined from

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two to three levels, with a view to better reflecting students' performance in ApL courses. The Administration would continue to explore other improvement measures for ApL, including allowing students to study ApL courses at Secondary Four.

21. Noting the Task Force's recommendation to improve the Business-School Partnership Programme ("BSPP") by strengthening coordination, fostering wider industry collaboration and formulating an incentive mechanism for industry partners, Mr CHAN Chun-ying asked how EDB would implement the recommendation, such as whether the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Innovation and Technology Bureau would be involved to approach relevant industries, and what incentives would be offered to attract industry partners, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic.

22. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan stressed the importance of promoting VPET and fostering wider industry collaboration to help students identify their interests and abilities, gain access to information about new/emerging industries and make informed choices of further articulation pathways. In her view, there was much room to further improve BSPP and suggested that professional bodies and retirees of certain industries should be invited to share insights and development opportunities with students directly.

23. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan said that the rapidly changing economic environment had led to the emergence of new industries which created new opportunities for young people. EDB should equip teachers with knowledge and information on new/emerging industries, including financial technology, innovative technology and creative industry, etc. so that students could obtain up-to-date industry and career information from their teachers.

24. SED advised that the Administration would continue to engage more BSPP partners from different sectors, with a view to providing students, teachers and parents with the latest information on the available articulation pathways. In fact, the number of enterprises/organisations under BSPP had been increasing. Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("DS(Ed)1") supplemented that the Steering Committee on Promotion of VPET and Qualifications Framework ("QF") had been set up on 1 September 2020 to oversee the overall VPET promotion strategy, strengthen coordination and foster closer industry partnership. The Administration would continue to work with the Steering Committee to explore ways to strengthen industry collaboration in providing VPET programmes.

Promotion of VPET in higher education

25. Mr IP Kin-yuen was concerned whether and how the limited number of overall publicly-funded first-year first-degree would be affected if the Administration took forward the Task Force's recommendation to develop

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applied degrees. Moreover, he said that there were varied definitions for VPET in different places. In considering the definition of VPET, the Administration might make reference to Germany and Switzerland where vocationally or professionally-oriented degree level programmes, for example, those in the disciplines of nursing, engineering, etc. were covered under VPET.

26. SED advised that in the past, there was no clear division between academic degree and vocationally-oriented degree level programmes in Hong Kong. To facilitate the development of applied degrees, the Administration would study the positioning of applied degrees as well as how these programmes could be supported, with a view to differentiating applied degrees from academic degrees. A pilot project would be launched in late 2020 to gain experience in the practical issues involved in the development of applied degree programmes with distinctive features in selected VPET disciplines.

27. Mr CHAN Chun-ying sought further information on the pilot project mentioned by SED. DS(Ed)1 advised that the Administration planned to launch the pilot project in late 2020. Eligible tertiary institutions would be invited to submit proposals in taking part in the pilot project on the development of applied degrees. The Administration would assess the proposals received and select suitable programmes in different VPET disciplines for the pilot project.

28. Dr Helena WONG pointed out that The Hong Kong Polytechnic University ("PolyU") was the major university providing vocationally and professionally-oriented programmes in the past. However, there was a growing tendency for some traditional universities such as the University of Hong Kong ("HKU") and The Chinese University of Hong Kong ("CUHK") to offer those programmes. She sought clarification on the policy direction of promoting and implementing VPET in higher education. She also considered there a need to more sharply differentiate the value and positioning of Associate Degree ("AD") and Higher Diploma ("HD") qualifications which offered similar vocationally-oriented courses. Ms Claudia MO considered it necessary to differentiate the positioning of applied degrees, AD and HD.

29. While appreciating the Administration's resources allocated to develop sub-degree qualifications, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok referred to his experience as the Chairman of Engineering Discipline Advisory Board of the Vocational Training Council and said that there was much difficulty in positioning the role of HD. He was also concerned whether the decline in school-aged population for secondary education would adversely affect the admission of VPET courses.

30. Prof Joseph LEE considered that the positioning of VPET under QF was vague. The Administration should clearly define how AD, HD, and applied degree programmes were recognized under QF, and establish clear articulation pathways for their graduates so as to help students and parents make informed

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decisions about pursuing AD, HD or applied degree programmes.

31. Mr KWOK wai-keung was of the view that in the past, certain jobs requiring technical skills, such as craftsmen, thrived without the recognition of QF. The Administration should review whether QF was still required for the development of VPET.

32. SED advised that the Government had all along been committed to providing multiple and flexible education pathways for young people with different aspirations and abilities through VPET. In this regard, EDB would launch the pilot project on the development of applied degree programmes, as well as a comprehensive review of sub-degree education in late 2020 which would, among other things, reinforce the role of HD as a key VPET pathway at the sub-degree level. As regards Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok's concern about the admission of VPET programmes, SED believed that the introduction of applied degrees would raise both the attractiveness and student admission of VPET programmes.

Promotion of VPET outside the education sector

33. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok emphasized that VPET, which was a good alternative academic pathway, had made valuable contribution to the society. The Administration should continue to allocate resources in promoting VPET and step up efforts in changing the public's negative perception of VPET.

34. Ms Claudia MO considered that EDB should improve public's perception of sub-degree qualifications and take into account the changing manpower demands for professions, such as veterinary assistants and elderly care health workers, in developing VPET programmes.

35. The Deputy Chairman said that due to a lack of understanding of the latest developments and career prospects of different trades, many parents had bias towards VPET. For instance, members of the public were not aware that Hong Kong's shipbuilding and repair industry was world-renowned and offered good career prospects. Hence, only a few young people joined the industry. The Administration should step up efforts in promoting VPET to students and parents and giving them access to information about VPET and related careers, with a view to raising their awareness and recognition of VPET. In addition, VPET programmes should be designed to prepare graduates to meet the manpower needs of different industries and to provide impetus to the development of industries, so that the value of VPET could be appreciated by the public.

36. Mr SHIU Ka-chun considered that students would pursue VPET if employment could be secured after completion of VPET training. He pointed out

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that in some places such as the United Kingdom, VPET were supported by chambers of commerce and some VPET programmes were awarded with industry recognized certification.

37. Mr KWOK wai-keung considered it difficult to change the public's perception of VPET as a second choice. A major factor for young people to determine whether to pursue VPET was the provision of quality articulation pathways. The Administration should provide more articulation pathways for skill-based trades so as to raise community-wide awareness of VPET. He then drew the Administration's attention to the manpower projection for 2022 that the local manpower supply with tertiary education qualifications was projected to grow while the supply at upper secondary level and below was expected to decline, and urged EDB to be responsive to the changing manpower supply and demand in developing VPET programmes. He further opined that the increasing number of self-financing post-secondary programmes might have an adverse impact on the manpower supply in the labour market.

38. SED agreed with members' view that public awareness on VPET should be raised and parents should be involved in VPET-related activities so that they could promote the benefits and value of VPET to young people. He advised that the Administration would formulate targeted measures to enhance parents' understanding of the prospects and opportunities provided by VPET. Moreover, EDB fully understood that the collaboration with industries was a key element of success for VPET. EDB would continue to engage more industry partners in the development of VPET and consult various bureaux on the latest manpower needs, with a view to reflecting the needs of various industries to course providers for consideration.

39. Dr CHENG Chung-tai opined that the New Senior Secondary ("NSS") academic structure only aimed at increasing secondary school leavers' opportunities to pursue higher education, without giving consideration to those students who had to drop out after completion of Secondary three due to poor academic results. He queried whether EDB had noted the inadequacies of the structure and started backpedalling by implementing VPET as a compensation strategy to offer further study pathways to those students. SED clarified that the implementation of VPET would not affect the NSS academic structure as ApL had been a part of the structure since its implementation to meet diverse learning needs of students. The aim for implementing VPET was to provide students with more diversified and quality VPET programmes, so as to facilitate the parallel development of VPET and academic routes.

40. While appreciating the Administration's efforts to change the public's perception of VPET, Mr Tony TSE expressed disappointment that no performance indicators had been formulated for monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of VPET, such as the targeted numbers of students enrolling in

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VPET programmes and applied degrees developed in universities within a specified period. SED explained that the setting of fixed targets was not recommended as the development of VPET required flexibility to address society's changing needs. Mr TSE did not subscribe to SED's explanation and urged the Administration to clearly set the objectives of promoting VPET, its performance indicators, and the timeline for taking forward the Task Force's recommendations and reviewing the implementation progress, so as to ensure proper use of public resources.

41. The Chairman concluded that given the ever-changing demands of the economy, a university degree was no longer the key factor of career success. The Administration should have long-term vision to provide multiple and flexible education pathways for young people with different aspirations and abilities, strengthen collaboration with industries to equip young people with professional work skills to cope with challenges of a more dynamic future and provide quality VPET programmes to meet the manpower needs of individual industries, especially those with keen or growing manpower demand, such as lift/escalator repair and maintenance.

VI. Campus development projects of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(4)72/20-21(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

42. Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the proposed campus development projects of CUHK and HKU, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)72/20-21(02)]. Director, Campus Development Office, CUHK and Senior Assistant Director, Estates Office, HKU then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the project design.

(Post-meeting note: The PowerPoint presentation materials were issued to members via LC Paper Nos. CB(4)111/20-2 (01) and (02) on 6 November 2020.)

(At about 12:33 pm, the Chairman informed members that the meeting would be extended for 15 minutes to 1:00 pm.)

Declaration of interest

43. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or

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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. She reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

44. The Deputy Chairman, Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Mr LAU Kwok-fan declared that they were elected by Members of the Legislative Council to serve on the CUHK Council.

Discussion

Proposed project for The Chinese University of Hong Kong

45. Ms Claudia MO raised no objection to the proposed projects. Noting there were research facilities for animal models of human diseases in the proposed research laboratory building of CUHK, Ms MO was concerned what animals and in particular, whether stray cats/dogs would be used for research. Director, School of Life Sciences ("SLS"), CUHK advised that mice and rabbits were commonly used animal models in human disease research conducted by CUHK. Neither cats nor dogs would be used. In fact, all animal experimentation had to comply with stringent procedures and standards of their ethics committees.

46. Mr LAU Kwok-fan expressed support for the proposed projects. He sought information on whether the State Key Laboratory of Agrobiotechnology for research in climate-smart agriculture planned to be provided for in the new laboratory building of CUHK was supported by national policies and whether it had any co-operation with the Mainland authorities. Director, SLS, CUHK advised that the State Key Laboratory of Agrobiotechnology was set up with the approval of the Ministry of Science and Technology of China. At present, there were 26 professors from CUHK, HKU and the Baptist University engaging in research projects on stabilizing food supply in the world.

47. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the Liberal Party was in support of the proposed project for CUHK and raised no objection to the project for HKU.

Laboratory management and security

48. The Deputy Chairman supported the proposed projects. In view of the vandalism on university campuses and theft of chemicals from the laboratory of PolyU last year, the Deputy Chairman enquired about the security measures to be taken by CUHK (particularly for its laboratories) so as to provide a safe and quality environment for campus users including students and staff. Vice-President (Administration) and University Secretary ("VP (Administration) and US"), CUHK advised that the safety of staff and students was the utmost

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concern of CUHK. To ensure campus safety, CUHK had stepped up its security measures since last year. For instance, those entering the campus were required to present relevant identity documents, security for buildings with valuable resources (such as libraries and laboratories) was enhanced and a security consultant was engaged to provide professional advice on security matters.

49. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan supported the proposed projects and asked whether advanced facilities and equipment would be procured for the new laboratory buildings. Director, SLS, CUHK advised that some existing facilities and equipment would be moved to the new building. New facilities and equipment would also be procured to meet the needs of the research teams.

50. Mr LAU Kwok-fan considered that the two universities should step up their efforts to commercialize research achievements. He enquired whether the proposed laboratories would commercialize the research outcomes and introduce new products to the market. Acting Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) ("Acting VP and Pro-VC (Research)"), HKU advised that the proposed Information Technology Building at University Drive would provide working space for iDendron, which was an innovation and entrepreneurship centre applying research outcomes to assist with the development of start-up companies.

Staff recruitment

51. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired whether additional research staff would be recruited with the expansion in research activities upon completion of the proposed projects. Director, SLS, CUHK advised that there were existing research teams in CUHK and new talents would be recruited to fill any vacancies resulting from staff departure or retirement.

52. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong was in support of the proposed projects. He recalled that many Mainland research postgraduate students had fled from Hong Kong as a result of the social incident the year before. He was concerned whether the social incident and the COVID-19 pandemic had any adverse impact on recruitment and retention of research talent. VP (Administration) and US, CUHK and Acting VP and Pro-VC (Research), HKU advised that they did not see much difficulty in recruiting research talents except some arrival delays of the new recruits due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, the overall manpower situation was satisfactory. As regards non-local postgraduates, they had been coming/returning to Hong Kong gradually.

53. Mr IP Kin-yuen remarked that the proposed projects which would bring new opportunities to the scientific research development of Hong Kong should be supported. He enquired whether the two universities would be provided with

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sufficient financial resources to recruit and train research manpower upon completion of the projects. US(Ed) explained that the Administration would allocate recurrent grants to UGC-funded universities through UGC. The two universities should have sufficient resources for recruiting and training manpower upon completion of the proposed projects.

Implementation timetable

54. Mr KWONG Chun-yu expressed full support for the proposed projects and thanked HKU and CUHK for attending the meeting to make explanations to the Panel. Noting that the proposed projects could only be completed in 2024, he urged for their early completion. US(Ed) responded that if everything went smooth, the estimated completion time of the projects was 2024. The Administration would closely monitor the progress of the construction works.

(At about 12:57 pm, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the meeting would be further extended for 15 minutes to 1:15 pm.)

Public expectations on universities

55. The Chairman said that members attached great importance to the development of universities and the general public had high expectations on universities. In view of the rude behavior of university students nowadays (such as using foul language), she considered that CUHK and HKU should improve the quality of students by cultivating their moral qualities so as to meet the public expectations. VP (Administration) and US, CUHK advised that CUHK planned to include in its five-year strategic plan and triennial academic development proposal a comprehensive review of its General Education curriculum with a view to strengthening moral education. Acting VP and Pro-VC (Research), HKU said that the University fully understood the expectations of the public and the present project in particular would serve to nurture the innovation and technology skills of students for them to directly contribute to the society and gain a sense of belonging.

Summing up

56. The Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's submission of the proposed projects to the Public Works Subcommittee.

VII. Any other business

Subcommittee to Study the Development of Textbooks and Teaching Materials for Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools

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57. The Chairman advised that the Subcommittee to Study the Development of Textbooks and Teaching Materials for Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools ("the Subcommittee") under the Panel on Education would continue its work in the 2020-2021 session. The membership of the Subcommittee would be re-opened to Panel members and the election of Subcommittee Chairman would be conducted at its first meeting.

58. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan was worried that the Subcommittee would not be able to elect the Chairman, as in the last session. She suggested that the item on the development to textbooks and teaching materials be discussed at the regular meeting(s) of the Panel. Mr KWONG Chun-yu considered that the Subcommittee should proceed with the election.

59. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:12 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 February 2021