

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1232/20-21
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 5 March 2021, 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 Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

Members absent : Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item III

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Secretary for Education

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

Agenda item IV

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Godwin LAI
Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education)
Education Bureau

Mrs Gloria LI
Principal Education Officer (Special Education)
Education Bureau

Agenda item V

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Kasper NG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)
Education Bureau

The Open University of Hong Kong

Professor Reggie KWAN
Provost

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

Staff in attendance : Miss Wincy LO
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Rachel WONG
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)506/20-21(01) -- Information paper provided by the Education Bureau on the final report on School-based Professional Support Programmes financed by the Education Development Fund)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21 -- List of follow-up actions)

2. Members agreed that the following items would be discussed at the next regular meeting on 30 March 2021 at 4:30 pm:

(a) The funding mechanism of the University Grants Committee ("UGC") and the Research Grants Council; and

(b) 8097EB – In-situ redevelopment of Wa Ying College at 8 Sheung Wo Street, Kowloon.

3. The Chairman reminded members that the Panel on Health Services and the Panel on Education would hold a joint meeting on 5 March 2021 at 2:30 pm to discuss the enhancement of healthcare teaching facilities of UGC-funded universities.

III. Review of the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320)

(LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(02) -- Background brief on the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

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Briefing by the Administration

4. The Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the legislative amendment proposals on the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(01)].

Discussion

Coverage of the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) regime

5. The Chairman noted that the Hong Kong College of Technology was not registered under the existing Cap. 320 and sought clarification on whether it should be registered under the revamped Cap. 320.

6. SED advised that some institutions offering self-financing sub-degree and degree programmes were not currently registered under Cap. 320. For example, institutions offering sub-degree programmes (but not degree programmes) might be registered under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279). At present, 11 degree-awarding institutions were registered under Cap. 320 while six post-secondary institutions were registered under Cap. 279. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education ("Task Force"), the revamped Cap. 320 should cover all institutions providing self-financing programmes at the sub-degree and degree levels, including the self-financing arms of publicly-funded institutions and institutions registered under Cap. 279, with a view to providing for a unified regulatory framework. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide the list of institutions that should be registered under the revamped Cap. 320.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)658/20-21(01) on 18 March 2021.)

Governance and management of post-secondary colleges

7. The Deputy Chairman noted the Administration's proposal to repeal section 5 of the Post Secondary Colleges Regulations (Cap. 320A) regarding the requirements on dangerous experiments and equipment. In view of the vandalism of laboratories and loss of chemicals in universities during the social incidents in 2019, she enquired whether section 5 was proposed to be repealed because there would be substituted provisions to better ensure the safety of the premises of the post-secondary colleges ("Colleges").

8. SED advised that, in pursuance of the Task Force's recommendations, the revamped Cap. 320 would be updated in tandem with the academic and institutional governance expected of a modern higher education institution, while certain obsolete or overly prescriptive requirements (including those concerning

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dangerous experiments and equipment) would be repealed. Despite the repeal of these provisions, the Colleges still had the responsibility to abide by the law and properly manage their campuses, including the use of dangerous equipment and laboratories. Hence, the overall regulation on the Colleges in these aspects would not be relaxed.

9. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed reservation about the Administration's proposal of revamping Cap. 320 to be an "enabling" ordinance. In her view, the Education Bureau ("EDB") had a regulatory role in ensuring the quality of both the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary sectors. However, an "enabling" ordinance was meant to empower the Colleges to carry out their functions and activities with less controls and constraints. She enquired about the reasons for streamlining the governance structure of the Colleges from a four-tier structure to a two-tier structure, deleting the requirement for the Permanent Secretary for Education ("PSED") to keep the register of teachers in Colleges, and removing the requirement of seeking PSED's approval for establishing institutes or departments of research or special studies.

10. SED explained that, in pursuance of the Task Force's recommendations, EDB had made reference to comparable provisions in the laws governing UGC-funded universities when reviewing Cap. 320. For instance, the "empowering" section only conferred powers for the Colleges to carry out basic functions or activities integral to their day-to-day operations, which were similar to those enjoyed by the UGC-funded universities. The rationalisation of the governance structure of the Colleges from four tiers to two tiers was proposed with reference to the prevailing governance structure of the UGC-funded universities. Nevertheless, the Colleges had the flexibility to establish additional non-statutory bodies in their governance structure. As regards academic research, EDB considered that the Colleges should enjoy academic freedom and institutional autonomy to conduct research, as with the UGC-funded universities, which would be conducive to their academic development and the enhancement of the quality of self-financing post-secondary education. That said, any academic and research activities conducted by the Colleges had to abide by the law. The proposed amendments aimed to support and facilitate the development of self-financing post-secondary institutions, while ensuring an appropriate level of transparency and accountability in their operations. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan did not subscribe to SED's response and opined that it would be difficult for the Administration to tighten up the control of Colleges thereafter.

11. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the promulgation of the National Security Law ("NSL") had been taken into account during the review of Cap. 320, so as to ensure the effective promotion of national security education in schools and universities, as stipulated in Articles 9 and 10 of the legislation. Also, as NSL had been enacted for some time, she was concerned about the progress of implementing national security education in the post-secondary education sector.

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12. SED advised that since the enactment of NSL, EDB had been discussing with UGC-funded universities the legal responsibilities of and public expectations on universities in the implementation of NSL, while respecting institutional autonomy. EDB understood that the universities had taken steps to enhance campus management and incorporate national security education in the curriculum, having regard to the circumstances of each university. More substantive measures were expected to be implemented in the next academic year. EDB would also work with the self-financing post-secondary education institutions in ensuring compliance with NSL requirements.

Self-financing post-secondary programmes

13. Mr Vincent CHENG relayed some parents' complaints about the quality of the programmes offered and high programme fees charged by self-financing post-secondary institutions. In his view, the revamped Cap. 320 must assure that the quality of self-financing programmes could meet public expectations. Moreover, despite the large manpower demand for elevator and piping engineering, etc., the Colleges mainly offered programmes in arts and social science such as social work, and there was an overlap of programmes offered by different Colleges. The Administration might consider making reference to the success of Finland in providing higher education pathways to students interested in pursuing vocationally-oriented studies.

14. Mrs Regina IP shared Mr Vincent CHENG's concern that some Colleges provided low-cost and easily replicated programmes. She opined that the self-financing post-secondary sector was overgrown and the quality of different Colleges varied. Some Colleges only offered programmes that could easily obtain accreditation from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications ("HKCAAVQ"), such as programmes in business, communications, digital marketing and social work. As a result, there was an oversupply of graduates in these disciplines, without benefitting industries with manpower shortage. There was a need for the Administration to regulate the self-financing sector with a view to offering high-quality programmes and programmes that were able to facilitate students in entering the employment market. Hence, she expressed support to the Administration's proposal of providing a unified regulatory framework for all self-financing post-secondary institutions.

15. SED shared members' view that the quality of self-financing programmes should be further enhanced so as to ensure the provision of quality education for all students. He advised that EDB had launched a pilot project on the development of applied degrees, as a part of its strategy to promote vocational and professional education and training, with a view to providing multiple and flexible education pathways for young people with different aspirations and abilities.

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16. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan enquired about the rationale for the proposed delegation of the approving authority for a College to award degrees from the Chief Executive in Council ("CE-in-C") to PSED, such as whether it was proposed alongside EDB's new role in fostering strategic co-ordination among self-financing institutions.

17. SED explained that the Task Force recommended that EDB should foster strategic co-ordination among self-financing institutions and help them develop their distinct niche areas. In this connection, EDB had updated its procedures for processing applications to award degrees, under which EDB would provide comments on the Colleges' new degree proposals before the Colleges sought accreditation from HKCAAVQ, having regard to factors including the manpower needs of the relevant sectors and the strategic positioning of the Colleges, etc. In the light of EDB's enhanced role in fostering strategic co-ordination, it was suggested that the authority to approve awards of degrees be delegated to PSED. It was also worth noting that CE-in-C's approval would still be required to register a College with a name that contained the word "University", or the Chinese words "Tai Hok".

Cancellation of registration of post-secondary colleges

18. The Chairman pointed out that some self-financing institutions/programmes were under-enrolled and enquired whether the declining candidature for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination would pose a further challenge for the Colleges. She then sought further details regarding cancellation of registration of the Colleges, including the criteria for assessing the performance of the Colleges, measures taken by the Administration to monitor the quality of the Colleges, circumstances under which an institution would be de-registered, and whether any institutions had been de-registered due to poor performance, insufficient student enrolment, etc.

19. SED advised that the number of secondary school graduates was projected to reach the trough in the 2022-2023 school year. EDB had kept the Colleges informed of the demographic trends and advised them to consolidate their developments as appropriate. As regards the quality assurance of the Colleges, programmes offered by the Colleges were currently subject to the external quality assurance and accreditation by HKCAAVQ. Under the revamped Cap. 320, the Colleges would also be required to go through a Periodic Institutional Review by HKCAAVQ to demonstrate their institutional competency in offering sub-degree and/or degree programmes. Under the enhanced de-registration mechanism, when a College failed to comply with the registration requirements under the revamped Cap. 320, such as when its development and institutional capabilities fell short of its plans and prescribed standards after a reasonably long trial period, PSED could request the concerned College to provide explanations and remedies. If the College could not provide

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explanations and remedies to the satisfaction of PSED within a reasonable period of time, PSED might cancel the registration of that College.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)658/20-21(01) on 18 March 2021.)

20. Mrs Regina IP opined that as some self-financing post-secondary institutions had received substantial public funding, she considered there was a need to de-register those institutions with low student enrollment under the revamped Cap. 320. She also reminded EDB to provide support to students of the de-registered institutions such as informing the students of de-registration arrangements as early as possible.

21. SED explained that the Government did not provide recurrent financial assistance for the Colleges, given their self-financing nature. Instead, the Government had implemented a host of non-recurrent measures to support the self-financing institutions, such as the Land Grant Scheme and the Start-up Loan Scheme, and provide subsidies for their students, including the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduates Studies in Hong Kong ("NMTSS") and the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors. In general, applications from the self-financing institutions under the support schemes were assessed on a meritorious basis, having regard to their respective objectives, scope, and selection criteria. The Chairman and Mrs Regina IP requested the Administration to provide information on the consideration factors for providing financial assistance to the self-financing post-secondary sector.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)658/20-21(01) on 18 March 2021.)

22. Noting that the Colleges were required to attain and maintain an Institutional Review status from HKCAAVQ, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan sought details of the quality assurance standards and practices of HKCAAVQ and enquired whether a programme would be cancelled if it failed to meet the requirements of HKCAAVQ. Deputy Secretary for Education (1) explained that HKCAAVQ adopted a Four-Stage Quality Assurance Process to accredit the institutions and their learning programmes under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework. HKCAAVQ also maintained close liaison with the Quality Assurance Council under UGC to ensure that the quality assurance standards and practices applicable to the self-financing sector were comparable to those of the publicly-funded sector. HKCAAVQ also underwent regular external reviews and benchmarking by renowned quality assurance agencies to ensure that their quality assurance standards and practices were recognized internationally.

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Financial support for self-financing post-secondary education institutions

23. Mr Tommy CHEUNG opined that the Administration's support tended to tilt against the community colleges established by the UGC-funded universities. He pointed out that those community colleges had been providing quality education services, but were not eligible for financial assistance from the Government. For instance, their students were not eligible for NMTSS. On the contrary, financial support measures were provided to some Colleges that experienced poor student enrolment and deficit over the years. In his view, this arrangement might somehow discourage the provision of quality education. Mrs Regina IP shared a similar view with Mr CHEUNG and commented that the community colleges set up under the UGC-funded universities should not be neglected and public resources should be allocated to the right place.

24. SED noted their concern and advised that upon the revamp of Cap. 320, all operators of self-financed programmes, including the self-financing arms of publicly-funded institutions, would have to come under the unified regulatory framework of Cap. 320, with a view to providing a level-playing field in support of the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector. Upon their registration under Cap. 320, these self-financing arms would become eligible for various Government support measures for the sector.

Summing up

25. The Chairman concluded that some members had expressed reservation on the proposed legislative amendments to Cap. 320 and asked the Administration to follow up on members' requests, including stepping up EDB's monitoring of the Colleges, enhancing the quality of self-financing post-secondary institutions/programmes and ensuring that self-financing post-secondary programmes were able to meet the needs of various industries.

IV. Educational and boarding services for students provided by special schools

(LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

26. The Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the latest situation of the educational and boarding services provided for students by aided special schools ("special schools"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(03)].

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Discussion

Support for special school leavers

27. Mr LAU Kwok-fan expressed support to the Administration's effort in improving the services of special schools. He pointed out that some special school leavers had to wait for a long time for residential care services and some were unable to find a job amid the COVID-19 pandemic. He enquired whether support measures were provided for special school students upon leaving schools.

28. US(Ed) responded that special school students normally left schools at the age of 18 upon completion of Secondary Six, and students with genuine needs could apply for extension of stay. Special schools in general would follow up with school leavers for two years after they had left schools, including keeping track of the school leavers' adjustment to daily lives, and referring the school leavers in need to the relevant organizations for support services. On employment, special schools had all along been helping their students plan and apply for post-school placement in accordance with their interests, capabilities and needs. EDB, the Vocational Training Council, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and the Hong Kong Special Schools Council would meet annually to share the latest development of various post-school services and relevant information, with a view to equipping special schools for applying for appropriate post-school services for students.

29. The Chairman pointed out that after leaving special schools, some parents and their children had difficulty in getting along with the new social workers who followed up post-school services. As a result, special school leavers continued to rely on the school social workers, imposing a heavy burden on school personnel. Also, families of some special school leavers had great pressure in taking care of the leavers at home and led to tragedies. She suggested that the special schools should early commence planning the post-school transition for students who would complete schooling to ensure a smooth transition.

30. US(Ed) responded that EDB had stepped up its cooperation with SWD to provide training for the staff of special schools to enhance their professional competence in managing the boarding sections and effectiveness in taking care of boarders, including identification and awareness of high-risk cases and provision of appropriate support to them. Such training would also enable the staff to get hold of the latest information about post-school services for special school students in a more comprehensive manner. Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education) ("PAS(SE)") supplemented that when students reached the age of 15, special schools would discuss with their parents the post-school arrangements. Relevant district support centres for persons with disabilities ("DSCs") and integrated family service centres ("IFSCs") subvented by SWD would be

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involved in preparing a smooth transition. Students would join the activities of DSCs/IFSCs with a view to familiarizing themselves with the social workers of DSCs/IFSCs, who may take over their cases in the future. In addition, special schools were encouraged to join the District Co-ordinating Committee on Rehabilitation Service of their respective districts so as to broaden their network in engaging community support.

Boarding service

31. While giving recognition to EDB's work in providing special school services, Mr Vincent CHENG expressed concern about the adequacy of boarding places in special schools. He enquired about the number of students with severe intellectual disability ("ID") awaiting boarding places and the average waiting time.

32. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan sought details on the longest and average waiting time for a boarding place for children with moderate ID. She then pointed out that according to the Director of Audit's Report No. 73, while 26 students were waiting for seven-day boarding service, there were 40 vacant five-day boarding places. She enquired whether five-day and seven-day boarding places would be reallocated to meet the demand.

33. US(Ed) advised that as at September 2020, there were 125 students with moderate ID and 11 students with severe ID on the waiting list for boarding service. To meet the demand, additional boarding places would be available in the coming few years, including 60 places in Tung Chung, 60 in Fanling and 80 in Kowloon Tong. Together with the existing 395 moderate ID boarding places, it was anticipated that all students with moderate ID on the waiting list would be provided with boarding places by the 2027-2028 school year. PAS(SE) supplemented that the waiting time for boarding places would be affected by various factors, such as parents' preference over five-day and seven-day boarding services, parents' choice of schools, etc. Hence, it was difficult to generalize an average waiting time.

34. The Chairman enquired about the investigation progress of the suspected maltreatment case in the boarding section of a special school in Tai Po and urged EDB to undertake more measures to monitor the quality of operations of boarding sections of special schools. US(Ed) advised that special schools and their boarding sections should comply with the rules and regulations under the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations, other related ordinances and the relevant Codes of Aid. Regarding the case in question, EDB had visited the school concerned and met with parents' representatives to understand the incident. Professional advice and training on handling students with severe emotional and behavioural problems were provided to the staff of the boarding section. Also, the school concerned had met with the parents to explain the incident, issued a

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statement on its website to clarify the incident details, and recruited extra number of supporting staff in the boarding section. Besides, the school sponsoring body had set up an investigation committee to investigate the incident in details and the report was under compilation.

Special school teachers

35. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan noted that the turnover rate of special school teachers was about 8.5% in 2019 and asked whether measures had been taken by EDB to reduce the turnover and attract new teachers to work in special schools. The Chairman enquired whether EDB would consider providing a grant and career ladder to special school teachers in order to retain and attract manpower. She also relayed the concerns of the special schools that the 240 training hours in Training Course for Special School Teachers ("TCSST") should include practical training sessions and that without supply teachers, schools had difficulties in releasing teachers to attend the training. She urged EDB to provide schools with relevant assistance such as supply teacher grant.

36. US(Ed) advised that the turnover rate of special school teachers had dropped from 8.5% in 2018-2019 to most recently 5.3% and the future turnover rate was expected to remain stable. In fact, the high turnover rate in 2018-2019 was owing to the creation of additional teaching posts in ordinary and special schools for the purpose of relieving manpower shortage. Given the provision of additional teaching posts, teacher-to-class ratio was enhanced, teachers' workload was lessened and more opportunities for promotion were provided. Moreover, to alleviate the pressure of special school teachers, manpower resources in special schools had been enhanced and support to special school teachers had been strengthened. For instance, EDB had been providing TCSST, a 240-hour training course specifically designed for the professional needs of special school teachers. Special schools could apply for reimbursement of the salaries of the supply teachers arising from study leave of their teachers attending TCSST.

Support measures for special schools

37. Mr Vincent CHENG enquired whether COVID-19 testing services would be provided to the staff and boarders of special schools on a regular basis, and whether they would be included in the vaccination priority groups. US(Ed) advised that COVID-19 testing services were provided to the boarding sections of special schools every three weeks. As regards vaccination, the Government would identify priority groups by taking into account the supply situation of the vaccines, risk level of various groups, etc. EDB had reflected the needs of special schools to the relevant bureau/departments and would keep in view the situation of the pandemic and vaccination arrangement.

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38. The Chairman urged EDB to strive for the inclusion of staff and students of boarding sections into the vaccination priority groups. She also relayed the request of some parents that there should be space for students' isolation in the boarding sections amid the COVID-19, in particular for boarders who returned to schools after holidays. US(Ed) advised that special schools could use the existing rooms for isolation.

39. Mrs Regina IP noted that the Administration had been improving the education quality of special schools by increasing additional specialist staff and improving the staff provision of boarding services, such as upgrading the ranks of occupational therapist and physiotherapist, creating a nursing officer rank and giving flexibility to schools to appoint nurses with psychiatric training. She was concerned whether post-secondary education institutions could offer sufficient programmes for training up these specialist staff. The Chairman shared similar concern. US(Ed) advised that EDB would keep in view the demand for relevant programmes and closely communicate with the relevant bureaux and the post-secondary education sector for the purpose of providing sufficient training programmes to meet the increasing manpower demand.

40. Mrs Regina IP pointed out that the premises of the Rhenish Church Grace School (a special school in Wong Tai Sin) was aged and asked whether EDB would consider allocating resources for improving its facilities. US(Ed) advised that EDB was liaising with the school, with a view to coming up a feasible improvement works plan given the site limitation.

V. Retitling of The Open University of Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

41. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the legislative proposal to amend The Open University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1145) in order to change the Chinese and English titles of The Open University of Hong Kong ("OUHK") to "香港都會大學" and "Hong Kong Metropolitan University" ("HKMU") respectively. Details of the briefing were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)573/20-21(04)]. Provost, OUHK then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the background of the retitling.

(Post-meeting note: The PowerPoint presentation materials were issued to members via LC Paper No. CB(4)596/20-21(01) on 5 March 2021.)

42. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed support to the retitling of OUHK. Noting the Working Group on University Title Review had considered that the existing

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title of OUHK would affect the chances for the university in securing donations and sponsorships, Ms YUNG sought further information in this regard. Provost, OUHK advised that while donations and sponsorships had not been affected so far, different stakeholders had reflected that the misperception of OUHK as mainly a distance learning institution offering part-time programmes had posed challenges and hindrance to its further development. For instance, OUHK's cooperation in research and scholarly activities with other universities was hindered. Some international schools rejected OUHK's offer to conduct admissions talks for their students, thereby affecting OUHK's student recruitment.

43. The Chairman expressed concern that OUHK might, after the retitling, deviate from its core mission of making quality and flexible further education opportunities available to working adults and only put efforts in research to compete with other universities for funding allocations, thereby losing sight of teaching and nurturing students. Provost, OUHK advised that OUHK was aware of its unique positioning and role in the higher education sector in Hong Kong, and would continue to provide open and flexible learning after the retitling as its core business. As a teaching university, OUHK focused on equipping students with the requisite knowledge and skills for employment. Research would be conducted to complement quality teaching.

44. Mr Vincent CHENG urged OUHK to, after the retitling, further secure its good reputation and uphold its mission of providing open and flexible quality education and nurturing quality students. Moreover, he asked how OUHK would facilitate the implementation of the Government's initiative in encouraging young people to pursue careers in the Greater Bay Area. Provost, OUHK responded that OUHK would strive to instil in its students national identity and global perspectives. Students of designated programmes were required to take part in the Global Immersion Programme, which included study tours and internships in global destinations including the Greater Bay Area, to prepare themselves for the challenges in the ever-changing global workplace. In addition, the development of OUHK (Zhaoqing) would provide an excellent platform for stepping up related efforts in the Greater Bay Area.

(At about 12:45 pm, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the meeting would be extended for 15 minutes to 1:00 pm.)

45. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan sought further information on the proposed OUHK (Zhaoqing) development in the Greater Bay Area, including the progress of the development, programmes to be offered and targeted students. Provost, OUHK advised that OUHK (Zhaoqing) was a joint establishment of OUHK with the Zhaoqing Municipal Government and Zhaoqing University. The three parties were working closely together and had submitted the application to the Ministry of Education for approval. Recently, the three parties met with the Ministry to discuss the application and provided supplementary information for the Ministry's

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consideration. It was expected that approval would be granted soon. Upon approval, OUHK (Zhaoqing) would initially offer applied and professional programmes in its niche areas, such as business management, engineering and applied science, etc. OUHK (Zhaoqing) would benefit both local and Mainland students. As there was no hostel within the campus of OUHK, OUHK students are encouraged to spend a semester or a year to study at OUHK (Zhaoqing) to experience hostel life.

46. The Chairman suggested that OUHK (Zhaoqing) should consider offering programmes to complement those offered by the local universities in Zhaoqing and to meet the educational needs of the residents of the "Hong Kong Town" in Zhaoqing.

47. The Chairman and Mr Vincent CHENG enquired whether the past graduates of OUHK could use the title of HKMU in their curriculum vitae. Provost, OUHK responded in the affirmative and advised that all graduates could apply for a certificate confirming the change of university title upon the completion of the formalities.

48. The Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's plan to introduce the Bill into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2021.

VI. Any other business

49. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:51 pm.