

# THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## SENATE

### Faculty Deanship

---

#### **BACKGROUND**

1. The University Council, as a responsible governing body, periodically engages in self-reflection on various aspects of university governance, to ensure that the governance structure keeps pace with the needs of modern society and aligns with best practices in leading universities around the world. The University Strategic Plan adopted in February 2006 recommended that the Council should take the further review of governance as a matter of priority over the next year (section II, para. 7.1).

#### **The Sutherland Report: need to review governance**

2. The current round of governance review can be traced to the Sutherland Report, adopted by The University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong in March 2002, as the roadmap for the development of higher education in Hong Kong. The Sutherland Report (Chapter 3) pointed to the need for each university to critically examine its governance and management structures to ascertain whether they are fit for the purpose of a university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The relevant recommendations of the Sutherland Report have been accepted by the Hong Kong SAR Government, and the Legislative Council brief submitted by the Administration states

*"We support the UGC's recommendation that university councils should review their governance structures to ensure 'fitness for purpose', drawing on the principles and international good practice set out in the review report."*

3. The Sutherland Report can be found at

<http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/ugc/publication/report/her/herreport.pdf>.

#### **The CUHK Task Force on University Governance**

4. The CUHK Council appointed a Task Force on University Governance in May 2002 to recommend how CUHK might address the governance and management issues raised by the Sutherland Report. The Task Force after a thorough review submitted an Interim Report (in May 2003) and a Second Report (in June 2005) to the Council. The Council has accepted these Reports and their recommendations. However, a number of issues remain to be further discussed and resolved.

#### **The Panel of External Experts**

5. In order that the University may benefit from the best practices in other major universities as well as the experience and advice of eminent leaders of universities

worldwide, the Council's Task Force on University Governance invited a Panel of External Experts to advise the Task Force and through it, the Council, on various matters related to the governance and management of CUHK.

6. The Panel consulted both by telephone and by meeting in Hong Kong on 25/26 March 2006. Additionally all Panel members spent time either before or after the meeting visiting the campus and holding discussions with members of the university community, including staff, students and alumni. The Panel has made a number of suggestions to the Task Force for the latter's consideration.

#### **Phase One Recommendations from the Task Force**

7. In view of the complexities of the issues involved, the Task Force has decided to proceed in several phases. In the first phase, the Task Force will make recommendations to the University Council on Faculty Deanship. In the next phases, the Task Force will address other issues including the composition of the Council, the Senate, the Faculty Board, and where appropriate also their terms of reference, as well as governance issues related to the senior management.
8. Before the Task Force makes its formal recommendations to the Council, the views of the Senate are sought on the proposal outlined below.

### **DEANSHIP: PRESENT SITUATION AND REASONS FOR CHANGE**

#### **Present Situation**

9. At present, Statute 15 of the University Ordinance provides that the Dean of any Faculty shall be elected and shall serve for a term of three years, for a maximum of three consecutive terms. For a number of reasons explained below, the election process is no longer considered appropriate.

#### **The Sutherland Report on Deanship**

10. The University is duty-bound to take cognizance of the Sutherland Report (2002), which has been accepted by UGC and the Government as the policy for the entire higher education sector in Hong Kong. The Sutherland Report asks the institutions to move to a system of appointed Deans:

*"It will therefore be for the Head of Institution to make recommendations upon the appointment of, and delegation of powers and responsibilities to, senior academic leaders. International practice suggests that procedures should be devised for appointing rather than electing Deans and related senior budget holders, and that accountability and management lines should run to individuals rather than committees."*

#### **Recommendations of the Panel of External Experts**

11. The Panel of External Experts, which consists of:

Professor Gerhard Casper (Chair)  
President Emeritus of Stanford University, United States of America  
Peter and Helen Bing Professor in Undergraduate Education at Stanford University,  
United States of America

The Rt. Hon. Lord Oxburgh (Vice-Chair)  
Formerly Rector of the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine,  
United Kingdom  
Former member of the University Grants Committee of Hong Kong

Professor Alison Richard  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom  
Formerly Provost of Yale University, United States of America

Professor Henry T. Yang  
Chancellor, University of California, Santa Barbara, United States of America  
Formerly Neil A. Armstrong Distinguished Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics  
at Purdue University, United States of America

has recommended that CUHK should move over to a system whereby full-time Deans are appointed after a proper search process:

*"Although the role of Dean varies to some extent among the leading universities of the world, it is most usual for Deans to be appointed as full-time members of the senior administration. This model appears to us to be appropriate in the case of CUHK and we recommend that Deans should be full-time appointments with an overarching responsibility for ensuring the well-being of all the departments in their Faculties. However, in order to do this they should have resources that they can deploy at their discretion to meet special needs. This would allow the Deans to take on a more proactive role and should reduce the burden that is at present carried by the Pro-Vice-Chancellors. We furthermore recommend that the University should adopt a different arrangement for the selection of Deans. However, one of the strengths of the present elective system is that those who become Dean carry a wide measure of support among their colleagues. We believe that this should not be lost and that future selections should be made only after an extensive open search process.*

*We recommend the following procedure for the appointment of Deans. A search committee will be formed to advise on the appointment of each Dean. The composition of the search committee should be subject to the approval of the Senate and the Council. The search committee should be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor's nominee. In the interests of transparency and parity of standards across the University the Committee should include in addition to senior members from the same Faculty at least one member of another Faculty. The composition of the Committee should be published and it should invite comments and suggestions from any interested party. The Committee should be free to consider candidates from both within and outside the University. In the case of external candidates, their academic standing should be such that they would be appropriate for an academic appointment within the relevant university*

*department. Appointments should in the first instance be for five years with a performance review to be completed by the end of the penultimate year of the appointment. Under normal circumstances we would expect individuals to serve for a second term. Arrangements such as these have been found to be satisfactory in many major universities around the world."*

#### **Views of the Task Force**

12. The above recommendation has been endorsed by the Task Force on University Governance. While agreeing with these principles, the Task Force nevertheless feels that operational details should take into account the local context and history, and therefore wishes to consult the Senate on the proposal before the recommendations are submitted to the Council for decision.

#### **Rationale for Change**

13. The rationale in support of full-time appointment after a proper search process for Faculty Deanship are:
  - (a) Deans will have clearer responsibilities and accountability lines.
  - (b) They can focus more on longer-term strategic planning, resource allocation and management roles.
  - (c) They will have a clearer identity as a member of the senior management team of the University.
  - (d) There will be devolution of authority and responsibility (including budgetary and personnel-related functions) to the Faculty Deans.
  - (e) They will have more resources at their discretion to meet special needs within their respective Faculties.
  - (f) There will not be any required teaching or research load for the full-time Faculty Deans.
  - (g) They will not be subject to conflict of interest and conflict of commitment in discharging their management responsibilities.

#### **Practice in Other Institutions**

14. Of the eight UGC institutions in Hong Kong, all except CUHK have adopted a system whereby Deans are appointed after a search process. Six of these have adopted such a system from inception, whereas HKU moved to a search process as a result of a reform subsequent to the Sutherland Report implemented in 2003.
15. Attachment 1 summarizes the practice in HKU and HKUST, as well as in a number of overseas institutions that CUHK can regard as peers. Although details vary, the typical process is for an open and transparent search followed by appointment by the head of the institution or by the governing body.

Not Enclosed

## **THE PROPOSAL OF THE TASK FORCE**

16. In the light of

- (a) the Sutherland Report,
- (b) the views of UGC and the Government,
- (c) the advice tendered by the Panel of External Experts, and
- (d) the practice in other universities including sister institutions in Hong Kong,

the Task Force on University Governance is prepared to recommend to the University Council that Faculty Deans should be appointed after a proper and transparent open search process involving significant input from the teachers of the Faculty concerned, to serve on a full-time basis (unless the appointee concerned prefers a concurrent appointment) as the chief academic and administrative officer of the Faculty. It will therefore be proposed that Statute 15 of The Chinese University Ordinance should be amended to give effect to the new mode of appointment (Attachment 2).

Not Enclosed

17. Parallel to the statutory amendment incorporating these main elements of the proposal, the University Council will consider detailed operational guidelines for the selection and appointment. It is thought that these guidelines should include such particulars as outlined in paragraphs 18-24 below.

### **Search Committee**

18. The Search Committee shall include a majority of members elected by the related Faculty Board, and the composition of the Search Committee shall be confirmed by the Senate and approved by the Council. The Search Committee will make such consultations as necessary and come up with nominations for consideration by the University. If an external candidate is recommended, (s)he will need to go through the usual procedure for an academic appointment as well.

### **Appointment**

19. The Council upon the advice of the Vice-Chancellor will make the appointment. Deans shall normally serve on a full-time basis (unless the appointee concerned prefers a concurrent appointment); the cost of appointment shall be borne by a central budget rather than the Faculty. The term of office will normally be five years, which can be renewed for a second five-year term. (Prior service as an elected Faculty Dean for whatever length of time does not affect the eligibility for appointment as a Faculty Dean under the new procedure.) Immediately after completion of service as full-time Dean and upon reversion to an academic position, a suitable period of paid sabbatical leave may be granted to allow the appointee to resume scholarly pursuits. In case the associated cost of academic appointment cannot be immediately absorbed by the teaching unit concerned, it will in the interim be also borne centrally.

### **Transitional Arrangements**

20. Upon amendment of Statutes, current elected Deans will serve out their terms, and will be eligible for further appointment under the new mode (irrespective of the number of consecutive terms already served as elected Dean).

### **Devolution of Authority and Responsibilities**

21. Full-time Deans will be in a position to assume more leadership and administrative responsibilities in their Faculties, and a series of related measures will have to be considered to devolve more authority, including budgetary authority, to each Faculty, to be exercised by the Dean and/or relevant committees.
22. It is expected that Faculty Deans appointed after a search process will be asked to take on a broader range of responsibilities, including the following:
  - (a) To recommend appointments of Department Chairs after broad consultation with individual members of the departments concerned.
  - (b) To take broad charge of the Faculty processes for appointment and pay review, with approval by the University simplified and reduced principally to substantiation, senior, and exceptional cases.
  - (c) To have authority over a portion of any additional budgetary resources that may be available to the Faculty (e.g., upon reversion to a four-year curriculum) in order to promote strategic developments in the Faculty.
23. Mechanism will be in place for providing proper checks and balances to address any grievances related to the management of the Faculty, e.g., direct appeal to the Vice-Chancellor.

### **Implementation**

24. These changes in administrative procedure will need to be implemented in phases after the Faculty Deans have been appointed through a search process. In addition to Statutory Amendment defining the new process in the broadest terms, the University will need to draw up detailed guidelines and procedures in relation to the search and the responsibilities. An Advisory Group on Implementation will be set up to provide advice to the Vice-Chancellor on these matters. The Group will include all current Faculty Deans and the Director, School of Law.

### **VIEWS SOUGHT**

25. The Senate is requested to note these proposals to be put to the University Council, to report on the proposed amendment of Statute 15, and in particular to comment on the following:
  - (a) the composition of the Search Committee
  - (b) the length of the term of the Faculty Deanship

- (c) the change to a full-time appointment
- (d) the source of funding for Faculty Deanship
- (e) a period of sabbatical after service as full-time Dean

Comments (if any) should be forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor for consideration by the Advisory Group.

4 December 2006