

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

An Updated Institutional Development Plan

Capturing the Challenge of Change: Detecting the Direction for Achieving Distinction

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Institutions of tertiary education have an obligation to be responsive to changing social needs. The challenges presented to Hong Kong by recent changes are far-reaching – socially, politically, economically and technologically. As the special administrative region faces its future, additional changes and needs are predictable – particularly those that are demographic, environmental, and information-related in nature.
- 1.2 The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), whose staff and students form part of Hong Kong's intelligentsia, will be expected to provide proactive leadership in helping the community to cope with, adjust to, and profit from conditions of dynamic change. Given that its fiscal resources are substantially drawn from the public purse, our University cannot adopt a passive, reactive role to the challenges being faced by Hong Kong. To do so would provide no assistance, much less leadership to its community, and allow significant opportunities for the University's own improvement and status to escape. Not unlike elite athletes whose greatest achievements are always accomplished when their competition and challenge are the greatest, the present and expected social upheavals offer to our University its greatest opportunity for achieving its greatest distinction.
- 1.3 Thus, our University finds it opportune to take stock of its mission and vision, and, in the light of predictable changes, to develop new strategic plans from which specific operational plans can be developed. These plans can be used to help our University, Hong Kong and China as a whole, not only to cope, but also to excel.

2. Our Mission

- 2.1 Our mission is :

To assist in the preservation, creation, application and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, research and public service in a comprehensive range of

disciplines, thereby serving the needs and enhancing the well-being of the citizens of, in order of priority, Hong Kong, China as a whole, and the wider world community.

- 2.2 Our mission is not qualified. It is neither conditional on available fiscal support nor constrained by time frames. During times of stability or dynamic change, the *raison d'être* of our University remains essentially the same. While changes will impact on its ability to accomplish the mission, our University recognizes that each of its members must contribute in all aspects if it is to be successful, particularly in less than ideal economic conditions.

3. Our Vision

- 3.1 Our vision is :

To be acknowledged locally, nationally and internationally as a first-class research university whose bilingual and bicultural dimensions of student education, scholarly output and contribution to the community consistently meet standards of excellence.

- 3.2 Since its inception in 1963, our University has adopted a plan of integrating Chinese and Western cultures. This has broadened the outlook of its programmes. Now, taking advantage of its unsurpassed achievements in Chinese-Western integration, it aims to become one of the world's most reputable comprehensive universities. Our University is committed to educating its students, through teaching, research and other scholarly activities, at standards which will meet the challenges presented by the new century.

4. Our Planning Philosophy

- 4.1 In face of change, our University has essentially two choices – to let the future take its course and strive to adjust to it, or to anticipate change and attempt to shape it. There is some historical evidence for CUHK's record of being proactive. Moreover, past efforts have proved to be both innovative and insightful: the first, but now not the only university to adopt bilingual and bicultural tertiary education in Hong Kong; the first, but now not the only university to develop a graduate school in Hong Kong; the first, but now not the only university to recognize the importance of a general education for all its students. CUHK's insights have been noticed by bodies other than Hong Kong's tertiary institutions. Many of the present policy initiatives of the Government of the Hong Kong SAR, such as IT, Chinese medicine, tourism and hospitality, environmental protection, entertainment and media and technological innovation, followed after CUHK had set on a course of research and development in these endeavours.

5. Our Assumptions

- 5.1 As we face the next decade, what are the reasonable assumptions concerning the future dynamics that will be the imperatives for change? We believe certain characteristics and needs of our future society, our future students, our faculty and our universities are in some measure predictable.
- 5.2 At the social level, we assume that China's and Asia's world-roles, both economic and cultural, will increase. Given the advantages gained from its historical context, we also assume that Hong Kong will therefore continue to capitalize on its Western and Eastern heritages; it will continue to serve as a catalyst and facilitator for synergistic exchanges between China and the West. The opportunity for it to do so successfully is predicated on Hong Kong's principal resource – people, and the future basis of economic growth here and elsewhere, which will become increasingly more dependent on knowledge.
- 5.3 We believe that in this world-wide knowledge-based economy, English will be the common language used; and its use will grow, spurred on by the influence of the Information Highway. Given this new technology's central role in both science and business, the use of English in these sectors will expand. Given Hong Kong's recent return to China, we also assume that the role of Putonghua will grow locally.
- 5.4 A most important feature of the development of the Internet will be the exponential increase of readily accessible information. The world's published material will be available in each home and for each person via user-friendly, cheaply acquired equipment. There will also be an avalanche of further information, in written and numeric form, that is largely unsubstantiated and therefore lacking in usefulness. Which information lacks evidence will be unknown to the typical and unsophisticated reader. Because this type of information will grow proportionally faster than knowledge, a dilemma will consequently emerge. We will have a community, whose economic viability and success is based on knowledge, being unable to cope with information overflow and to filter components that are based on evidence.
- 5.5 Increased globalization of information, communication and the economy will occur. However, the finite limit of fiscal resources will become an increasingly important policy parameter within Hong Kong. That is, the strategic advantages of cost-effectiveness learned in today's economic recession will not be soon forgotten. Accordingly public institutions of all types will be increasingly held accountable for their use of public money. Measurable outcomes of success will be expected more frequently. What goals and how they are achieved and what resource allocations are used to achieve the goals will be expected to be evident. The culture of service that has served the business community well will therefore become increasingly applicable to the public sector. These factors will combine with growing competing demands from public allocations, resulting in even more fiscal limits on tertiary education. Accordingly, universities' adoption of expensive high technology equipment for teaching and research, in order to fulfil their missions, will necessitate an increasing reliance on soft money.

- 5.6 In face of such likely fiscal constraints, universities will be under increasing pressure to set priorities, building on their strengths to remain viable and competitive, and students will opt to take advantage of the varying strengths of different universities. Increasing numbers of mid degree transfers will be made. Demands will increase for allowing credit recognition of courses taken at one institution for the purpose of completing degree requirements at another.
- 5.7 Distribution of expertise, economies of scale, restricted budgets will be imperatives for universities to become more interdependent. Research and development costs that exceed the public's ability to pay will add impetus for such cooperation.
- 5.8 Despite the fact that significant numbers of schools and their students have recently been excluded from an earlier English education, it would be unsafe to assume that the screening criteria used for selecting our youths into English and non-English schools has correctly separated the bright from the non-bright. A university's reputation and success largely rests on who are selected rather than how well they are educated. Thus, CUHK will have to face choices – of excluding bright applicants who are less bilingually competent, or changing its bilingual requirements, or introducing effective remedies for past lack of linguistic training.
- 5.9 Resulting from the drop in our local students' bilingual skills, there will be an increase in the diversity of the educational backgrounds of university students. This will be due to demographic changes such as an increased influx of people from mainland China and an increased enrolment of overseas post-graduates. The latter may represent a desired source of extra revenue as well as provide our existing student body with a better opportunity for a broader education.
- 5.10 Within this heterogeneity of student intake, an inevitable rise will occur in the proportions of students who expect their university education to prepare them for specific jobs. This will lead to an increase in the classic tension between goals of education and training. Universities will want to emphasize their long-term goals for students: personal development and independent learning skills; while more students will seek short-term job-oriented training. This heterogeneity in orientation and purpose will increase the need for universities to delineate their roles clearly if they are to be seen as being responsive to social needs.
- 5.11 Although changes in faculty demographics will not be as notable as those in student demographics, the aforementioned factors of restricted budgets, increased competition for students, changed learning needs of students, service culture and accountability will combine as imperatives for individual faculty members to change. The most significant role change needed will be the demand by students for more help in learning how to filter knowledge from information, i.e. to learn how to apply the rules of evidence for establishing knowledge. Accordingly, a teaching shift from content to process, from teacher-centred to student-centred learning will be needed. We predict this will not be an easy transition for existing staff, and assistance will have to be given to them if universities are to meet the students' demands and needs.

6. Our Goal

- 6.1 What then is our goal in the light of these expectations of changes? It must be to prepare our students to meet the new challenges of a dynamically, rapidly changing society. What then is the knowledge, and what are the skills and attitudes which are most likely to provide our students with the means to be competitive in such an environment?
- 6.2 We believe that the most competitive abilities that tertiary level students can acquire are the attributes of a commitment to life-long learning, an ability in self-learning, analytic reasoning, multilingual language skills and ethical behaviour. Life-long, self-learning skills are fundamental for coping with a knowledge base that is estimated to double every six years. Analytic skills are fundamental to distinguishing unsubstantiated information from knowledge, the latter buried in a mass of accessible information that grows even more quickly than knowledge. Bilingual skills in Chinese and English will no longer be enough, because IT literacy must now be added as a necessary linguistic skill if rules of evidence are to be acquired. Ethical standards must be recognized and valued because as knowledge and access to information grow, the opportunity for misuse of information and the ease of widely producing and disseminating misinformation will also grow.

7. Our Strategic Plan

- 7.1 To accomplish the above goal with today's economic constraints is difficult. How then should our overall strategy be developed to accomplish our mission and realize our vision?
- 7.2 First we must honour the heritage of the founding fathers of our University. To do so, we need to embrace change, not fear it; and we must manage change, not allow it to manage us.
- 7.3 Our assumptions of increased interdependence among universities and restricted budgets suggest that we should build for the future on our strengths, instead of prioritizing attempts to remedy our weaknesses. To implement this policy effectively, it will be necessary to link closely our strategic planning and resource allocation decisions. As we proceed through our strategic plan for the coming decade or so, we must also be prepared for mid-course corrections. Plans that are implemented but left unevaluated in terms of measured, desired outcomes are of unknown utility. We will therefore be a learning organization, in order to ensure that needed adjustments are known and made.

7.4 Within this overall context, our strategic plans are then as indicated below.

Strategy: we will	Operational Plan
1. Respond to social needs	a) by adjusting our present mix of courses, b) by introducing new courses and programmes. e.g. new study programmes – Hotel Management (1999) Chinese Medicine (1999)
2. Emphasize student-centred learning	a) by helping faculty to adopt new roles: - devote larger proportions of time to students, - shift from our past emphasis on what teachers wanted to teach to what students need to learn, - focus on student outcomes, - use appropriate teaching technologies, - accept our accountability for what student outcomes do occur.
3. Enhance language proficiency of students	a) by developing their information technology literacy (to at least minimally acceptable standards), b) by expanding language proficiency training in Chinese and English. e.g. prescribed IT competency/training targets for students (1999)
4. Upgrade physical infrastructure for teaching and learning	a) by improving existing facilities, b) by providing new facilities. e.g. new postgraduate hostels (1999) Dementia Centre at the Shatin Hospital for clinical service and research (1999) expanded canteen facilities new laboratory complex – high-risk laboratories new undergraduate hostels new concert hall new/renovated student centres Engineering Building (Phase II)
5. Strengthen continuous quality assurance programmes for faculty	a) by facilitating an overall enhancement to CUHK' s faculty complement - expand reward mechanisms for excellence in teaching, research and service, - provide assistance to faculty to improve and adjust teaching to evidence-based learning techniques, - create early retirement incentives, - require resignation of poor performers.

<p>6. Strengthen research activities of individuals and research groups</p>	<p>a) by upgrading the research infrastructure, b) by developing further reward mechanisms for excellent achievements in research, c) by creating targeted endowments in order to - supplement existing teaching and research support, - conduct product evaluation leading to technology transfer, d) by enhancing national and international collaboration</p> <p>e.g. strengthening/upgrading research infrastructure : new Marine Science Laboratory new R & D facilities in Area 39, Taipo Engineering Building (Phase II)</p> <p>enhancing national and international collaboration : Joint Centre for Intelligence Engineering (1999) Joint Laboratory for Plant Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (1999) Joint Research Centre for Biomedical Engineering (1999) Digital Library Initiative at CUHK (1999) Hong Kong Bioinformatics Centre – further expansion Joint Laboratory for GeoInformation Science – further expansion</p>
<p>7. Foster areas of excellence</p>	<p>a) by adopting better strategies - identify selective penetration, - differentiate the emphases being taken, b) by prioritizing these areas for infrastructural upgrading.</p> <p>e.g. proposed Institute of Chinese Medicine proposed teaching hotel proposed management training centre Science Park related R&D facilities/projects</p> <p>A complete list of our University’ s designated AoE is at Annex</p>
<p>8. Improve the cost-effectiveness within the University</p>	<p>a) by improving management efficiency - allocate funds based on performance, - expand mechanisms for performance appraisal, - require accountability, - conduct regular management efficiency reviews, - conduct internal audits, - embrace external audits.</p>
<p>9. Compensate for inadequate resources</p>	<p>a) by pursuing international competitive research funding, b) by developing technology transfer, c) by generating revenue from soft-funded teaching programmes, d) by targeting alumni and donors, e) by reallocating resources, - expand vertical cuts of programmes, - reduce/merge departments.</p>

8. Our Implementation of the Strategic Plan

- 8.1 To accomplish our mission and realize our vision it will be important for all members of our University to share in its institutional goal, and contribute to the development of its strategic and action plans as they are caused to evolve.
- 8.2 Our University therefore solicits from its faculty and other members their input and advice in order to achieve a common guide for managing changes. In doing so, we will have a more realistic expectation of successfully maintaining our University's record of innovation and insight, so as to meet the challenge of change, determine our strategic direction and continue to achieve distinction.

Re: 3rd Meeting (1998-99) of the Senate
7 April 1999

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

**List of Areas of Excellence (AoE)
(in alphabetical order)**

1. Asian Business Education and Research
2. Automation and Robotics
3. Cantonese in Research, Education and Creative Writing
4. Educational Development in China
5. Genomics and Bioinformatics
6. GeoInformation Science
7. Geriatrics and Gerontology
8. Hong Kong as the Financial Gateway to China
9. Hong Kong Public Policy Research
10. Information Technology
11. Internationalising Higher Education in Hong Kong
12. Materials Science and Technology
13. Molecular Genetics and Vision Epidemiology Eye Centre
14. Music East and West
15. Plant and Fungal Biotechnology
16. Research in Chinese Medicine (RICHME)
17. Sports Medicine for Health Promotion
18. Synthetic Chemistry
19. Telemedicine
20. The Hong Kong Centre for Asian Cancer Studies
21. The Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS)
22. The Institute of Mathematical Sciences
23. The Study of Chinese Religions and Christianity in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland
24. Universities Service Centre (USC) Enhancement