

Response from The Chinese University of Hong Kong to the Management Review Report

1. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is very pleased that the management practices at CUHK have been given very positive reassurance and high recognition in the UGC Review Panel's Report on the Management Review of the University.
2. The University is glad that the diversity of management practices among the local institutions has been examined in the context of their different missions, cultures and histories, and that many good management practices of CUHK have been identified and commended in the Report.

Strategic Direction

3. The long-term Institutional Development Plan of the University, presented to the Panel during its visit, contains well articulated statements on CUHK's mission and vision, its planning philosophy and goals, and its overall development strategies. It was updated as an outcome of a recent round of strategic planning exercises involving all levels of faculty members and representatives of student bodies. Endorsed by the Administrative and Planning Committee (AAPC) and the Senate for submission to the Council, this document will also form the blueprint of CUHK's development in the next triennium and beyond.
4. The University is glad that the Panel commended its efforts to involve relevant expertise from the industrial sector in the search for and development of new initiatives, and to take into full consideration government policies and UGC objectives in strategic planning. The Panel also commended CUHK on the clarity and participatory nature of its planning processes and the widespread ownership of its mission and strategic plan, which informs planning at the faculty and departmental levels. The University will continue to review and update this overall strategic plan on a regular basis in view of new opportunities and challenges. As suggested by the Panel, CUHK will seek to increase the range of external inputs, drawing on its close links with the government, business and the community.

Resource Allocation

5. The Panel commended CUHK on its resource allocation processes which are working well. Resource allocation at CUHK is performance-based, transparent, flexible and effective. The New Funding Model initiated by CUHK allows the University and the Faculties to top-slice funding to support strategic developments that are in tune with CUHK's overall strategy, and provides sufficient flexibility for budget holders to deploy their resources in an efficient and accountable manner. Proper training has also been provided to the budget holders.
6. As commended by the Panel, CUHK will, with a clear commitment to achieving value for money and making good use of opportunities to bring in external funds, continue to monitor

and further refine its funding methodology to adapt to the needs of new circumstances, and make an effort to maximize the potential of external funding sources.

7. The Panel also registered that CUHK's administrative cost is one of the lowest among all local institutions. CUHK takes pride in having maintained a very lean but very efficient management at the University which has been given full recognition by the Panel.
8. The Panel's concern for more flexibility in the allocation of space is also shared by the University. The University's Committee on Space Allocation, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, vets all space requests and sets criteria and priorities to ensure fair allocation of the scarce resources to meet many competing demands. The Campus Planning and Building Committee under the Council also plays an active role in the planning of long-term campus development to support new academic and research initiatives. However, without any buffer space, it is difficult for the University to meet all competing demands because approval of new space (and construction of new buildings) by UGC and the Government is on a short term incremental basis. There is often an unexpectedly long and variable time lag between the identification of space needs and the approval for commencement of construction, not to mention the completion of buildings. Following the Panel's suggestion, CUHK will review the allocation process and encourage greater flexibility in the allocation of space.

Implementation of Plans

9. The Panel commended CUHK on its processes to ensure the effective implementation of plans across the University, and on its efforts to develop clear procedures for monitoring progress with the support of an effective and participative infrastructure. Clear milestones and performance indicators, which have already been established in a number of units, will be developed across the University as recommended by the Panel.

Roles, Responsibilities and Training

10. CUHK is pleased to learn that the Panel was impressed with the overall calibre of its staff, their strong sense of identity with the University and their commitment to and understanding of their responsibilities. The Panel was also impressed by the clear leadership style of the Vice-Chancellor, his relationship with his staff, many of whom commented on his accessibility, and his ability to achieve a good balance between providing strong executive leadership management and maintaining a spirit of collegiality. The Panel also observed that CUHK's Council makes valuable inputs into strategic planning.
11. The University is also pleased that the Panel commended CUHK on the introduction of the enhanced developmental staff appraisal scheme, which provides a two-way communication channel between the University and the appointee concerned and feeds into related initiatives for human resources planning, re-deployment and development. The University has consolidated its on-going training efforts into an updated strategy with an updated policy and structure for training and development matters. With the new staff appraisal scheme

now in place, CUHK will be in a better position to build a stronger link between performance appraisals and training needs as envisaged by the Panel.

12. Looking into the future, the Panel is concerned that the increasing responsibilities and workload of elected Faculty Deans may be too heavy for concurrent appointments and the Deans may have increasing difficulty dealing with the inherent tension in such a system. The issue of elected versus appointed Deans, and concurrent versus full-time appointments has in fact been debated at the University. The current system of elected Deans at CUHK is the majority's preferred mode and this has been found by the Panel to be working well. The University will continue to keep the system under review, taking full note of the Panel's suggestion.
13. The University is delighted that the contributions of the Colleges as a unique feature of CUHK have been recognized and reaffirmed by the Panel. The Colleges and the University complement each other in offering a balanced and holistic education to our students, in delivering general education, and in providing counseling and pastoral care. Being smaller in size and each having its own tradition and spirit, the Colleges promote diversity without duplication of efforts. They help to foster a strong sense of belonging and fellowship within their respective community of academics, staff and students, which is important as the University expands and diversifies. The Colleges, through their network of trustees, alumni and friends, also help to enhance the fund-raising and networking functions of CUHK and generate considerable resources in the form of ideas, community support and financial income. The University takes pride in its collegiate system and considers it a special strength of CUHK.
14. CUHK has attached great importance to continuing education since its early days. Besides the School of Continuing Studies, which runs a dedicated town centre in Tsimshatsui, the professional Faculties/Schools (e.g. Accountancy, Business Administration, Engineering and Medicine) also offer professional development and continuing education programmes to meet the growing demand in Hong Kong and the nearby region. The observation of the Panel that there might be potential for conflict between the SCS and the Faculties have been positively addressed by the University. The University has made conscientious efforts to set strategic directions for these multifarious professional development and continuing education programmes, including the proper delineation of the roles of the SCS vis-à-vis other academic units of the University. An updated policy was adopted in February 1999 with inputs from all parties concerned including external members on the Advisory Board of Continuing Studies who are representatives of the industrial, business and professional community. Mechanisms are in place in the University to ensure synergy between the School and the academic departments over the offering of programmes, and to assist the SCS to concentrate on its niche in developing a more flexible mode of life-long education to take advantage of present and future opportunities. The University is in the process of making statutory amendment to provide for the inclusion of the Director of SCS as a full member of the Senate in accordance with the recommendations of the above-mentioned SCS Report. It will also consider how to ensure that the development of continuing education can be represented more adequately at the Administrative and Planning Committee.

Service Delivery

15. CUHK thanks the Panel for registering the service culture at CUHK, and in particular among its administrative units. The Panel also recognized the success of the internal reviews conducted by the Task Force on Management Efficiency, which has, as of today, completed the reviews of 11 major administrative units and achieved approximately 10% cost savings or productivity gains in all such units through re-engineering and reorganization. Performance indicators have also been set and benchmarking performed for those units. The University will consider the suggestions of the Panel to roll out the management efficiency reviews to include academic departments in future, and to step up efforts in benchmarking its performance against institutions both within and outside Hong Kong for continuous improvement.

Management Information and Systems

16. The Panel commended CUHK on its widespread and effective application of Information Technology (IT) across the University, and was pleased with the breadth of management information available to budget holders and staff in general and the efforts made to assess and address user requirements. The University is glad that the Panel also commended its IT Strategy Committee on having mapped out an over-arching competitive IT strategy for the University and identified key goals for the next five years, with contributions from all academic and administrative units. CUHK will build on this excellent start and continue to develop a coherent strategy for IT development for the benefit of its academic and administrative units as well as students and staff as they march into the 21st Century.

Vote of Thanks

17. It was indeed our pleasure to have worked closely with the Review Panel and the Consultants on the management review, and shared with them our experience and vision in developing CUHK into a top quality and efficient institution. The University's strong commitment to excellence and its proactive approach to meeting the needs of the Hong Kong community have been highly commended by the Review Panel. With its team of capable and dedicated staff, CUHK is confident that it will, as the Panel encourages it to do, build on its current achievements and develop an even stronger reputation which stretches beyond Hong Kong into the whole of China and further afield.
18. The University wishes to thank the Review Panel again for its valuable contribution and encouraging remarks. The University is fully aware that there is no room for complacency and will continue to strive for improvement. We also welcome more opportunities to collaborate with our sister institutions to further improve the management practices of higher education institutions in Hong Kong.