

# THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## Report of the Task Force on New Colleges

### Questions and Answers

Q1. The Task Force recommends the new colleges to charge a college fee. If the college fee is set on a high side, only wealthy students can apply. The creation of “elite colleges” will result in division. It violates the principle of equal education opportunities and limits the choice of students.

- The University encourages students to actively participate in college activities so as to broaden their education experience. The purpose of the proposed college fee is to help defray part of the cost of student activities. The amount will be small. Collection of college fee is just one of the recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force will consider the views of all members of the University. For students with financial needs, bursaries will be provided to ensure that students who wish to apply to the new colleges will not be discouraged because of financial reasons.
- The level of hostel fee charged by the new colleges will be similar to that of the existing Colleges. However, since the new colleges expect all students to be in residence throughout their entire programme of studies, students have to spend more on room and board. The new colleges will provide bursaries for students with financial needs to defray these costs. All students, regardless of their financial circumstances, will therefore have an equal opportunity to apply to the new colleges.

Q2. Will the proposed features of the new colleges result in the creation of an “elite collegiate system”? Does it mean that only elite students can apply to the new colleges?

The small, fully residential nature is only a suggestion of the Task Force for the consideration of the University. The aim is to offer more choices to students. Students can choose different colleges according to their different preferences and needs. It demonstrates the University’s valuable strength of diversity. The Task Force believes that not all students will identify with the smallness, the fully residential character and the dining arrangements of the new colleges. Only those students who see these concepts as strengths and benefits will choose to apply. There is no connotation whether these students are elite or not because of their choice. All students, regardless of their financial circumstances, will have an equal opportunity to apply to the new colleges. The Task Force recommends that new colleges should provide bursaries for students with financial needs.

- Q3. According to the recommendation of the Task Force, the University appears to focus on the establishment of small colleges and has made no recommendation on the mission and characteristics of new colleges. Does it mean that the Task Force considers college size is more important than the mission of a college? What are the mission and vision of the new colleges?

The Task Force agrees that each college should have its own mission and vision as a guide for development and a focus of identity. The education goal of the colleges should be consistent with the core values and mission of the University. Likewise, each new college should have its own mission, vision and special characteristics when it is established. However, the spirit and character of a new college will take time to evolve as the college grows and flourishes, and will be shaped by its members.

- Q4. The Task Force proposes that the new colleges should have 300 to 600 students. In the long run, how many new colleges will have to be established to accommodate the increase in student number following the conversion of the undergraduate curriculum to four years?

Upon the launch of the four-year undergraduate curriculum, the number of undergraduate students enrolled at CUHK will increase by approximately 3,000. The Task Force considers it undesirable to further increase the size of the existing Colleges so as to maintain the intimate community for college life and education. The University may therefore have to establish more than one college. The number of new colleges will depend on their size and resources. The Task Force is open to all suggestions. The crucial point is that the education goal and culture of the new colleges should be consistent with that of the University and bring benefits to students and staff.

- Q5. Will diversity in the size and features of new and existing Colleges lead to unequal distribution of University resources and hence result in division? The establishment of new colleges requires huge investment in manpower and financial resources. Will University resources be tilted towards the new colleges?

The collegiate system of CUHK is an effective system. Each college has its distinctive character, tradition and spirit. They grow and flourish on this solid foundation, providing their students with a rich college experience. All resources for the formation of new colleges will be raised through private donations. The University funding allocation to the existing Colleges will not be affected. The Task Force considers that the University, in conjunction with the existing Colleges, should continue to step up their effort to raise funds to enable the Colleges to continue to grow from strength to strength.

- Q6. The proposal to establish new colleges has been put forward hurriedly without due consultation.

After consultation and deliberation, the University has decided in its ten-year Strategic Plan to form new colleges. The Strategic Plan has been endorsed by the Senate and approved by the University Council. The Vice-Chancellor has appointed a Task Force on New Colleges to conduct an on-site review of the successful college systems of leading overseas universities/colleges. The report of the Task Force was forwarded to all staff and students as well as alumni of the University on February 16, 2006. The consultation process will last until March 31, 2006. All members of the University are welcome to forward their views and suggestions to the Task Force. Professor Liu Pak-wai, Chairman of the Task Force and other Task Force Members have started the consultation process, explaining their findings and recommendations at College Assemblies and Alumni Gatherings. The Task Force will organize an open forum to facilitate the expression of opinions of all students. To date, Task Force members have attended the College Assembly of United College, the United College Annual Workshop and the Shaw College Assembly of Fellows meeting. The Task Force will also participate in the Shaw College Student Union Forum. After the close of the consultation period, the Task Force will consider all the views and suggestions received, and submit a report to the University for consideration.

- Q7. The proposed site(s) of new colleges.

The government will not grant additional land for the establishment of new colleges. New colleges will be erected within the existing campus of the University and located at a convenient site with a suitable size. The Task Force considers that the choice of site should be contingent upon several factors, including the long term master plan of the University, construction and engineering constraints, availability of funding, environmental protection etc.

- Q8. Does the University have a timetable for the establishment of new colleges?

The Task Force recommends that the University establishes new colleges before the conversion of the undergraduate curriculum to four years in 2012. The planning and construction of a new college takes several years. The Task Force believes this is the right time to start the planning process.

- Q9. The student member of the Task Force was not elected from the students, and hence cannot represent the views of all students of the University.

The composition of the Task Force comprises a Chairman (a Pro-Vice-Chancellor), four members (a College Head, a teacher, an alumna and a student) and a Secretary. Miss Carol Chan, the student member of the Task Force, is a Year 3 student of the Faculty of Business Administration, a hostel resident and former Vice-Chairman (External Affairs) of the Student Union of Chung Chi College, and former member of the Representative Council of the Chinese University Students Union. Miss Chan has a clear understanding of the collegiate system, the need of students and the education environment of the University. The four Members, each a member of one of the four constituent Colleges, serve on the Task Force on an *ad personum* basis. The findings and recommendations contained in the Report represent the personal views of the Task Force members. The consultation process has just begun. All students are welcome to forward their personal views to the Task Force for consideration.

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