

Convocation Ordinary General Meeting 2002

The Convocation Ordinary General Meeting 2002 was held on June 17, 2002 in Convocation Room, Main Building, HKU. It is an annual major event of Convocation (香港大學畢業生議會) where town and gown will meet and share their views on various topics. This year's topic was the "future development of HKU". Dr Victor Fung 馮國經, Chairman of the University Council, was invited to give his ideas on making HKU a Top University.

Future Development of HKU

An extract of Dr Victor Fung's speech



HKU is close to the heart of many

I have been Honorary Professor of the Business School since 1996, Council member for 5 years, and Council Chairman since last September. I know some of you here graduated long before I got to know HKU, and some of you have been associated with the University for many more years, but perhaps I can say that my passion and commitment for this institution is no less. Since I become Chairman, I have visited many departments, and have been amazed to see the dedication and indeed excellence, which sometimes even our community are not fully aware of. ***But I am most impressed by the alumni. I have always known that HKU graduates have been the movers and shakers in the community.***

Why 25?

You may have heard me say recently that I believe that HKU can be one of the top 25 Universities in the world. Many people have asked "why 25? Why not 24 or 26?" But my point is not to play around with numbers. My point is that HKU can be, and

should be, one of the top Universities in the world. ***Indeed the University is already on its way to being a highly respected international institution.***

A Top University

In my opinion, a top University is one that puts *excellence* first. It strives for excellence in research and teaching, and in the quality of its students and staff. ***A top University strives for international status, taking a leadership role locally, regionally and on the global stage. It is also an institution that its alumni, students, teachers and the community can be proud of.*** Finally it is an institution which takes its traditions very seriously and strives to maintain a special bond with the past. On these criteria, I think you will agree that HKU has the credentials to become one of the world's top Universities.

Of course we are not quite there yet. But the structures to support our ambition are being put into place. As Lord Sutherland said in his Report to the University Grants Committee (UGC), the message to Hong Kong is clear: ***to be an international city it needs an international university.***



Dr Victor Fung: "During the 90th Anniversary Celebrations, we have witnessed the strength, the passion, the commitment, of its graduates, teachers, students, and friends. It was the Grand Reunion last December when over 3,500 people gathered at the Convention Centre, that confirmed my belief that this is indeed a GREAT institution."

HKU competing at the highest international level

The University Council and myself welcome particularly the key proposal in the Sutherland Report that a small number of Hong Kong tertiary institutions be strategically identified as the focus of public and private sector support, with the explicit intention of creating institutions capable of competing at the highest international level. This is entirely consistent with the University's goal of becoming one of the best universities in the world, which is an ongoing objective of the University.

The reasons for my confidence are numerous. For example, the University is already ahead of its competitors in many important areas. It leads the way in academic excellence, attracting the finest students. ***It has a strong body of international staff and students and successful working relationships with many overseas institutions. It has developed a strong research culture that attracts the highest competitive grants from major research funding bodies.*** Indeed, I was just told that HKU has beaten all its rivals on this front this year, securing the most funding, from both the Research Grants Council and the Innovation Technology Support Programme. As far as teaching and learning is concerned, the University has just been reviewed by the UGC, and my understanding is that the UGC was very impressed by the results that the University has achieved.

All these achievements, and further improvement in these areas, rely on the efforts of all teachers, staff, and students of the University.

University governance and management

Lord Sutherland in his report urges the governing body of each university to carry out a review of the fitness for purpose of its governance and management structure. His view, which I agree entirely, that an appropriate governance and management structure will give the University the capacity to plan and implement strategies and to focus on the enhancement of its areas of excellence. In this area, ***the University Council will play a leading role.*** The Council has fully support the need for a review, and reform if necessary, of the governance and management of HKU. I have been asked by the Council to propose means of conducting the review exercise. While I am still giving thoughts to this, I believe we need advice and assistance from both inside and outside the University in the review exercise. I am sure that the Council will seek advice from Convocation and HKU alumni at an appropriate time.



Support of alumni

An enhanced governing and management structure of the University will give better support to the University for it to compete at the highest international level, but this will not automatically guarantee academic excellence. Other efforts and support will be required. One source of support which the University can rely on, I am sure, is Convocation and its alumni.

The University appreciates the loyal support of its alumni. You have shown your support in many different ways over the years and I implore you to continue working with the staff, students and Council to ensure that our mission of becoming a first-class international University is fulfilled. I know that if we all continue to work together we can give Hong Kong the international university it so richly deserves.

HKU has announced a review of its governance and management structures:

The UGC recently publishes the Sutherland Report on the future development of higher education in Hong Kong. A key recommendation of the report is that the governing body of each university carry out a review of the fitness for purpose of its governance and management structures.

HKU is following this lead, and in July the Council set up a review panel of external experts to advise the University on a framework within which any necessary reforms in governance and management could be considered and implemented.

The Review Panel on University Governance and Management comprises three persons of international stature who are eminently suitable to undertake this important task. The Convenor of the Panel is Professor John Niland who had been Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of New South Wales until July 2002. The other members are Professor Neil Rudenstine, former President of Harvard University and the Hon. Mr Justice Andrew Li, Chief Justice and formerly Chairman of the then University and Polytechnic Grants Committee.

The Panel will examine the current governance and management structures of HKU, and those of other institutions in Hong Kong. International examples of best practice will also be studied to ensure that whatever revised structures we may adopt are in line with our counterparts elsewhere. It is expected that the Panel will complete its task within about six months.

Alumni who have any queries about the review or wish to submit comments on university governance and management should contact Mr Eric Ng at the secretariat of the Review Panel [email: gmrpanel@hku.hk].

Details: www.hku.hk/daao/revgovman.htm

Other businesses conducted at the Ordinary General Meeting: Report on Convocation issues and activities 2001-02

Mission of Convocation

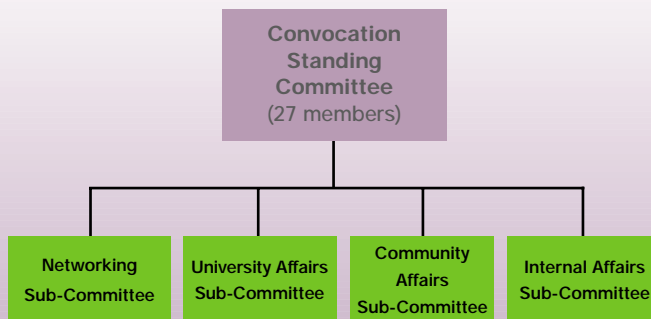
- At a Standing Committee meeting in January 2002, a mission of Convocation was adopted:

Mission of Convocation

Convocation of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) is a statutory body comprising graduates and teaching staff of the University.

With HKU's well-being and excellence as our paramount concerns, Convocation is dedicated at networking HKU graduates, at offering our help and ideas to HKU, and at bringing HKU and the community closer together.

Structure of Convocation



Networking Sub-Committee

- The Grand Reunion, on December 18, 2001 in the Grand Hall of the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, reuniting some 3,500 local and overseas alumni, friends, staff and students.



- Visits to alumni in Singapore and Shanghai.

University Affairs Sub-Committee

- Representatives of Convocation serve in the University Court and the Council, and various University committees/working groups and attend University ceremonies and activities.
- An Ad Hoc Nomination Committee for Honorary Doctorates will be formed each year for making nominations on Honorary Doctorates to the University.
- Convocation project *“Growing with Hong Kong: The University and Its Graduates — The First 90 Years”*.
- The Lord Sutherland Report of the University Grants Committee (UGC) on higher education in Hong Kong was released in March 2002. The Report identifies major issues and problems pertaining to higher education in Hong Kong and makes a number of recommendations which will have significant impact if being taken. The Standing Committee of Convocation held an open forum in May 2002 to engender more discussion on the Report and to find out the views of Convocation members on the matter.

Internal Affairs Sub-Committee

- A permanent and free Graduate Email Account @graduate.hku.hk
- Free Convocation Newsletter
- Pre-approved HKU Graduate Credit Card
- Other benefits for graduates include: special discounts from SPACE (the School of Professional And Continuing Education)



If you have any idea on any offers which will be beneficial to graduates, you are most welcome to contact Convocation Secretariat at convocat@www.hku.hk.

Community Affairs Sub-Committee

- A trip to Taiwan to donate the book 《嬰兒車和輪椅》 to educational institutions in Taipei and to visit various government and educational offices and organisations.
- The *“Hong Kong 2030 - Challenges and Opportunities — An Action Agenda for Hong Kong”*: a project on long term planning of Hong Kong in different aspects aiming to arouse awareness and participation of the University alumni, faculties and students in the future strategic development directions for Hong Kong.



A survey was also conducted among 5,000 Convocation members randomly selected in July 2002.

The exceptionally high response rate of 11% to the survey suggests that the subject is close to the



Guest speakers included Mr Roger Luk, Mr Allen Lee, Professor Felix Wu, Dr Cheung Kwok-wah and Mr Peter Cheung.

heart of the members. A response paper summarising the views was submitted to the UGC in July 2002.

The overall response shows that members believe the Report has pointed to the right direction for higher education in Hong Kong where government, private sector and universities form a partnership. 55% of Convocation members surveyed would have greater confidence in higher education in Hong Kong if the recommendations of the Report were to be adopted.

Outline of the views that are of most interest and concern to the members:

1. International perspectives

- Overwhelming support for the first major recommendation in the Report: "That a small number of institutions be strategically identified as the focus of public and private sector support with the explicit intention of creating institutions capable of competing at the highest international levels." and "Institutions should increasingly engage themselves with international benchmarks."
- This should not be an opportunity for Government to reduce its funding towards higher education but simply a redistribution of public funding in support of a handful of universities becoming world-class players.
- International practice on the governing bodies of universities should also be reviewed.
- Institutions' remuneration packages should be de-linked from that of the civil servants.



- Students should be allowed to take some courses from universities other than the university with which they have registered as undergraduates.

2. University Education

- Universities should not be reduced to "educational enterprises" and the higher ideals of education – well-stocked critical minds capable of major contributions to the culture, democracy, science and economy of developed societies - must be upheld.
- A properly structured progression of undergraduate education plus the chance to learn to live independently in a community are important factors in university education.

3. To fund or not to fund

- Courses with high start up and maintenance costs requiring access to well-equipped laboratories or sophisticated equipment, courses that meet specific manpower needs in the knowledge economy or courses which are regarded as "endangered species" all need to be protected and remain publicly funded. This qualification should be applicable to both associate degree and taught postgraduate programmes.

4. The New Paradigm

- With the adoption of the recommendations in the Report, a paradigm shift towards more private sector funding in the tripartite relationship of government-university-private sector is needed.

5. Internal review

- The governing body of each university should carry out a review of the fitness for purpose of its governance and management structures.

Details of the report and the survey result:

www.hku.hk/convocat/

Election

Deputy Chairman of Convocation



Mr Tong Chun Wan 唐振寰 (BA[AS] 1975; MArch 1977) was elected *ipso facto* and held office with immediate effect until the Ordinary General Meeting in May 2005.

Seven members to the Standing Committee

Mr Horace Chan 陳孟東 (BA[AS] 1971), Mr Albert Lai 黎廣德 (BScEng 1980; MSocSc 1984), Ms Betty Leong 梁羨靈 (BA 1987), Mr Patrick Tsang 曾廣海 (BScEng 1973), Mr Frederick Wai 衛志良 (BA[AS] 1972), The Hon Andrew Wong 黃宏發 (BA 1967) and Ms Sophia Yan 甄玉鳳 (BSocSc 1984; MSocSc 1985) were elected *ipso facto* members of the Standing Committee and will serve for a term of three years with effect on September 1, 2002 until August 31, 2005.



Ms Wendy Gan, Chairman of Convocation, presenting a souvenir to Mr Henry Lo who has served as Deputy Chairman of Convocation for nine years, for his immense contribution to Convocation especially in the launching of the HKU Graduate Credit Card and its various related schemes, and the chairing of the Ad Hoc Committee on Graduates' Networking, the review of the Convocation Constitution, etc.