

Mr. Keith Ho  
Wilkinson & Grist

20 April, 2007

Re: Commission of Inquiry on Allegations relating to The Hong Kong Institute of Education

In response to your request for a statement concerning the allegation that Mrs Fanny Law, the then Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower, encouraged me to leave The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED), I submit the following testimony with a view to assisting the Commission of Inquiry to ascertain the truth. I have endeavoured to maintain my impartiality.

My appointment to HKIED was made by the Director, Professor Ruth Hayhoe, in 2001. I had previously been working at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) as Associate Professor and Project Director of the Unified Professional Development Project (UPDP) (a two-phased Project funded by QEF). While I was working at HKU, Mrs Law had approached me and discussed a secondment arrangement for me to work at EMB. That did not materialize and I was appointed to HKIED instead in October 2001 as Principal Lecturer (same rank as Associate Professor), where I use my experience in UPDP to help set up the Centre for Learning-study And School Partnership (CLASP). Mrs Law has closely followed my work on Learning Studies and has been very supportive of it. In June 2004, CLASP was invited by EMB to submit a bid for the University-School Partnership component of the special funding for School-based Professional Support. Our proposal – the VITAL Project, was successful and received funding from December 2004 to December 2007 (funding amounted to \$27 million).

It is true that on more than one occasion, Mrs Law suggested to me that I should take the CLASP staff and set up an independent centre under EMB to carry out Learning Studies. I have always replied that I need the support of the academic staff at HKIED because of the different subject expertise, and I need a university environment for the research and development of Learning Studies. I explained to her that working at EMB would not provide me with the kind of environment for the advancement of

Learning Studies that I would get at a university-level institution. Indeed, CLASP now hosts the World Association for Lesson Studies, and I have the honour of serving as the founding-President of the association. This indicates the international recognition accorded to CLASP and HKIEd for the work on Learning Study.

I did not keep notes of all the interactions with Mrs Law and so cannot supply details of the dates, venue and the actual words used on every occasion. However, I can provide three specific pieces of information.

1. In an email correspondence dated 26 January 2005 with Mrs Law discussing the extension of the VITAL project that was supposed to lead to further funding of \$35 million (part of the \$70 million mentioned by Mrs Law as extra support given to HKIEd after the Institute suffered the funding cut), she reiterated the idea of a separate centre. In her own words, "*If you remember, we have discussed the option of a stand alone organization for taking on learning study.*" I enclose a copy of the email. In the event, this funding was not forthcoming, owing to irreconcilable differences between the funding body and CLASP over the direction of the project.
2. During the First Annual Conference on Learning Study organized by CLASP on 3 December 2005, where Mrs Law was invited as a Panel Member in her capacity as Permanent Secretary of Education and Manpower, she spoke to an audience of around 150 teachers and teacher educators on the development and sustainability of Learning Study. The forum was chaired by Dr Derek Sankey, who submitted his resignation two months later and is now working on projects commissioned by EMB. Professor John Elliott was also one of the panel members, and I was in the audience. (For your reference, a copy of the programme is attached.) She spoke for about five minutes. The forum was video-recorded, and a copy of the recording is enclosed. The relevant part of her speech is transcribed below:

[For quick reference, the time code for this segment is 3:08]

...It's so difficult to put together university teams. Even deep collaboration between HKIEd and CU is so difficult. So, how could I possibly, with this university "label" (with a hand signal of in quotation) of autonomy. We could not possibly put together teams, so to speak. But of course, Paul Morris is not around here. I would like, of course, Lo Mun Ling to set up a Centre maybe

outside the Institute of Education and therefore can recruit from among all universities, as well as among schools....

3. My most vivid recollection of any conversation with Mrs. Law on this matter was after a meeting of which I was present as an ACTEQ member. I was engaged in a casual talk with Mrs. Law, and she said to me quietly, “敏玲·HKIED 無前途㗎喇” (which I would translate as “Mun Ling, HKIED has no future”). She then encouraged me to seek an appointment at other Universities, such as HKU. I replied that I had left HKU and had no intention of going back. Besides, I said that I thought that we were doing very well at HKIED. I remember this very clearly because I was surprised and taken aback by her saying that HKIED had no future. I relayed this message to Professor Paul Morris some time afterwards and told him how surprised I was, as HKIED had just gone through all the hoops towards acquiring University title. I cannot remember the exact time, but I remember clearly that this conversation with Mrs. Law took place after a meeting in Room 118 of the Central Government Offices (Main Wing). Since the only occasion that I would have been with her in a meeting at that venue would be ACTEQ meetings or meetings in which ACTEQ members are invited to attend, and as we have not attended any more meetings together since the 64<sup>th</sup> ACTEQ meeting, I can only infer that the 64<sup>th</sup> ACTEQ meeting, which took place on 13 December 2005, was the most likely occasion for this conversation to have occurred.

This is all the information that I can provide.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Lo Mun Ling  
Head, Centre for Learning-study and School Partnership  
HKIED