

Statement of Cheng Siu Fong, Doreen

1. I, Cheng Siu Fong, Doreen of
will state as follows:

2. I am the Senior Personal Secretary to President of The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd). I joined the Institute in 1994 and have since then worked as secretary to three Presidents, namely, Professor Leung Chi Keung (1994-1997), Professor Ruth Hayhoe (1997-2002) and Professor Paul Morris from 2002 onwards.

3. I write this statement to provide information which is relevant to the subject matter of the inquiry by the Commission of Inquiry on Allegations relating to The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

4. I understand that there has been ongoing pressure from Professor Arthur Li, Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM), to merge the HKIEd with The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) since he has become SEM in 2002. Professor Paul Morris has from time to time briefed me about the pressure exerted on him to merge the HKIEd with CUHK.

Phone call from Professor Arthur Li to Professor Paul Morris on 21 January 2004

5. On 21 January 2004, Professor Arthur Li called Professor Paul Morris. I could see that Professor Paul Morris looked upset after that phone call and therefore when I went into his office to say goodbye to him before I left on that day, I asked him what Professor Arthur Li had said to him. He told me that Professor Arthur Li said that HKIEd had to do something radical and asked him to initiate a merger with CUHK, otherwise our student numbers would be squeezed. We would receive the Start Letter soon and Professor Paul Morris was worried that our student numbers would be cut. This was the phone call in the first allegation. I remember the date as it was the Chinese New Year's eve and staff were released early, but I stayed behind because I had to work on the Chinese version of the Role Statement which we had to return to the University Grants Committee (UGC) by the deadline of 21 January 2004.

Phone call from Professor Arthur Li to Professor Bernard Luk in end June 2004

6. One day in end June 2004, I received a phone call from Professor Arthur Li's *Secretary*

asking to speak to Professor Paul Morris. When I informed him that Professor Paul Morris was out of town, he asked to speak to the Acting President, Professor Bernard Luk. I then transferred the line to Professor Bernard Luk. I cannot remember the exact date of that phone call, but it was a few days after Professor Paul Morris had gone on summer holiday. He left Hong Kong on 26 June 2004. This was the phone call in the third allegation.

Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) dinner on 4 April 2006

7. The pressure on merger continued in 2004 and 2005 and I understand that such pressure was mounting in 2006.

8. Professor Paul Morris attended the HUCOM meeting on 4 April 2006 and HUCOM had invited Professor Arthur Li to join the dinner which followed the meeting. On the morning of 6 April 2006 (note: 5 April 2006 was a public holiday) when I asked Professor Paul Morris if the meeting and dinner went well on 4 April 2006, he told me that in a private conversation just before the dinner, Professor Arthur Li told him that he himself would step down as SEM after July 2007 and Professor Paul Morris would also go in September 2007. I was surprised to hear that as the review process for the President's reappointment would only be discussed at the Council meeting on the morning of 6 April 2006. I wondered why Professor Arthur Li made such a remark before the review process started and had an inkling that it was not going to be a fair review process.

Dinner hosted by Arthur Li on 17 April 2006

9. Professor Arthur Li hosted a dinner on 17 April 2006 at the HK Club and invited Professor Paul Morris to attend. I understand that Professor Arthur Li had also invited Dr. Alice Lam, Chairman of UGC; Mr. Michael Stone, Secretary General of UGC; Professor Lawrence Lau, Vice Chancellor of CUHK; Professor Kenneth Young, Pro Vice-Chancellor of CUHK; and our Council Chairman, Dr. Thomas Leung. On the morning of 18 April 2006, I asked Professor Paul Morris how the dinner went. He told me that Professor Arthur Li pushed for a merger and CUHK would only accept a full merger by which HKIEd would move to the CUHK campus in Shatin and our staff would be called "Teaching Fellows" and "Instructors".

Phone call from Dr. Thomas Leung, Council Chairman on 16 June 2006

10. On the morning of 16 June 2006, Dr. Thomas Leung called Professor Paul Morris, but he was not in the office. Upon his return, I asked Professor Paul Morris to call back Dr. Thomas Leung and he asked me if I knew what Dr. Thomas Leung wanted. I jokingly replied that perhaps he wanted to congratulate you on the good outcome of the Research Grants Committee Visit which was held on 15 June 2006. Professor Paul Morris rolled his eyes and said he did not believe so. After he had finished his telephone conversation with Dr. Thomas Leung, I went into his office and asked him what Dr. Thomas Leung wanted. Professor Paul Morris then told me that Dr. Thomas Leung, at the breakfast meeting on 10 June 2006, said to him that it would be very difficult to reappoint him if he did not agree to a merger with CUHK. When he stated that he would not support a merger, Dr. Thomas Leung asked him to reconsider. Dr. Thomas Leung was calling him to reiterate that he would not be reappointed if he did not support a merger and ask for his decision. I then asked Professor Paul Morris how he replied. He told me that he confirmed his stance of not supporting a merger and said to Dr. Thomas Leung, "So be it". I then said, "I respect you, you have guts".

All the information contained in this statement is provided to the best of my recollection, and I would be willing to testify at the hearing if I am requested to do so.

Cheng Siu Fong, Doreen

Dated: 19 March 2007