

Dr. Lai Kwok Chan  
Office of Strategic and Academic Planning,  
The Hong Kong Institute of Education,  
10 Lo Ping Road, Tai Po, N.T.

The Commission of Inquiry on Allegations relating to  
The Hong Kong Institute of Education  
c/o Wilkinson & Grist,  
6/F, Prince's Building,  
10 Chater Road, Hong Kong.

29 March, 2007

Dear Sir,

Statement on Matters which Relate to the Cutting of the Student Numbers of HKIEd

1. I am submitting this statement to the Commission of Inquiry in response to the request by Wilkinson & Grist on 26 March, 2007. As requested, I will focus on matters which relate to the cutting of student numbers of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), in particular the student cuts in the 2005-08 triennium. To achieve better understanding, I will provide at the beginning a review of the contextual factors that have affected academic planning of the Institute and, in the end section, how these factors have continued to affect the Institute's planning for the 2008-09 roll-over year.

My Responsibilities and Experience

2. I have been the Head of Strategic and Academic Planning (formerly known as the Head of Planning and Academic Implementation) of the HKIEd since 1997. My responsibilities are to support the Institute's strategic and academic planning, including formulating the Institute's Strategic Plans and Academic Development Proposals (ADP) and preparing institutional responses to the UGC/EMB on matters regarding student numbers and academic development. I report directly to the Vice-President (Academic) and have regular contact with the President. I have been a long-standing member of the Institute's Academic Board and its Academic Planning and Development Committee.

3. Because of my responsibilities, I have frequently represented the Institute in meetings with the UGC and the EMB on matters related to higher education planning, academic planning and professional upgrading courses. I also represented the Institute in periodic meetings with the other three teacher education providers (TEPs), i.e. HKU, CUHK and HKBU. In addition, I have been serving as an elected staff member on the Institute's Council for ten years, and was a member of the Council's Task Force on Long-term Role and Positioning.
4. To support the Institute's planning functions, I have been conducting contextual analysis and research on factors affecting teacher demand and supply, teacher qualifications, attractiveness of the teaching career and teacher education policies in the HKSAR and other parts of the world. My research findings have been published in book chapters and journals locally and internationally. I also occasionally write articles in these areas in local newspapers.
5. With my work and research experience, I am familiar with the development of teacher education policies in Hong Kong and the planning parameters and processes of the UGC/EMB which have affected the student numbers of HKIED.

Contextual Factors which had Affected the Institute's Academic Planning

6. In 1997, the Chief Executive (CE) announced the policy objective of requiring all new primary and secondary school teachers to be graduates and professionally trained in the foreseeable future. To achieve this objective, he further announced in 1998 that the HKIED would replace its sub-degree places in primary and secondary teacher education by degree and above places. With this policy support, during the 2001-04 triennium, the Institute's First Year First Degree (FYFD) places had increased from 340 in 2000/01 to 536 in 2003/04.
7. Since the government had set a ceiling of 14,500 FYFD places for the UGC-funded sector, the UGC had to re-distribute FYFD places from other institutions to support the upgrading of the Institute in the 2001-04 triennium. This upgrading process would not be possible without the firm policy backing of the government in the several years after 1997.
8. However, a number of contentious issues in teacher education had begun to emerge since 2002, which had led to continued tension between the EMB and the Institute, and to a lesser extent, between the EMB and other TEPs.

A. Professional Training Requirements for New Teachers

- (i) The EMB has hitherto not set any target year to implement CE's policy objective of requiring all new teachers to be graduates and professionally trained. As a result, a large proportion of teachers newly joining the profession were still untrained. (EMB Teacher Statistics indicated that over 40% of the newly joined teachers were untrained in 2001.) By 2002, it was evident that the EMB had actually retreated from CE's policy. Instead, it had advocated the shifting of student places to part-time programmes so untrained teachers could acquire their professional qualifications through in-service training (Mingpao, October 28, 2002). The Institute had grave concerns about this policy shift and considered it as a retrograde step in the government's pledge to enhance the professional status of teachers. I had first hand knowledge of this dispute as I was the Institute spokesperson at a press conference held on 30 October 2002 to express the Institute's views on this policy change (Appendix I). I had since been aware that the EMB had been highly critical of this press conference, which had adversely affected its relationship with the Institute.
- (ii) EMB's preference for part-time training had influenced its advice to UGC on allocation of student places for the 2004/05 roll-over year and the 2005-08 triennium. Nevertheless, from the start, all the four TEPs had repeatedly informed the UGC that EMB's projections of a strong demand by serving teachers for part-time training places were inaccurate, as TEPs had already faced difficulties in filling their existing part-time places. Unfortunately the UGC had continued to adhere to the advice from EMB.
- (iii) In the absence of a firm commitment towards pre-service training requirements, the EMB can continue to rely on untrained teachers to meet any shortages in teacher supply. In this regard, there is little incentive for the EMB to ensure that there will be a sufficient supply of newly trained graduates for each subject area. Instead, it is expedient for the Administration to move student places to selected subject areas which they consider as top priority in meeting its immediate policy needs. On the other hand, the HKIEd is more interested in ensuring an adequate supply of qualified graduates in various subjects to support

the implementation of a balanced curriculum in schools. As I will elaborate later, the persistence of the EMB to shift large number of student places for expedient purposes had caused great difficulties to the development of the HKIEd.

B. Methodology of Teacher Demand Projections

- (i) To achieve his policy objective of requiring all new teachers to be trained, the CE had asked the UGC to conduct a study on the future demand for new primary and secondary school teachers. However, the findings (UGC, 1998) were never released to the public. Since the year 2000, with the decreasing enrolment in primary schools and concerns about the problem of redundant teachers, the EMB had taken the dominant role in developing manpower projections. As evidenced from the Start Letters, the UGC tended to accept EMB's specific manpower requirements as fait accompli.
- (ii) In the past few years, the Institute had repeatedly cautioned the UGC that the demand projections of the EMB were problematic as they were based on a minimalist approach (Appendix II). They are strictly demographic-driven, and have ignored curriculum and work factors that influence student-teacher ratios and hence the demand for teachers. There is a complete lack of scenario planning. In other words, the EMB would not build in any buffer to cater for new demands for teachers arisen from educational initiatives unless they were approved as government policy at the juncture when the projections were made. As a result, as evidenced from subsequent developments, the EMB projections in the UGC Start Letters for the 2005-08 triennium had become quickly outdated as the government had since decided to implement the new senior secondary academic structure, introduced redundancy schemes for serving teachers and a number of initiatives which have led to significant increase in demands for teachers.
- (iii) I had first hand knowledge of the EMB methodology as I was a member of the Working Group on Teacher Demand and Supply chaired by Mr. Cheng Yan-Che, the former Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower. This Working Group had met nine times from February to December 2002. My observation was that the great majority of the senior civil servants on the Working Group had little experience in

manpower projections. Anyway, there was a fair degree of transparency in these meetings and I was able to make some input through persuasion. However, after the ninth meeting in December 2002, for unknown reasons, I had not been invited to attend any more meetings and I was not informed by the EMB whether this Working Group had continued to operate or not.

(iv) I consider the breakdown in communication since the end of 2002 most unfortunate. The EMB had subsequently moved to formulate controversial projections of teacher demand by each Key Learning Area (KLA) of the school curriculum, which had guided allocation of student places for the 2005-08 triennium. Since the methodology has not been made transparent, the TEPs did not find the estimated projections by KLAs credible. As a result, this issue has led to continued tension between the EMB and the TEPs, particularly the HKIEd.

C. Projections in Teacher Demand by Key Learning Areas (KLA)

- (i) In the UGC Start Letter for the 2004/05 roll-over year, the EMB had given strong advice on the indicative student intake by KLAs. It had indicated a strong preference for new teachers in the three core subjects of English Language, Chinese Language and Mathematics, as its latest projections had indicated "a shortage" of teachers in these subjects. For the first time, it required all TEPs to set out clearly the subject/KLA of the teacher education places in their ADPs. This practice had gradually evolved into EMB micro-managing the allocation of student places to each KLA during the planning for the 2005-08 triennium.
- (ii) While the government does not believe that new teachers have to be professionally trained, it paradoxically wants to ensure that language teachers are "highly qualified." The reason is to support the implementation of mandatory Language Proficiency Requirements for English-language and Putonghua teachers, and the SCOLAR policy requiring Chinese- and English-language teachers to have taken the relevant subject as majors in degree programmes. The Institute has voiced out its concern that, by singling out language subjects as requiring "highly qualified" teachers, it emphasises one area of the

curriculum at the expense of the other non-language subjects.

(iii) The scale of EMB's allocation of large number of student places to English Language was beyond imagination. During the planning for the 2004/05 roll-over year, the UGC conveyed the advice by the Administration to "dramatically" increase the number of FYFD in English Language at both the primary and secondary levels. The EMB was much less concerned about whether there would be an adequate supply of newly trained teachers for the "non-core" subjects such as Art, Music and Physical Education. In response, TEPs had repeatedly alerted UGC of their difficulty to fill the large numbers of English places with qualified entrants. In addition, the HKIEd is particularly concerned about the marginalization of the non-core subjects, of which it is the major provider in Hong Kong. This dispute is still ongoing, as evidenced by the recent controversies over the Start Letter for the 2008-09 roll over year.

9. In the 2004/05 roll-over year, the Institute had experienced a significant cut of 43 FYFD places in its primary numbers because the Administration had advised UGC of "the need to reduce the provision of pre-service training at the primary level" and the need "to accommodate the new demand in nursing" (Start Letter dated 28 Jan 2003). The reduction in primary numbers was applied pro-rata to all TEPs concerned, i.e., resulting in a cut of 5, 43 and 7 FYFD places from CUHK, HKIEd and HKU respectively. Nevertheless, the Institute ended up as the only UGC-funded institution which had suffered from an overall reduction in FYFD numbers in the roll-over year as both HKU and CUHK were compensated by the new FYFD places for their nursing programmes. It is notable that this established practice of pro-rata increase or decrease had ceased to exist in the allocation of places for the 2005-08 triennium, and the HKIEd had suffered nearly all the cuts in student numbers.

#### Cuts in Student Numbers for the 2005-08 Triennium

##### The Planning Process

10. The planning process for the 2005-08 triennium was best described as chaotic. Only three weeks after the Chair of UGC had issued its first Start Letter to all TEPs on 21 January 2004, the Secretary General of UGC issued a second Start Letter on 17 February to supersede the first one.

11. It was evident from the wording of these Start Letters and sequence of events that the EMB had played a dominant role in stipulating the student numbers in teacher education, and the UGC was reacting passively to its advice. The first Start Letter stipulated that:

*To meet the projected need for teachers from 2009/10 to 2011/2, the Administration advises that about 1330 and 1030 FYFD places should be allocated at the primary and secondary levels respectively. Among these, the Administration sees a need dramatically to increase the number of FYFD in English Language and Mathematics for primary teachers and English Language for secondary teachers.*

The second Start Letter recorded that the EMB had later softened its stand after UGC had reacted to the first Start Letter:

*The UGC is concerned about the genuine difficulties likely to be experienced by institutions to increase substantially their FYFD places in teacher education ... and to make very sharp changes to the distribution of places among Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Following discussion with the Administration, I am pleased that EMB has agreed to make some changes to their overall requirements. ... At the FYFD primary level, the total requirement over the triennium will come down from the 1330 figure in the Start Letter to 1050. That at the secondary level, the FYFD requirements will increase slightly from 1030 to 1050.*

12. Anyone with prior knowledge of UGC planning processes would have been startled by the EMB-set parameters of 1330 FYFD places in primary and 1030 FYFD places for secondary. According to the first Start Letter, in yearly terms, the FYFD places required in the year 2007/08 would be as high as 910, compared with about 700 places in the base year of 2004/05. Since the ceiling of 14,500 FYFD places remained unchanged, UGC would really have "genuine difficulties" to ask institutions to re-distribute 210 places from other disciplines to teacher education. This chaos suggested that, first, senior officials in the EMB were anxious to ensure an adequate supply of qualified language teachers probably because of the Language Proficiency Requirements for Teachers, and second, they had not even consulted UGC before determining the parameters.
13. Another evidence of chaos was the deletion of all student places of the Institute's

in-service ECE programmes in 2007/08, which had led to strong protests by the early childhood sector. I will return to this in paragraphs 22-26.

14. TEPs were very concerned about the lack of transparency throughout the planning process and the dramatic shift of places among the KLAs. UGC arranged in short notice a meeting with the PSEM on 19 February 2004, in which I attended. During the meeting, the TEPs voiced their grave concerns over the rigid stipulation of places by KLAs. At one point, PSEM had asked Dr. K.K. Chan, the Principal Assistant Secretary of the EMB in charge of the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI), to give her views on the future needs of teachers in view of the curriculum reform. Dr. Chan gave a few examples on the spot, including the need for Technology teachers which were not even mentioned in the Start Letter. It was clear that the EMB section responsible for preparing student numbers had not consulted the CDI on their views about the future needs of school teachers.
15. The PSEM finally agreed to allow greater flexibility to the TEPs for distribution of places among the KLAs, but insisted that "English should be given top priority". A day after the meeting, the Secretary General of UGC provided further clarifications to the President, HKIEd, on the provision of teacher education places.
16. It was made clear at the meeting that the EMB projections did not take into account the changes in teacher demand resulting from the pending implementation of the senior secondary academic structure. For instance, there was no projection for the need of Liberal Studies teachers. In this regard, the ADP for 2005-08 was outdated shortly after it was released and even before it was implemented, as the Government subsequently announced on 18 May 2005 the implementation of the new senior secondary academic structure from 2009 onwards. However, up till now, the TEPs have not received any updated plans from the EMB or the UGC.

Cut in Total Student Numbers (Appendix III)

17. The Institute had experienced a massive cut in total student places for the 2005-08 triennium – its indicative numbers would be reduced from 5,376 in 2004/05 (base year) to 4,605 FTEs in 2007/08 (by 771 FTEs or 14.3%). Contrary to claims that these reductions were solely due to a drop in school enrolment and hence a reduced demand for teachers, 77% of the cut of 771 FTEs



were in the Institute's in-service early childhood courses and Professional Upgrading Courses, which are not dictated by future teacher demands and do not affect teacher supply. I will provide an analysis of the cut in places of the major types of programmes below.

#### Cut in FYFDs

18. Though HKIEd got an increase of 68 FYFD places for the Bachelor of Education (Primary) programme (from 251 in 2004/05 to 319 in 2007/08), it had a significant cut of 128 FYFDs for its two secondary programmes (i.e. Bachelor of Education (Secondary): reduced from 94 to 50; and the Bachelor of Education (Languages): reduced from 148 to 64) (Appendix IV). The cut was slightly compensated by 35 FYFDs for its new collaborative programmes with PolyU, CityU and Lingan. In total, the Institute had a reduction of 25 FYFD places, (from 493 in 2004/05 to 468 in each year of 2005-08) and emerged again as the only institution which had been given a cut in FYFD places. (Appendix V) Apparently, 10 places were allocated to HKU for its English language education programme and 15 places to LU for its collaborative programme with the HKIEd.
19. The Institute trains over 80% of the new primary teachers in Hong Kong. In this regard, the allocation of FYFDs for primary to the Institute was relatively small as the UGC's first Start Letter had projected a significant increase in demand for primary teachers in 2011/12. In addition, the reduction of FYFDs in the second Start Letter was exclusively from the primary places, which would mostly affect HKIEd as the largest provider in primary teacher education.
20. The Institute trains only about 25% of the secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. However, all the UGC cuts in FYFDs for secondary teacher education in the 2005/08 triennium were exclusively from the HKIEd. As described in para. 15, the secondary programmes would experience a cut of over 50% (128 FYFD places), which was slightly offset by the 35 places allocated to three collaborative programmes, representing a net loss of 93 FYFDs. The cut was also across a wide range of subjects – Art, Music, Physical Education, Technology, Chinese and English.
21. As mentioned in para. 18, the Institute was required to contribute all the FYFDs for its joint programme in English Language education with Lingnan University, which was totally unexpected. In the ADPs submitted by both institutions to

the UGC in March 2004, each institution had requested 10 additional FYFD places for an intake of 20 for the joint programme. I had read a series of communications between UGC and our President on this matter. In a letter from Secretary General, UGC, to the President on 2 Feb 2004, he had assured that "where the FYFD numbers for joint degrees come from must primarily be a matter between the collaborating institutions". Hence, the explanation given by the Chairman of UGC to the President on 27 May 2004 that all the places had to come from HKIED's FYFD places was because Lingnan had "little flexibility" in deploying its FYFD numbers "given its small size" was unsatisfactory, as the unilateral decision by the UGC was against the spirit of collaboration highlighted by the Secretary General, UGC, in his previous letter.

Cut in Student Numbers for in-service ECE

22. In 2004/05, HKIED was allocated 369 intake places (245 FTEs) for in-service C(ECE) (named CE (KG) in the Institute) and 204 places (153 FTEs) for in-service QKT. The training of early childhood teachers was a core part of the Institute's Role Statement given by UGC. The demand for these in-service programmes was very strong as the serving kindergarten teachers were very keen to upgrade their qualifications. It was astonishing that the first Start Letter had advised that the indicative intake places for the in-service C(ECE) would be reduced from 369 in 2004/05 to 200 each in 2005/06 and 2006/07 and then to 0 in 2007/08. In addition, there would not be any allocation of places for the in-service QKT. I subsequently attended a meeting with Mr. Andrew Poon (PAS(QA)) of EMB and Miss Charmaine Wong, DSG of UGC. My impression was that both of them were not well informed of the reasons behind the reduction.

**Change in intake places (Headcounts) of in-service ECE programmes from 2004/05 to 2007/08**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Change (07/08 vs 04/05)
C(ECE)	369	200	200	200	-169
QKT	204	0	0	0	-204
<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>-373</b>

23. Amidst strong objections from the early childhood sector and the Institute, the EMB had finally agreed to re-instate 200 intake places for C(ECE) in 2007/08.

This still represented a substantial reduction of 57% (from 398 FTEs to 171 FTEs) of the intake places for the Institute's in-service ECE programmes.

24. The EMB had explained that the reduction in C(ECE) places from 369 to 200 was because the Government's policy target of upgrading the qualification of kindergarten principals to certificate level would have been made. This had demonstrated the rigidity and short-sightedness of EMB planning as the HKIED had clearly indicated to UGC in its ADP that the demand for the in-service C(CE) course was very strong as kindergarten teachers were very keen to upgrade their qualifications. In this regard, the strong reactions by the ECE sector towards the cut had not been surprising. In fact, just one year after the start of the 2005-08 triennium, the Chief Executive had pledged to provide training opportunities to upgrade the qualifications of all serving ECE teachers to CE level (Policy Address, October 2006).
25. The EMB had subsequently used the savings retrieved from the cessation of the Institute's in-service ECE programmes to fund tendered programmes in C(ECE). The reason given by EMB was that the provision of ECE programmes "should not be monopolized by one institution and considered the provision of diversity in early childhood education beneficial to the development of teachers in the sector" (minutes of the Legco Education Panel 7 Feb 2005 meeting). The accusation of monopolization was not valid as two other providers, i.e. the Vocational Training Council and the Hong Kong Baptist University, were then offering in-service ECE courses in competition with the HKIED. The outcome after the tendering process was that the same three institutions remained as providers of in-service ECE programmes.
26. The decision to take away UGC-funded places from an institution for open tendering was highly unusual. The HKIED has been given a distinctive mission in the education of pre-school teachers, as stipulated by the UGC Role Statement. Personally, I am not aware of another incident where the EMB had applied the same measure to a UGC-funded teacher education programme in any other institution.

Cut in Professional Upgrading Courses and Full-time PGDE numbers

27. It was less well known that the EMB had also advised a 20.5% reduction of intake of the Institute's Professional Upgrading courses (PUCs) (from 440 FTEs to 350 FTEs in each year of the triennium). As a result, the total student

number for PUCs would decrease by 128 FTEs (from 478 in 2004/05 to 350 for each year in 2005-08). This reduction had reduced the opportunities for serving teachers to enroll in professional development courses of a sustained duration and with purpose-built facilities to support their professional development.

28. In terms of full-time PGDE programmes in secondary education, the HKIEd had also suffered the most among all the TEPs. Its intake places will have been reduced by 77%, i.e. from 86 in 2004/05 to only 20 in 2007/08, while the corresponding reduction of the other three teacher education providers was in the range of 40 to 50%.

#### Non-Provision of Senior Year Places to HKIEd

29. For the 2005-08 triennium, the UGC had allocated 840 FTE as additional year 2 places in each of the three years and another 840 FTE as additional year 3 places in each of 2006/07 and 2007/08 to UGC institutions. However, HKIEd was the only institution that was not allocated any places with the reason that it would "increase the supply of newly trained teachers, which would upset the manpower plans prescribed at the FYFD level (Letter from Chairman, UGC to P, HKIEd on 7 May 2004). The reason given was doubtful as the UGC had already reduced 260 FYFD places from those given in its first Start Letter. After this round of allocation, UGC has subsequently allocated additional 127 and 254 senior years places for 2006/07 and 2007/08 respectively. HKIEd was again the only institution being excluded. (EMB response to Question 1991 on the 2007/08 Budget dated 14 March 2007).

#### Dramatic Shift in Allocation of Places by KLAs

30. In para. 8, I have mentioned the increasing tendency by the EMB to allocate most of the student places to several "core" subjects to meet its immediate policy needs, and the difficulties that it had brought to the Institute's offering of the "non-core" subjects. Unfortunately, this tendency was further strengthened during the planning for the 2005/08 triennium, during which the EMB had advised TEPs to "dramatically" increase the number of FYFDs for English Language (see para. 11). Even UGC described these allocations as "very sharp changes". After the TEPs further raised their concerns during the meeting with the PSEM on 19 February 2004, some degree of flexibility was given so long the TEPs gave English as the top priority (see para. 14).
31. The "dramatic" shift of student numbers to the core subjects has threatened the

existence of the "non-core" subjects, such as Art, Music, P.E., which have been the traditional areas of strength of the Institute. For instance, in the full-time PGDE (Secondary) programme, the Institute was allocated only 10 places each in the areas of Arts Education (for the two subjects of Art and Music) and Physical Education respectively, compared with a total of 26 places in 2004/05). For the full-time PGE (Primary) programme, the Institute was allocated 14 places for four school subjects, i.e. General Studies, Art, Music and Physical Education, compared with a total of 28 places in 2004/05 (Appendix IV).

#### Summary

32. The successful upgrading of the Institute into a degree-granting institution since the late 1990s had been due to firm policy backing as the Chief Executive had announced in 1997 his policy objective of requiring new teachers to be graduates and professionally trained. However, this policy was short-lived as the EMB leadership has been in favour of allocating resources to support part-time training for untrained primary and secondary school teachers. This policy shift had led to an open debate with the Institute in late 2002, which had adversely affected relations. Furthermore, there is little incentive for UGC to implement this policy after the 2001-04 triennium as it would need re-distribute FYFD places from other disciplines to teacher education and from other institutions to HKIEd.
33. As untrained teachers are allowed to enter the teaching force, there is little incentive for the EMB to ensure that there will be an adequate supply of newly trained teachers for all the school levels and subjects. On the other hand, the paradoxical policies to require language teachers to be "highly qualified" had prompted EMB to "dramatically" increase the student places for the "core" subjects, particularly English language, at the expense of all other subjects. As a result, TEPs have become more vulnerable to the shift in EMB's immediate priorities. The Institute's position is probably more vulnerable because it is the major provider of teachers in the "non-core" subjects, such as Art, Music, Physical Education and Home Economics.
34. The long-term needs of schools and teacher education providers were often ignored due to first, the lack of communication between senior EMB officers of the section responsible for teacher education planning and the Curriculum Development Institute, and second, the lack of communication between EMB and teacher education providers.

35. It is unfortunate that the UGC has played a characteristically passive role in teacher education planning. There is evidence to demonstrate that it was aware of the disruptions to TEPs as the EMB had frequently made "very sharp changes" in allocation of student numbers by KLAs. However, it had tended to treat the EMB's specific manpower requirements as fait accompli. In the past ten years, I have probably attended more than fifteen meetings with the UGC Secretariat, the former UGC Teacher Education Sub-Committee and external members of the UGC to discuss the Institute's student numbers. During these meetings, the UGC Secretariat and external members characteristically voiced that they had little room by not following the advice of the Administration.
36. The student number cuts in the 2004/05 roll-over year could be better explained by the projected reduction in demand for primary school teachers, and the cut in places was less controversial as it was distributed pro-rata among the TEPs concerned. However, the cuts for the 2005-08 triennium were more massive and affected most of the pre-service and in-service programmes of the Institute. In fact, nearly 64% of the reductions in intake (in FTEs) were in in-service ECE and professional development programmes which do not affect teacher supply. Despite the Institute gets a small increase in the FYFD places for primary due to a projected increase in demand, it had to bear all the cuts in FYFD places for secondary.
37. As a result of the cut in student numbers, the Institute was the only UGC-funded institution that had suffered from the following:
- i. a cut in FYFDs;
  - ii. the shift of FYFDs to support another institution for their joint degrees;
  - iii. bearing all the cuts in FYFD places for secondary;
  - iv. the biggest cut in percentage of full-time PGDE (Secondary) places;
  - v. the reduction of the majority of its in-service ECE places for public tendering; and
  - vi. nil allocation of senior year places.

There may be a reason for each type of cut in student numbers. The question that remains to be answered is why have all the above cuts occurred in the 2005-08 triennium, which have caused serious funding difficulties for the Institute.

38. Based on intake figures given to Legco by the EMB, I have conducted a comprehensive analysis of the total student numbers of the four TEPs in the 2005-08 triennium (Appendix VI)). The figures indicate that the HKIEd is the only institution that has a reduction in the total number of student places (14%). The other three institutions got an increase in student numbers of between 7 to 39%.
39. It is worrying to observe that EMB has continued to adopt the "roller-coaster" type of planning to serve expedient purposes, as indicated in UGC's Start Letter for the 2008/09 roll-over year on 16 June 2006. Regarding the FYFD places for secondary, EMB advised the deletion of all the 80 existing places for Science Education, Technology Education, Arts Education and Physical Education, 50 of which originate from the HKIEd. Furthermore, compared with 2007/08, it has recommended a 52% decrease in English Language, a 144% increase for Chinese and a 350% increase for Mathematics. Subsequent to objections from the Heads of Universities on the drastic decrease in English numbers, it agreed to allow more flexibility among the three "core subjects", but has so far insisted on the deletion of all the places for the other KLAs.
40. HKIEd will again be the institution that will suffer most from the deletion of all the FYFD places for the "non-core" subjects. This will result in a loss of the entire 50 FYFD places in the Institute's existing Bachelor of Education (Secondary) programme, forcing it to close down its offerings in Art, Music, Physical Education, Home Economics and Business Studies in 2008/09. The Institute will likely again experience a significant reduction of student numbers in a roll-over year when other institutions are expecting no or little change.

(signed)

Lai Kwok Chan, Ph.D.