

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

1. Please outline the extent of your involvement with the process of planning for the allocation of student numbers to the Institute for the triennium 2005-08 and the roll-over year of 2008-09 and state the position you held within the Government in this regard.

A.: I, Susanna Cheung Sau-man, retired, was former PAS(PDT) under the School Administration and Professional Development Branch (Branch 3) of EMB from 1 January 2003 to 2 May 2006. My main responsibility covered the professional development and training of school principals and teachers. During the period, I was responsible to Mr Cheng Man-yiu, DS3. I left EMB on 3 May 2006 to commence my pre-retirement leave.

Since I am no longer in my official mind-set, I can only provide information as required relying much on my knowledge and recollections and on the documents provided to me by Mr Keith Ho of Wilkinson and Grist.

In my capacity of PAS(PDT) from 1 January 2003 to 3 May 2006, I was involved in the planning cycle of the 2005-08 triennium and the initial planning for the 2008/09 roll-over year (which is still part of an on-going process).

Within EMB, the allocation of teacher training places involves mainly three Divisions which may have a direct interface with HKIEd. Branch 1 deals with higher education policies and processes the triennium funding for UGC-funded institutions, including HKIEd. Branch 3 has overall responsibility for professional development of school principals and teachers, updating teacher numbers through the teacher database and making teacher supply and demand projections. DS3 represents EMB on the HKIEd Council. Branch 5 deals with curriculum development and early childhood education. Resources for the UGC-funded institutions are planned on a triennium basis.

The planning cycle begins with a letter from the Chairman, UGC to SEM to seek Administration's advice on the manpower requirements for teachers. PAS(HE) then issues a memo consulting Branch 3 on the projected requirements for teacher training places, by levels (sub-degree, first degree and taught post-graduate) and by 8 key learning areas (KLAs). My Division under Branch 3 is responsible for making

collaborative recommendations on teacher training places, territory-wide, on the basis of the statistics provided by EMB's Statistics Section and taking into account population forecasts, teacher enrolment projections and the development and needs of relevant education initiatives. To this effect, my Division has to liaise with officers of the relevant Divisions within EMB, especially the CDI and the QA Division on the policy requirements for KLAs and early childhood teacher education.

I had a tiny team which underpinned me in undertaking this task. It comprised my deputy, Mr Steve Lee, PEO(PDT) and now PAS(PDT) and Mr Sheridan Lee, CPDO(PDT) and now PEO(CDI). Mrs Helen Kung took over the post of CPDO when Mr Lee was transferred out of the Division in May 2005. Generally speaking, CPDO is responsible for the technical side, liaising with counterparts in UGC, TEIs, and relevant EMB Divisions on the required teacher training provisions, with supervision from PEO (PDT) who is also overall in charge of EMB's teacher database. In a nutshell, it was my Division which was responsible for putting up collaborative proposals on teacher training places for DS3 and PSEM's consideration. Where necessary, steer would be sought from senior management and clarification made with the relevant parties in the process of preparation. Subsequently, I would issue a memo on the recommended provisions to Branch 1 vide PAS(HE) for collation. A reply then was issued by SEM to Chairman, UGC.

It is worth mentioning here that EMB advises UGC on global figures and territory-wide teacher training places. This is only for reference of UGC. EMB does not deal with the allocation of training places and it is UGC's responsibility for allocating training places to TEIs.

It is within such a mechanism that I was involved in the planning of the 2005-08 triennium and the 2008-09 roll-over year.

#### 2005-08 triennium planning and 2008-09 roll-over year

In the planning of the 2005-08 triennium, we broadly followed the mechanism and proceedings described above. As far as I can recall, I provided our input to PAS(HE) around October 2003. The Chairman, UGC wrote to SEM expressing concerns especially on EMB's proposed increase of FYFD requirements, and the zero places recommended for certain KLAs in FT PGDE etc. The First Start Letter was issued before the Chinese New Year. The concerns were subsequently addressed some of the proposed allocations adjusted. In February 2004, UGC issued the Second Start

Letter. Following this, the then PSEM and S/UGC met with Deans/TEIs to discuss the 2005/08 allocations. TEIs were informed that greater flexibility for distribution of places among certain KLAs was allowed.

I was involved in the kick-start of the proposed allocation for the 2008/09 roll-over year in line with the same mechanism and proceedings. Discussion sessions were held with relevant parties, including the Statistics Section and CDI. A representative from UGC was invited as resource person as and when necessary. I replied to PAS(HE) on the proposed recommendations around mid- January 2006.

Until I left EMB on 3 May 2006, I was not aware of specific issues relating to planning of the 2008-09 roll-over year which I was involved.

2. It is alleged by Prof. Morris that on the advice of the EMB, the UGC proposed to allocate zero places to the Institute in the areas of art, music and physical education to the Institute in the roll-over year of 2008-09. It is alleged by Prof. Luk that this proposal was contrary to an indication given by yourself to the Institute, when you were about to retire, that there would be no significant changes of student numbers for the roll-over year of 2008-09.

2.1 Please state whether the proposal to allocate zero places to the Institute was made on the advice of the EMB. If yes, please indicate what the advice was, who gave the advice, and to whom it was give.

A.: As in the previous planning exercise for 2005-08, we followed the same mechanism in planning the 2008-09 roll-over year. My Division made collaborative proposals on overall territory-wide figures, on the basis of the statistics provided by EMB's Statistics Section. And taking into account the population forecasts, enrollment projections, and the development and needs of other relevant education initiatives, etc... Bias apart, adjustments among various subject fields was just a natural consequence, as in the previous triennium planning exercise. But there has never been any intention to amend allocation figures in any TEIs for any non-official reason, not to mention that it is UGC, and not EMB which decides on the allocation of places.

2.2 Please state whether you gave the indication as alleged by Prof Luk to the Institute, and if so, to whom and when.

A.: I am a retired civil servant of EMB. I joined the HK Government in September 1972. I proceeded on my pre-retirement leave on 3 May 2006. Before that date, I was PAS(PDT) responsible for the professional development and training of school principals and teachers. Hence contacts, formal and informal, with TEIs were necessitated by my official obligations. As I am no longer in the civil service, I have already disengaged myself from any official mindset since, and with no recourse to official records, I can only tell from memory my encounters and contacts with HKIED for the mentioning of my name in the transcript provided for me in making this statement. As a matter of fact, Prof. Luk was also my teacher when I did my MA (Education) in CUHK in 1979-82.

There has never been any formal meeting or discussion on the allocation of teacher training places between myself and HKIED prior to my leave from the civil service. I can vaguely recall that on one occasion when I had an informal chit-chat, possibly with Professor Phil Moore of HKIED, on the allocation of places. But I cannot recall the date, time, or over the phone. As I did not have the figures in hand then, I could only tell from my general impression of the picture of the proposed roll-over year in 08-09. I casually responded with the overall territory-wide allocation of places in mind that there would not be significant change. I had no intention to pinpoint particularly any TEI, not to mention HKIED because the final decision to be made by UGC would take months to materialize. I retired in May 2006. I had no idea whether it was due to my casual response or that HKIED had thus misinterpreted my response.

2.3. Please state whether there is a rational basis for the proposal and if so, please explain what the basis was.

A.: It's my understanding that the 08-09 planning is an on-going process. The recommended allocation to UGC was made in line with an established mechanism, taking into account the projected supply and demand, enrollment and surplus teachers and the prevailing policy demands.

3. It is alleged by Prof. Morris that the EMB organized meetings for teacher education providers in the field of early childhood education from which the Institute was excluded, and that the EMB requested the UGC to temporarily suspend the role differentiation exercise of the UGC-funded institutions so that, inter alia, the Polytechnic University could be allocated student places in the area of early childhood and primary teacher training which would otherwise have been allocated to the Institute.

3.1 Please state whether the EMB organized such meetings and if so, who of the EMB organized the meetings, and whether the Institute was excluded and if so, why.

A.: Early childhood teacher education was under the responsibility of Mr Andrew Poon, the then PAS(QA) of EMB's Branch 3. I personally do not have the details have any knowledge of such meetings.

3.2 Please state whether the EMB requested the UGC to temporarily suspend the role differentiation exercise of the UGC-funded institutions so that, inter alia, the Polytechnic University could be allocated student places in the area of early childhood and primary teacher training which would otherwise have been allocated to the Institute, and if so, who of the EMB made the request, to whom of the UGC it was made, and why it was made.

A.: I do not know as I was not involved.

4. It is alleged by Prof. Morris that in respect of the 47% budget cut for the Institute for the 2005-08 triennium, over 60% of this related to courses for in-service teachers so that the cut could not be justified on the ground of demographics, which was the explanation given to the Institute. For the years after 2004-05, the Institute bore the burnt of the cuts whereas the other education institutions did not. It is alleged by Prof. Luk that whilst the Institute suffered a budget cut of 47% for the 2005-08 triennium, other UGC-funded institutions suffered single digit cuts or even enjoyed budget increase for the same period; and that no other UGC-funded history had ever suffered such a cut.

4.1 Please explain the reasons for the 47% cut for the Institute for the 2005-08 triennium and to what extent this was a decision on the part of the EMB and UGC respectively. Please identify the persons who were involved in making the decision.

A.: I am not able to comment on this and: I work within the mechanism of the civil service and I would do not make guesses. \_ \_

4.2 Please state whether it is the case that no UGC-funded history had ever suffered such a cut, and if so, why the Institute suffered such a cut.

A.: I do not know and I am not able to comment on this and I would not make

~~guesses, cannot make comments.~~

4.3 Please explain whether it is the case that the Institute bore the brunt of the cuts whereas the other teacher education institutions did not. If so, please explain why.

A.: ~~I do not know and I would not make guesses, do not know and I cannot comment on this.~~

5. It is alleged by Prof. Morris that on the advice of the EMB, the UGC refused the Institute's request for allocation of articulated places and was the only teacher education institute whose request for articulated places was refused.

5.1 Please explain whether the EMB gave such advice, and if so, please state the occasions on which it was given, who of the EMB gave the advice, to whom it was given, and why it was given.

A.: ~~I am not able to comment do not know as the "articulation" programme ed places~~ was not under my purview.

5.2 Please state whether it is the case that the Institute was the only teacher education institute whose request for articulated places was refused, and if so, why.

A.: ~~I cannot comment as I did not deal with the "articulation" programme, have no idea as I did not deal with "articulated places" when I was former PAS (PDT).~~

6. It is alleged by Professor Morris that on the advice of the EMB, the UGC refused the Institute's request for the allocation of research postgraduate places. Please explain whether the EMB gave such advice, and if so, please state the occasions on which it was given, who of the EMB gave the advice, to whom it was given, and why it was given.

A.: ~~I did not deal with "re not knew as I did not deal with Research postgraduate"~~ programme - in my former capacity of PAS(PDT).

7. It is alleged by Prof. Luk that whilst the statement in the Start Letter of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004 addressed to the Institute of "0" places for the Certificate in early Childhood education sub-degree programme for the year of 2007-08 may have been an error and

was ultimately corrected, the fact that it was left uncorrected for a number of months despite the Institute's raising of the matter with EMB and negotiation over it, suggested that there was an attempt to disadvantage the Institute. Please explain why the error was not corrected earlier. Please identify the persons and events involved in the initial stipulation and the later change.

A.: I do not remember the details and the sequence of the events accurately. I can only recall it was arising from misunderstanding in communication between the contact officers of my Division and the QA Division. The two officers had a number of exchanges on early childhood education policy requirements and for the C (ECE) courses. Subsequently, the proposed target number offered for the C(ECE) programme was taken as "0" in the 2007/08 year. Attention was brought to me and my counterpart, i.e. the then PAS (QA) and to senior management. ~~I also recall shortly after this, I sent PAS (HE) a memo alerting her of the revision required, in mid-October.~~

8. It is alleged by Prof Luk that the reinstatement of 200 places for the Certificate in early Childhood Education sub degree programme of the Institute for the year 2007-08 nevertheless represented a cut to the Institute's places since the year 2004-05, the Institute had been allocated 369 places per programme.

8.1 Please explain what part of EMB played in the decision to decrease the number of the places allocated to Certificate in Early Childhood Education Sub degree programme of the Institute Institute to 200 per annum. Please identify the persons from the EMB involved in the decision.

A.: Policy requirements for the early childhood education rest with the then PAS (QA) who is thus in a better position to comment on the proposed teacher training places. However, it was my Division which consulted the QA Division for its policy requirements and proposed allocation. I vaguely recall the proposed places (200) were related to policy requirements. QA Division considered that the policy targets for upgrading serving KG principals and supervisors of childcare centres would be largely fulfilled by 2005/06.

8.2 Please state whether there was a rational basis for the decrease, and if so, explain what the basis is.

A.: I wish to refer to the information for 8.1 above. I have no further comments.

not aware of any others.

9. It is alleged by Prof. Luk that Institute was disadvantaged in the Start Letter of 21 January 2004 addressed to the Institute reduced the places allocated to professional upgrading courses run by the Institute to 350 ftes per annum.

9.1 Please explain what part the EMB played in the decision to decrease the number of places allocated to professional upgrading courses run by the Institute to 350 fte per annum. Please identify the persons from the EMB involved in the decision.

A.: I cannot recall the details. It might be at a meeting that recall that a UGC representative raised the issue as to whether PUCs should continue to be funded through UGC as these were in-service and non-award-bearing training programmes. Steer was also sought from PSEM on retaining the funding of PUCs in the UGC mechanism. There were also discussions on revamping the contents and modes of certain PUC programmes at the regular EMB/HKIEd PUC meetings chaired by DS5, attended by HKIEd staff, ~~also attended~~ PDT and CDI colleagues.

9.2 Please state whether there was a rational basis for the decrease, and if so, explain what the basis is.

A.: I cannot remember.

10. It is alleged by Prof Luk that there was no rational basis for the decrease in the number of FYFD places for primary education teaching and increase the number of FYFD places for secondary education teaching in the second Start Letter of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2004, given the Government's own demographic projections.

10.1 Please explain what part of the EMB played in the decision to decrease the number of FYFD places for primary education teaching in the second Start letter of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2004. Please identify the persons from the EMB involved in the decision.

A.: As far as I can recall, it was in connection with the concerns raised by UGC for EMB's proposed increase in the FYFD places for the primary level and the considerable shift towards English KLA in particular. EMB and UGC subsequently met to revisit the relevant issues and made adjustments to the numbers. It was agreed that the FYFD places for primary education would better be leveled off across



the three years of the triennium. I cannot remember the details of ~~may not recall accurately, the meeting was attended by the then PSEM, S/UGC, DS3, myself, the then CPDOP and a representative from UGC.~~ the meeting.

10.2 Please state whether there was a rational basis for the increase in the number of FYFD places for primary education, and if so, explain what the basis is.

A.: In preparing the administrative advice on teacher education places for 2005-/08 triennium, we broadly followed a -mechanism, through consultation with relevant Divisions on policy requirements, taking into account statistics on projected overall supply and demand provided by the Stat. Section, ~~with regard to enrolment and other factors such as projected demands for KLAs and any prevailing policies which might affect demand and supply.~~ I recall it was on the basis of population forecast and projection at the point of time that primary students were expected to slightly increase by 2011/12, with a corresponding increase in demand for new teachers.

10.3 Please explain what part the EMB played in the decision to increase the number of FYFD places for secondary education teaching, and if so, explain what the basis is.

A.: I cannot remember ~~each specific details.~~ On this

11. It is alleged by Professor Luk that the Institute was disadvantaged in that in a joint "2+2+ programme with Lingnan University for English teachers, whilst 30 places were allocated to the programme, all the places had to come from the Institute's FYFD allocation, and none from Lingnan University, meaning that whilst the resources were shared equally, 30 places were cut from the Institute's other programmes.

11.1 Please explain what part the EMB played in the decision that all places for the programme had to come from the Institute's FYFD allocation. Please identify the persons from the EMB involved in the decisions.

A.: I cannot remember. And I do not know, ~~have no knowledge of this as I did not deal with the issue.~~

11.2 Please state whether there was a rational basis for the decrease, and if so, explain what the basis is.

A.: I do not know, have no idea as I was not involved.

12. It is alleged by Professor Luk that the fact that a number of cuts were imposed on the Institute in 2005-08 suggested that the cuts may not been wholly innocent.

12.1 Please explain what part of EMB played in the decision to impose a number of cuts on the Institute together in the 2005-08 triennium. Please identify the persons from the EMB involved in the decision.

A.: The 2005-08 triennium was planned in line with the mechanism and broad parameters described in 10.2. It was a collaborative exercise and consultation was made with and advice sought from relevant policy Divisions on the recommended provisions ~~is on such basis that EMB provides recommendations to UGC on teacher education places in tin terms~~ of programme types, level and KLAs territory-wide. The recommendations were put up to senior management for consideration, and not on individual TEs. ~~Other than this,~~ Other than this, I am unable to comment.

12.2 Please state whether there was a rational basis for the decision, and if so, explain what the basis was.

A.: I work in line with an established mechanism and stipulations of the civil service. I do not make guesses and I have no comment on this.

13. Generally, are you aware of any negative sentiment on the part of the then Permanent Secretary for Education and manpower, Mrs. Fanny Law, or the SEM, Professor Arthur Li, towards the Institute and whether there is any evidence you are aware of that Mrs. Fanny Law or the SEM has used their powers on student numbers to disadvantage the Institute.

A. I would not make any guesses on other people's thinking or intention. I work within the mechanism and stipulation of the civil service.

Any other business

I have noted one reference made by Prof Luk in one of the transcripts (Day 5, P61) mentioning "...and I think for the technical side of all these calculations were done we would have to rely on Dr Lai Kwok-chan, and for the EMB side the person that had done a lot of these calculations and had liaised with us from time to time on these

issues was Ms Susanna Cheung, Cheung...”

I wish to make a minor clarification and to put the fact right. At EMB's end, CPDO was responsible for the technical side, hence he/she was the contact-point on the day-to-day liaison with HKIED/TEIs, UGC and various Divisions at working level.

|(signed) signed

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(Cheung Sau-man, Susanna)

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