

Dear Council Members, Alumni, Students, and Colleagues,

The Beacon to be Preserved, Construction Plan to be Discussed

In his open letter dated 20 November 2008 on the proposed extension of the University Library, Prof. Ching Pak-chung, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, has reiterated the University's firm position that the Beacon will be preserved. Let there be no misunderstanding about our constant and non-negotiable position: the University Square cannot be altered, and the Beacon, the repository of so much of our history, must be reinstated in its existing form when construction is completed, its size not diminished by one inch, its shape and look not changed by one iota.

Although during the construction phase, the closure of the University Square is to be limited to no more than one year, I am still concerned about the possible impact on the Beacon during that period. Accordingly, I have instructed Prof. Ching and the building committee for the library extension project to study all feasible construction options, including the possibility of limiting the scope of work, and the possibility of not affecting the Beacon even in this construction phase. At present, the building committee is consulting the project architect on technical issues, in order to examine all feasible construction options, and will soon engage with CUHK members; a number of communication sessions with students, staff and alumni are being arranged. We would like to hear your views and suggestions before the building committee decides upon a construction option.

We are proud of our campus and treasure its beautiful setting. The building committee proposed an underground development plan for the Library precisely to avoid building a high-rise that would blot the campus landscape. Right from the first deliberation on the proposal a year ago, there has been a clear consensus that no alteration to the University Square will be allowed. Our resolve to preserve the cherished landscape and our historical heritage has been constant and firm.

The Beacon is a symbol of the University's ideals and a symbol of our history, including the rallies for the four-year curriculum mounted by staff and students many years ago. We certainly will preserve it for future generations of those who will call CUHK home.

We sincerely hope that the library extension work would be completed in time for providing the requisite library services to the enlarged student body under the four-year curriculum from 2012 onwards. The Beacon will continue to command the University Square as before, and will welcome the new students under the four-year curriculum, as a

fitting witness to the final triumph of the valiant defence of the four-year curriculum by students and staff on that very spot.

Lawrence J. Lau

24 November 2008