



CUHK Newsletter

Special Issue 19th January 2005

Open Letter to Staff Members of the University

Dear colleagues:

2004 was a difficult year for us all. UGC funding cuts necessitated by the government's huge fiscal deficit weighed heavily on both teaching and non-teaching units. We have experienced the austere challenges of cost saving, salary reduction, and increased workload.

At the start of 2005, let me first thank you for weathering the tough times with the University. Without your understanding and support, cost-saving measures and academic restructuring could not have been implemented successfully. We owe it to you that the University has come out of the slimming exercise largely intact and eager to seek greater progress in the year ahead.

The University administration is grateful to you for putting our collective interest before your own. What is gratifying is that, with the launch of cost-saving measures last April, the core objective of avoiding lay-offs and retaining as many posts as possible has been achieved. Although certain posts now exist in reduced terms, 99 per cent of over 1,000 non-teaching contracts offered for renewal have so far been accepted. This is sufficient proof of the great sense of trust in and belonging to the University among our staff force. Such solidarity is the University's most precious asset.

You must have known that following the substantial funding cut in 2004/5, UGC allocation to the local universities for the 2005/8 triennium will be based on a 0-0-5 formula. The UGC has recommended, pending approval by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, that HK\$6.36 billion be allocated to CUHK for the next three years. This represents a significant reduction from the 1995/8 allocation figure. By 2007/8, the amount of subvention received will be 25 per cent less than that of 1997/8 (excluding reductions made in line with civil service pay cuts). To allay anxiety about the future, let me take this opportunity to explain the University's stance and give an assessment of what we shall be facing in the next three years.

The figure of HK\$6.36 billion is cast on the premise that funding levels for 2005/6 and 2006/7 should largely be the same as that for 2004/5, to be followed by a 5 per cent cut in 2007/8. The government has also promised a review in mid-2006, with a possibility of reducing or eliminating the 5 per cent cut.

We have strongly urged the government to adopt a 0-0-0 formula, and to consider an increase in its subvention allocation to the universities in 2007/8 should the economy continue to improve. We believe this is necessary for maintaining the quality of higher education in Hong Kong.

I must also point out that even with no cut introduced in the entire 2005/8 triennium, actual annual allocations over the next three years will be less than that for 2004/5. This is mainly due to the gradual withdrawal of public funding for most taught master's programmes, which according to UGC policy should henceforth be self-financing. As the government withdraws financial support to the tune of HK\$100 million from these programmes in three years, the reduction in the quota for medical students will mean that we shall receive another HK\$36 million less. By 2007/8 therefore, actual UGC allocation will be 2 per cent lower than that for 2004/5, and 7 per cent lower if the 0-0-5 formula is adopted.

You may have noticed that the University is stepping up its fund-raising efforts for a host of research and development projects, hoping to secure as much financial support as possible from private sources. We need to recognize however that most donations and grants are one-off in nature and usually designated for specific purposes. They can in no way be relied upon to sustain the University's regular operation.

Having said that, the University administration will do its utmost to manage any budgetary shortfall within this broad framework over the next triennium. We shall also press for the adoption of the 0-0-0 formula. Provided that the 5 per cent reduction planned for 2007/8 is cancelled, there should be no need to introduce additional cost-saving measures. What has already been approved will however continue to be implemented.

What we most hope to see, of course, is that Hong Kong's economy will continue to improve, affording the government the ability to increase its subvention for higher education in 2007/8.

Dear colleagues, let us continue to arm ourselves with optimism and team spirit. Let us continue to advance and excel in the face of adversity, and build another glorious decade for The Chinese University.

I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2005.



Lawrence J. Lau
Vice-Chancellor
19 January 2005

校長致全校同人的公開信

各位同事：

2004年對大家來說，是艱辛的一年。因政府巨額財赤引致的大學經費削減，給所有院系和非教學單位帶來沉重的壓力；大家都經歷了節流、減薪和工作量增加的嚴峻挑戰。

新的一年剛剛開始，我首先在這裡祝大家新年進步，工作順利；再要感謝大家與校方衷誠合作，共渡時艱。沒有各位的諒解和支持，大學各項節流措施和重組計劃便沒可能按步推出，取得成效。中大現得以基本上保存實力，繼續提升質素，都是大家的功勞。

在削資過程中，你們都為中大的整體福祉作了付出，校方深表感激。令人欣慰的是，去年四月開始實施的一系列應變和節流方案，達到了我們的主要目標，為各部門保存了最多的職位，避免了裁員。雖然職位的續聘條件有所調減，但至今百分之九十九的非教學合約僱員，在大學提出與他們續約時，都願意接受新的條件簽約，涉及的聘約總數超過一千，顯示員工對大學的極大信任和忠誠。我們深以中大的團隊精神為榮，認為這是大學的寶貴資產。

相信大家已從報章得悉，政府撥款經過2004/5年度的大幅度削減後，2005/8年度的資助，將基於一個0-0-5撥款方案。據此，大學教育資助委員會建議於未來三年共撥款六十三億六千萬元予中大，尚待立法會財務委員會正式通過。這數目較諸1995/8年度的資助，有大幅度的削減。到了2007/8年度，中大所得的政府撥款，會較1997/8年度減少百分之二十五（並未包括因公務員減薪而作的相關撥款扣減）。為避免大家對前景過分憂心，我想在這裡闡釋大學的立場和對未來財政狀況的評估。

建議中的六十三億六千萬元，是預設了2005/6和2006/7年度的撥款水平，與2004/5年度的相若，而2007/8年度則按現水平削減百分之五。不過，政府亦承諾會於2006年中作出檢討，有望取消這百分之五的削減。

我們已向政府強烈表達，要求把0-0-5調整為0-0-0，並按經濟環境的改善程度，考慮於2007/8年度增加大學撥款，以維持香港高等教育的質素。

然而，我必須在這裡指出，就算採用的是0-0-0方案，下一個三年撥款期的每年實際資助額，仍較2004/5年度的為少。這是由於很多現有的修課式碩士學位課程，按教資會規定，會陸續轉以自資形式開辦，三年內政府將因此減少對中大撥款超過一億元。此外，醫科生學額經削減後，資助額又會相應減少三千六百萬元。是以到了2007/8年度，政府的實際資助金額將較2004/5年度減少達百分之二；如0-0-5方案維持不變，減幅更高達百分之七。

也許大家會留意到，大學正在努力募捐，希望籌得更多資金，以使各項教研計劃繼續順利開展。然而，私人捐助通常屬一次過性質，且捐款每每有指定用途，不能轉作其他項目的補貼，或用以應付經常開支。

但無論如何，校方將會竭力在這個財政框架裡平衡收支，以應付未來三年裡政府資助的遞減。我們更會盡力爭取把0-0-5方案修改為0-0-0；在這個前提下，我們應毋須推出新一輪的節流措施。已經通過並實施的方案，則需繼續執行。

當然，我們最渴望見到的是，香港經濟情況不斷好轉，2007/8年度政府撥款不減反增！

最後，我呼籲各位繼續抱持積極樂觀的態度，發揮一貫的團隊精神，一起克服這些過渡期間的困難，為中大建造再一個光輝的十年。

劉遵義

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二零零五年一月十九日