

「校長來信」混淆視聽 The Misleading "VC's Letter"

各位同事、同學、校友和高等教育界的同工：

劉遵義校長在 2007 年 2 月 5 日發出給各教學部門同人有關學院院長遴選委任制的信件，指大學校董會肯定「遴選委任制」的大方向，並提請校長就委任制的具體安排作出諮詢。信中內容頗多不盡不實之處，我們覺得有責任向大家澄清：

1. 「大學校董會對遴選制度的指示」

根據我們向數位有參與會議的校董查證所得，當日校董會成員考慮到校內師生與校友的反對意見，經討論後決定將原來議程中對大學管治專責小組報告書表示「支持」(“supported”)改為「閱悉」(“noted”)，並請校長進行全面諮詢。因此，校董會並無通過或接納報告書中有關遴選委任制。校長的現階段的任務，應是諮詢大學社群對委任制的意見，而非如何落實委任制的問題。信中以含糊的辭令轉移視線，引導大家相信院長委任制的建議已經獲校董會接受，而把重點放在遴選程序上，做法令人遺憾。

2. 「遴選委任制度優勝之處」

校長在信中強調遴選委任制度的優勝，主要理據在於委任制院長將是全職，可專注領導和管理工作；並可有清晰權責，自行調配更多資源。其實院長是否全職，權責是否清晰，與選舉制或委任制並無必然關係。而院長若有權力調配更多資源，則如何從機制上保證有公平合理的原則分配資源，至為重要。

校長提出「遴選委員會的過半數成員，將由有關學院的院務委員互選產生」，因此「能夠充分反映院內同人的意見」。可是，現時院務委員的成員只有極少部分為民選，反映教授級或以下成員意見的代表嚴重不足，互選後的遴選委員會如何能夠「充分反映」同人的意見實成疑問。況且委任制下的院長，只向校長負責而不向學院成員負責，如何能充分理解院內各學系與同事的需要，如何能如校長所言促進院內同人的聯繫？亦是未知之數。

3. 「改制建議經長期醞釀和諮詢」

改制是否經長期諮詢，大學同人自然心裏有數：大家都清楚知道自己有沒有、或在甚麼時候被諮詢過。

至於改制的醞釀期，校長的信讓我們知道校方自 2002 年起已就大學管治架構進行全盤檢討。但大學管治專責小組至今向校董會提交的三份報告書，卻從來沒有公佈予大學社群知悉，更遑論讓我們討論和提出意見。

至於去年三月，由「四位國際知名大學的前任或現任校長」組成專家小組訪校，就大學管治架構進行意見及資料搜集一事，相信絕大部分同事都聞所未聞。事實上，校方初時只分別安排了學生會、校友評議會及一些大學高層與專家小組見面。員工總會是收到學生會的通知後，致信校方強烈要求，最後才被安排參加了一次不足一小時的非正式茶聚。當時除員工總會外，教師協會、職員協會及四所書院教職員聯誼會的代表亦有出席。由於準備時間及會面時間都非常不足，員工總會只能在會面後提交書面意見。其後專家小組提出的報告書，在員工總會多次要求下，校方仍一直不允公開。

因此，改制問題，在大學高層或者有過長期的醞釀，但大部分老師和同學卻無疑是被蒙在鼓裡。在根本不知情的情況下，如何可以有效回應諮詢？

4. 「新一輪諮詢已經開始」

去年十一月至十二月的所謂諮詢及教務會通過建議的詳情，我們已在聯署信上說明，在此不再重覆。校方是否真正做過諮詢，教職員表達了的意見，校方如何對待，各位老師、同學，以至校方都心裡明白。總的來說，上一次的諮詢過程是「非正式」和十分的不透明。這一次校長能以公開信的形式，邀請大學教學同人參與討論，是一個進步。

但校方其實從未有就大學社群對委任制的看法作出正式的全面諮詢。把新一輪的諮詢定位為「如何落實委任制」明顯是「偷步」的做法。況且上文提到的各種重要報告文件還是一貫的保持「機密」，大學同人對大學管治改革根本缺乏一個全面的了解；對於遴選委任制的優劣，亦只能聽到一面之辭。

我們絕對同意對大學管治問題作全面而深入的檢討，亦相信是時候對各層級的管治架構，制訂完善的評核與制衡機制。但我們同時相信，真正的諮詢，必需對被諮詢者有起碼的尊重和信任。大學應該是一個尊重事實、尊重他人，崇尚理性的社群。

我們必需重申，學院院長選舉制是香港中文大學條例中明文規定的制度，賦予大學教授們選舉院長的權利。校方若要將選舉制改變為委任制，必需開誠布公，提出充分的理據以及周詳的計劃，與同事深入討論，爭取同人的共識，才能使院長有足夠的認受性，有效發展院務。

[香港中文大學員工總會](#)

大學教育關注組

2007年2月14日

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Co-workers of Higher Education in Hong Kong,

On the issue of appointed deanships, the Vice-Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Prof. Lawrence Lau, wrote a letter to all faculties on the proposal of appointed faculty deanship, claiming that the University Council “supported” the proposal, and that the Council allegedly asked the VC to consult colleagues on the implementation of the proposal. Given that many colleagues are somewhat puzzled about this state of affairs, we feel it incumbent upon us to clarify some misleading points made in that letter dated 5th February, 2007.

1. “The University Council’s Directive on Faculty Deanship”

Having checked with some members of the Council who attended the University Council meeting, we know that the Council considered the arguments against deanship appointment and the major concerns of faculties and students. After careful deliberation, the Council decided to change its response to the proposals of the CUHK Task Force on University Governance from “support” to “having noted” the proposals. The Council further asked the VC to conduct a full-scale consultation on the formation of faculty deanship. From the response of many Council members, it is therefore apparent that the Council has not approved nor accepted the appointment proposals put forward in the report. The task of the VC at this stage should therefore be to fully consult the academic community of the University on their views on the proposed appointment system, rather than merely proceeding to implement the appointment system. Unfortunately, the VC’s letter attempted to mislead readers, and to pass off as a fact that the Council had already accepted the proposals, shifting the attention to the implementation procedures of the appointment system. This misrepresentation of Council deliberation, we feel, is regrettable, as there are avenues which have not yet been fully explored..

2. “The Benefits of the Proposed Change to the Faculty Deanship Appointment”

The VC emphasized the benefits of the faculty deanship appointment system in his letter. His major argument is based on the claim that full-time appointment of deans will have clearer responsibilities and accountability lines and that deans will be able to focus more on longer-term strategic planning, resource allocation and management roles. There is, however, no absolute cause-and-effect relationship between the benefits in this claim and whether the deans are appointed or elected. What is crucial to transparent governance concerns the issue that if the deans are given more power to allocate resources, there should be a robust mechanism to ensure that allocation is based on fair and just principles.

The VC claimed that “the majority of members of the Search Committee would be elected among Faculty Board members”, and therefore it would “fully represent the related Faculty”. However, very few of the present Faculty Board members were elected. Faculties of professor grade or below are barely represented. How, we might therefore ask, does this make the Search Committee fully representative of the Faculty? The composition of the Search Committee is in itself problematic. Under the proposed appointment system, deans are accountable to the VC only, not to faculty members. Will appointed deans necessarily care about the needs of faculty members, and the inter-connections among them? All these questions are left unanswered.

3. “The Proposed Change is the Result of a Long Period of Discussion and Consultation.”

Has the proposed appointment system been thoroughly discussed or consulted upon? From our discussions with faculty members, the majority feel that little consultation, if any, has actually taken place.. Indeed, it was only from the VC’s letter that we learnt about the existence of the three reports on the management review of the University by the Task Force on University Governance. Given that the majority of the faculty members do not know anything about these reports, how could they therefore discuss them and submit their views?

The VC’s letter mentioned that a Panel of External Experts made up of four present or former heads of eminent international universities has been invited to advise the Task Force on University Governance since March 2006. However, the majority of faculty members have never been informed. In fact, only a few students and alumni, and some members of the senior management were invited to meet with

the Panel. When the Student Union told the Employees General Union about this meeting, the Union immediately made an urgent request for a meeting with the Panel, and was briefly given an informal tea gathering with it. The meeting – which was short, lasting less than an hour, and which allowed virtually no time for preparation – included representatives of CUTA and CUSA and the Staff Club of the four colleges. Time was so short that the Employees General Union were only able to put in a written submission after the meeting. Despite repeated requests by the Union to make public the report of the Panel of External Experts, the University authorities refused to allow it to be brought to light.

The proposed change to appointed deans has therefore been discussed for a limited period of time only among senior management of the University. The majority of the faculty members, students and other staff have been kept in the dark. The corollary to such “consultation” is that it is very difficult for people to be able to respond effectively.

4. “The next round of consultation has already begun”

The alleged consultation and endorsement by the Senate in November and December in 2006 have been reported in our open and jointly signed letter. Has the University really consulted faculty members and students? The answer cannot be a straightforward “yes”, since the last consultation exercise has been perceived by many as **informal** and far from **transparent**. The VC’s current open letter to invite submissions and discussions by the academic communities is, therefore a step in the right direction.

Strictly speaking, the University has **never** launched any **full-scale formal consultation** of the academic community on the proposed change to appointed deanship. Consequently, many perceive the VC’s letter as an attempt to avoid real consultation and divert attention instead to how to implement the proposed system of appointed deans. All the major documents referred to above are still being kept strictly confidential. The majority of the faculty members are therefore left in the dark concerning intricacies of University governance. They have been given only one side of the story --- only the beneficial side of the appointed deans, and have been presented with nothing concerning the system’s potential downsides, or any possible alternatives.

We totally agree that there is a need for thorough reviews and in-depth analyses of the present mode of University governance. It is time to examine, and possibly

conduct an overhaul of the structure of University governance at all levels, so as to formulate proper appraisal policies and mechanism of checks and balances in governance. At the same time, nonetheless, we believe that there must be real consultation built on trust and respect for all those being consulted. The University should be a community of reason working on facts and mutual respect.

We would like to conclude by stating that the University administration must honour the fact that the system of elected faculty deans is a statutory institution established in accordance with the University Ordinance. Such a system protects the basic rights of faculty members to elect their deans. If the University proposes a complete change of the system, it must be honest in its consultation exercises and support its argument with sound reasons and careful planning. There must be thorough and in-depth public debates on both sides of the argument until a consensus is arrived at. It is only at such a juncture, we would argue, that the deanship system will be able to enjoy due legitimacy and in consequence exercise effective governance.

University Education Concern Group,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Employees General Union
14 th February, 2007.