



**The Report of the Inquiry Panel on  
the Community College at Lingnan University (CC) and  
Lingnan Institute of Further Education (LIFE)  
2012 Admission**

**(The Inquiry Panel)**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Incidents relating to the CC and LIFE 2012 admission**

- 1.1 Starting from late September 2012, issues relating to Community College (CC) and Lingnan Institute of Further Education (LIFE) admission exercise received considerable media coverage. This incident had aroused concerns among a number of stakeholders including students, staff and alumni. The Council of the University resolved on 15 October 2012 to appoint an Inquiry Panel (“the Inquiry Panel”) to inquire into and review the operations of CC and LIFE in the admission exercise for 2012-13 with a view to making improvement recommendations to the University.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

#### **Student enrolment**

- 2.1 There exist different student number projections at different points in time. The Council of the University approved a student number projection on 18 June 2012. All subsequent student number projections by CC and LIFE were not submitted to the Council of the University and the Board of Governors of CC for endorsement.

#### **Admission procedures**

- 2.2 An Admission Management Committee formed to formulate policies, guidelines, criteria, procedures and budgets for student admissions of CC and LIFE in relation to admission did not fully function in accordance with its term of reference.
- 2.3 It is noted that the former Dean of CC and Further Education adopted some aggressive admission measures soon after the start of admissions exercise.

#### **Class schedule arrangement**

- 2.4 Class schedules for the Term 1 were only disseminated to students before the class commencement. To fully utilize the available teaching venues, classes were also scheduled from early morning to late evening and even on Saturdays (including evening), which were not practised before.

#### **Quality assurance**

##### *Teaching resources*

- 2.5 It is noted that due to late staff recruitment, many candidates although being offered, did not show up. A large number of part-time teachers have been recruited eventually.
- 2.6 It is reported to the Inquiry Panel that there was insufficient administrative support. Teachers are therefore heavily engaged in administrative work.

##### *Integrated Learning Experience Programme (ILEP)*

- 2.7 The details of the newly developed ILEP were not disclosed to the teachers and students in time.

### *Advanced diploma programmes*

- 2.8 The new Advanced Diploma programmes were not accredited in time before the admission of new students. However, there was no mention of the pending status in the Level 4 of the QF Register.
- 2.9 It came to light that the admissions requirement to the Advanced Diploma programme had been relaxed during the admissions exercise. Consequently, 123 out of 748 students are non-standard admissions. According to standard practice, remedial workshop would be arranged for such students. However, no such remedial workshop has been conducted till now.

### *Class scheduling*

- 2.10 It is noted that scheduling of courses in LIFE programmes does not follow the common patterns of a university.

### **Facilities and administration**

- 2.11 Request for the two additional education centres in Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) and corresponding IT facilities was made very late.

### **Human resources**

- 2.12 The entire process for recruiting new teaching staff appeared to be rather late.
- 2.13 During the process of interviewing various parties, the Inquiry Panel observed the low staff morale, the inadequate administrative support and the related confusion.

### **Communication with various parties concerned**

- 2.14 During the inquiry process, the Inquiry Panel observed that most of the teachers, administrative staff and students were not well informed.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Associate Vice-President (Academic Quality Assurance)**

- 3.1 The AVP (AQA), who is responsible for overseeing the operations and for making key decisions of CC and LIFE, has not established sufficient management control measures. Furthermore, he was clearly slow in making important decision to recruit additional academic and administrative staff even after student enrolment had already exceeded 8,000 in late July/early August.

### **Former Dean of CC and Further Education**

- 3.2 The former Dean was the key person to supervise all administrative and operational procedures in CC and LIFE. His direct supervisor, the AVP (AQA) had entrusted to him with many important decisions. However he has made a lot of aggressive decisions on his own initiatives without following the stipulated procedures. His staff has also charged him for his dictatorial management. Moreover, he also failed to establish well-documented administrative procedures for his sub-ordinates to follow.

### **Associate Director of CC**

- 3.3 As the second most senior staff besides the former Dean, she was not able to

provide the support and advice at the level expected of her grade and role. She had also not properly supervised her sub-ordinates.

### **Former Assistant Director (Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance) of CC**

- 3.4 As the staff responsible for quality assurance, she had failed to submit the new programmes for accreditation in time; failed to take any decisive action to control the admission of non-standard candidates and also failed to implement the new ILEP program in a proper manner.

### **Governance**

- 3.5 The check and balance system of the governing body can be further improved to enable a more effective supervision.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Student enrolment**

- 4.1 The Inquiry Panel finds the existence of over enrolment in both CC and LIFE. It is of utmost importance that sufficient preparation and adjustment in infrastructure and resources, ranging from education centres with adequate facilities to teaching resources and administrative support be set up and arranged in a timely fashion to align with careful student number projection approved in a proper channel from time to time.

### **Governance**

#### *Accountability*

- 4.2 The Inquiry Panel suggests that improvements be made to the governing body of CC so as to ensure an effective management system in place to oversee administration, quality assurance and financial matters.
- 4.3 The Inquiry Panel recommends the Council to review the governance structure of LIFE and to set up a separate governing body for proper administration of LIFE.
- 4.4 Necessary interim measures to the current governing body of LIFE be made. Besides the attendance performance of the current governing body members should be closely monitored.
- 4.5 The Inquiry Panel also considers that limitation should be imposed on the maximum number of term an individual may serve as chairman of the governing body of CC and LIFE.

#### *Transparency*

- 4.6 It is recommended that a summary of discussions and decisions of the governing body meetings be disseminated to the CC and LIFE staff and students on the material website of CC and LIFE from time to time.

### **Quality assurance**

#### *Teaching resources*

- 4.7 The Inquiry Panel recommends that the teaching load as well as the arrangement of teaching remission for various administrative duties be fully reviewed.

#### *Adherence to adopted procedures*

- 4.8 CC and LIFE should act in accordance with the adopted procedures and guidelines and keep proper records of all decisions and minutes of various meetings.
- 4.9 The Inquiry Panel considers that sufficient support has to be provided to the newly recruited and part-time teachers and much effort has to be exerted in quality assurance aspect.

#### *Admission procedures*

- 4.10 It is considered that the lax admission exercise was undesirable and improper. CC and LIFE should follow strictly the stipulated admission procedures.

#### **Class arrangement and education centre**

- 4.11 It is strongly recommended that the future timetabling exercises for LIFE programmes adopt a similar class scheduling as for the undergraduate degree programmes unless there are strong pedagogical reasons to do otherwise.
- 4.12 Efforts should be made to explore the possibility of re-arranging some of the classes at Hoover Education Centre in Tsuen Wan to other venues, in consultation with, and upon agreement of all parties involved.
- 4.13 CC and LIFE should closely monitor the teaching and learning facilities available so as to ensure that they are able to cope with students' needs.
- 4.14 It is recommended that for future admission exercise, the types of programmes offered in various education centres should be made known during the admissions exercise so as to facilitate applicants to make an informed choice and to monitor the admissions quota.

#### **Advanced diploma programmes**

- 4.15 It is important that the approved admissions requirements should be closely adhered to, and extreme caution be exercised, with full justifications provided for exceptional cases. The built-in remedial measures for those non-standard admissions which should be strictly followed without delay.
- 4.16 For future programme offering, it is highly recommended that the JQRC time frame of approval be strictly followed with a view that all the relevant information including the outcome of the verification be made available at the start of admissions.

#### **Early involvement of relevant units in resources planning**

- 4.17 It is recommended that in future, the units concerned be invited to participate and contribute as early as possible so that they could provide expert input and advice, instead of a last-minute rush and requests for urgent work done.
- 4.18 Proper plans on staff recruitment with a specified time frame should be in place for management consideration at the earliest possible time. The management should also respond promptly to the staff recruitment request.

#### **Further study and career counseling**

- 4.19 CC and LIFE should start working on measures to address the issue of students' articulation for students studying in top-up degrees awarded by some overseas institutions.

- 4.20 Given the large student population, it is deemed necessary to engage additional staff with relevant expertise to enhance service and support for students, *inter alia*, career planning and counseling.

### **Communication with various parties concerned**

- 4.21 CC and LIFE should establish proper complaint handling mechanism to address and handle student and staff complaints effectively.

#### *Staff*

- 4.22 It is strongly recommended that CC and LIFE should strengthen and enhance its communication with staff.
- 4.23 CC and LIFE should disseminate relevant details of the ILEP implementation details to both staff and students without further delay.

#### *Students*

##### Course selection

- 4.24 It is recommended to consider the arrangement of having student class representatives to serve as focal point of contact between the administration as well as teachers and the different classes of students. Furthermore, staff and student consultation committee/sessions can be arranged as the feedback loop to further enhance communication and attend to students' needs.

##### Programme offering

- 4.25 The revised arrangement of programme offerings by CC (mainly associate degrees) and LIFE (higher diplomas, diplomas and advanced diplomas) should be clearly conveyed to students, *inter alia*, the year of implementation.

##### Students' enquiry and dissemination of important information

- 4.26 Sufficient notice should be given to students for any important changes, and CC and LIFE should also deploy sufficient and necessary resources in handling students' enquiry in a timely manner.

#### *Student liaison*

- 4.27 The administrative units concerned should take a more active role in liaising between the University and students, and act as a bridge in solving communication gaps and thus promoting mutual understanding and harmonious relationship.

### **Crisis management**

- 4.28 In order to manage crisis effectively in future, the University should establish a crisis management plan with clear structures and support mechanisms, which will enable speedy response to address a crisis, and the impact of the crisis can be minimized.

### **Media**

- 4.29 CC and LIFE administration should enhance the awareness of the importance of gathering relevant facts and evidence without any delay in handling any crisis. In the process, expert and professional advice should be sought from the relevant units in the University.

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **Incidents relating to the CC and LIFE 2012 admission**

- 1.1 Since late September 2012, issues relating to CC and LIFE admission exercise received considerable media coverage. This incident became the focus of attention as evidenced in numerous media reports published nearly every day since 24 September 2012. Reports were also widely made on radio and television. The incident had aroused concerns among a number of stakeholders including students, staff and alumni.
- 1.2 At first, the issue was just the ‘over enrolment’ of students of CC and LIFE this year resulting in insufficient teaching and learning facilities provided at the off-campus education centres for students’ use. As things unfolded, more issues were drawn into the incident, *inter alia*, reduction of class hours from three hours to two hours for a number of weeks from late September 2012; making up of the reduced class hours with a new Integrated Learning Experience Programme (ILEP); undesirable location of a few education centers; issues concerning the mapping of the Advanced Diploma programmes in Qualifications Framework and an anonymous complaint from teaching staff of CC and LIFE against the former Dean of CC and Further Education.

### **Appointment of the Inquiry Panel**

- 1.3 On 28 September 2012, the management of the University appointed a 3-member panel to inquire into the admission arrangements of CC and LIFE. The Inquiry Panel is tasked with investigation into and reviewing the operations of CC and LIFE in the admission exercise of 2012-13 for its associate degrees, pre-associate degrees, higher diplomas, diplomas and advanced diplomas. The terms of reference and the membership of the Inquiry Panel are as follows:

#### *Terms of reference*

In light of the recent concern arising from the admissions of the Community College at Lingnan University (CC) and Lingnan Institute of Further



Education (LIFE), to inquire into and review the operations of CC and LIFE in the admissions exercise for 2012-13 including its impact on teaching and learning, with a view to making recommendations to the University on improvements thereon.

*Membership*

Convenor: Mr Simon IP Shing Hing, member of the University Council

Members: Dr Kenneth LAW Wing Kin, Associate Professor of the  
Department of Sociology and Social Policy

Mr Sammy LEUNG Chung Sing, member of the Board of  
Governors of CC

Secretary: Mrs Monica TSANG TAI Mo Oi, Director of Administration  
and Registry Services

- 1.4 To demonstrate its concern and the importance given to the 2012 admission issues of CC and LIFE, as well as to further enhancing the credibility of the inquiry, the University Council at its meeting on 15 October 2012 resolved to appoint two additional members to the Inquiry Panel, i.e. expanding the membership from three to five. In addition, the President of the Lingnan University Students' Union has also been invited to join the Inquiry Panel as observer. The Inquiry Panel was expanded with the following membership:

Convenor: Mr Simon IP Shing Hing, member of the University Council

Members: Dr Kenneth LAW Wing Kin, Associate Professor of the  
Department of Sociology and Social Policy

Dr Alex LEE Ye Lick, member of the University Council

Mr Sammy LEUNG Chung Sing, member of the Board of  
Governors of CC

Mr Allen YUNG Chan Lung, Chairman of the Audit Committee  
of the University Council

Observer: Mr Eddie CHAN Shu-fai, President of Students' Union

Secretary: Mrs Monica TSANG TAI Mo Oi, Director of Administration  
and Registry Services

## **Panel's Approach and Procedure**

- 1.5 The 3-member Inquiry Panel convened its first meeting on 5 October 2012 and identified various concerns arising from the admissions of the CC and LIFE as set out in the news reports, viz. (a) over enrolment, (b) class arrangements, (c) shortage of teaching staff, (d) insufficient facilities in the teaching centres, (e) teaching centres in undesirable location, (f) teaching quality (quality of programmes, such as mapping of advanced diploma programmes to the Qualification Framework, and quality of teaching staff), and (g) re-arranging of programmes offered from CC to LIFE.
- 1.6 In pursuing its mandate, the Inquiry Panel wrote to various parties concerned for acquiring relevant details, *inter alia*, chronologies, information and copies of relevant documents, including: (a) Associate Vice-President (Academic Quality Assurance) who is also Chairman of the Management Committee of CC and Chairman of the Management Board of LIFE, (b) former Dean of CC and Further Education, (c) Associate Director of CC, (d) Office of the Comptroller, (e) Human Resources Office, (f) Library, and (g) Information Technology Services Centre. The Inquiry Panel has received full cooperation of the parties concerned, including the University administration, management of CC and LIFE and their teachers and students as well as useful information from all the interviewees. For this, the Inquiry Panel expresses its gratitude.
- 1.7 As part of the fact-finding exercise required the Inquiry Panel's seeking to obtain information from those who were involved, it was also achieved by interviews with 51 individuals (invited and voluntary) from CC and LIFE (teaching and administrative staff) and administrative units of the University as well as student representatives (including those from the Concern CCLU and LIFE Action Group) during the period from 31 October 2012 to 13 December 2012. Among the 51\* individuals who met with the Inquiry Panel, these included staff members from CC and LIFE as well as administrative units of the University who were involved in the admission process, and some of them participated in the 2012 admission related exercise in more than one

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\* Given the need to maintain confidentiality and safeguard their identities, their names are not disclosed.

capacity. In addition, the Inquiry Panel received from some of the interviewees their written submission to clarify issues concerned, and/or additional information to facilitate the work of the Inquiry Panel.

- 1.8 The Inquiry Panel also set up a dedicated email address (inquirypanel@LN.edu.hk) to solicit information and views from staff and students of CC and LIFE concerning the CC and LIFE 2012 admission. The Inquiry Panel received 13 individual or group messages via its email address.
- 1.9 The Inquiry Panel held 14 meetings spending about 71 hours in meetings during the period from 5 October 2012 to 28 December 2012.

### **Confidentiality**

- 1.10 All proceedings have taken place in closed sessions as open meetings would not be conducive to frank disclosure of information and open discussion of issues. In addition, the Inquiry Panel has treated all views and comments collected from staff and students with the strictest confidentiality in accordance with the current Rules of Procedure for Council and University Committee Meetings (Lingnan University Statute 4) and applicable laws. Every reasonable effort has been made to protect the privacy of all parties involved and the confidentiality of all information and documents used.
- 1.11 At the start of each interview session, interviewee(s) were assured of the confidentiality of the discussions and that no tape-recorded or video-taped without the Inquiry Panel's consent in accordance with section 10.14 of Rules of Procedure for Council and University Committee Meetings. The Guidelines on the Procedures of the Inquiry Panel were sent to all interviewees prior to their interview session. In addition, a hard copy was also provided for their reference at the meeting.
- 1.12 In line with the stipulated principles, coupled with the need to keep the contents of all interviews confidential so that every interviewee could be frank with the Inquiry Panel, a confidentiality undertaking form to this effect, applicable to the Convenor, Members, Observer, Secretary and duty staff, were signed.

- 1.13 In response to the news report of a local newspaper which published the information of proceedings of the Inquiry Panel on 6 December 2012, the Inquiry Panel issued a media statement on the same day which indicated that the Inquiry Panel is strongly concerned about the said media report. It was reiterated that the Inquiry Panel has made every effort to protect the privacy of all parties involved and the confidentiality of all information and documents used. The Inquiry Panel deeply regrets over the leakage of information of its proceedings, and reserves the right to take legal action. It was clarified that some information as reported was incorrect. The media statement has been disseminated to all staff and students on 7 December 2012.
- 1.14 The Inquiry Panel disproved the media leakage at the strongest terms and has taken all the necessary steps to enforce the undertaking given at the commencement of the proceedings. On 11 December 2012, all parties concerned including the Convenor, members, observer and secretariat staff have signed a Statutory Declaration individually declaring that they have kept/would uphold confidentiality at all material times.

## Chapter 2 Observations

2.1 The Inquiry Panel has the following observations.

### Student Enrolment

2.2 The following is the comparison of the actual student Enrolment (as at 5 October 2012) with different projections at different stages presented to different parties:

	<u>Programmes</u>	<u>Actual Student Number</u> (5 Oct 2012)	<u>Approved Target Student Number*</u>	<u>Student Projections</u>	
				<u>CCLU and LIFE Admission Management Committee</u> (16 Jan 2012)	<u>CCLU Administrative Meeting</u> (18 Jul 2012)
<u>CC</u>	Associate Degree	2,637	1,200 (120%)	2,400 (10%)	1,990 (33%)
	Pre-Associate Degree	171	30 (470%)	0 (-)	30 (470%)
	<b>(a) Sub-total:</b>	<b>2,808</b>	<b>1,230</b> <b>(+128%)</b>	<b>2,400</b> <b>(+17%)</b>	<b>2,020</b> <b>(+39%)</b>
<u>LIFE</u>	Higher Diploma	2,538	1,680 (100%)	1,320 (92%)	1,780 (43%)
	Diploma	815	360 (126%)	460 (77%)	460 (77%)
	Advanced Diploma	748	420 (78%)	420 (78%)	420 (78%)
	<b>(b) Sub-total:</b>	<b>4,101</b>	<b>2,100</b> <b>(+95%)</b>	<b>2,100</b> <b>(+95%)</b>	<b>2,660</b> <b>(+54%)</b>
	New Yi Jin Diploma (Yi Jin)	1,346	2,500 (-46%)	2,500 (-46%)	2,500 (-46%)
	<b>(c) Sub-total:</b>	<b>1,346</b>	<b>2,500</b> <b>(-46%)</b>	<b>2,500</b> <b>(-46%)</b>	<b>2,500</b> <b>(-46%)</b>
<b>TOTAL: (a) + (b)</b>		<b>6,909</b>	<b>3,330</b> <b>(+107%)</b>	<b>4,500</b> <b>(+54%)</b>	<b>4,680</b> <b>(+48%)</b>
<b>TOTAL: (a) + (b) + (c)</b>		<b>8,255</b>	<b>5,830</b> <b>(+42%)</b>	<b>7,000</b> <b>(+18%)</b>	<b>7,180</b> <b>(+15%)</b>

Note: ( ) the bracketed figures denote over and under enrolment percentages =  $\frac{\text{Actual Student Enrolment} - \text{Approved Student Number/Student Projections}}{\text{Approved Student Number/Student Projections}}$

\*Target student number for CC was presented and noted at the Management Committee of CC at its meeting of 20 April 2012, and then presented in the budget of CC for 2012-13 at the meeting of the CC's Board of Governors (29 May 2012). The budget was subsequently approved at the University Council meeting (18 June 2012, Budget documents of CC).

Target student number for LIFE was presented in the University's budget for 2012-13 and was approved at the University Council meeting (18 June 2012, budget documents of LIFE).

- 2.3 It is noted that for the academic year 2012-13, the approved respective target student number for CC and LIFE are 1,230 and 2,100 while the respective actual student number are 2,808 and 4,101. Taking into consideration the high student demand for study opportunities in 2012-13 and with the much larger than previous years' potential applicants in this double cohort year, it is understandable to have "moving" student number target at different point of time as projected in the internal meetings, including the CCLU and LIFE Admission Management Committee (AMC) meeting held on 16 January 2012 and the CCLU Administrative Meeting held on 18 July 2012. However, after the CCLU Administrative Meeting, the latest student number projection had not been submitted to the respective approving authority, viz. the Management Board of LIFE, Management Committee of CC and Board of Governors of CC (BoG) for consideration and approval.
- 2.4 The Inquiry Panel cannot find any relevant proof which substantiates the variance in different student projections at different stages. It is also noted that while the CC and LIFE management had adjusted the student projection, they had not prepared for corresponding teaching resources to align with the student number projection, including faculty and administrative staff as well as teaching facilities.

#### *Admission Procedures*

- 2.5 The AMC was formed in 2011-12 academic year to better utilize the resources of CC and LIFE. As stipulated in its terms of reference, its works include, *inter alia*, formulating policies, guidelines, criteria, procedures and budgets for student admissions of CC and LIFE in relation to admission. However, the Inquiry Panel was informed that the major work of the AMC is to oversee and monitor the marketing and promotion campaigns for all CC and LIFE programmes. There was little discussion about the targeted student enrolment, the teaching and learning facilities and the teaching and administrative supports, etc. In essence, the AMC did not function according to its terms of reference.
- 2.6 It is noted that admission interview is a standard admission procedure of CC and LIFE once application is received. Such assessment and interview

procedure is also published on the web of CC. However, it is noted from interviewees that individual/group interviews had only been arranged in the early period of admission. Very soon after the start of admissions exercise, the former Dean of CC and Further Education instructed not to arrange admission interview for applicants. Offers were then made directly to those who have attained the minimum programme admission requirement.

- 2.7 It is also noted that three telephone lines manned by six staff members were engaged during the peak admission period of 20 – 30 July 2012. Qualified applicants were assigned a serial number and asked to bring along their academic transcripts to CC/LIFE for programme application within three days for further processing.
- 2.8 It is found that student recruitment advertisements placed in the press on 13, 16 and 17 August 2012 were enlarged, with the reason being given by CC and LIFE as “it was an urgent decision in order to push the enrolment figures” (as indicated in the justification provided by CC and LIFE to the Office of Comptroller on 5 November 2012).

#### *Class Schedule Arrangement*

- 2.9 It is noted that there were inadequate teaching venues at the start of Term 1 in September due to the non-availability of two education centres until late October 2012. The class schedules for the current term were only disseminated shortly before the class commencement. To fully utilize the available teaching space, classes were scheduled from early morning to late evening. There were also classes scheduled on Saturday (including evening), which were not practised in previous years.
- 2.10 Staff and students were informed about the reduction of contact hours from three hours to two hours commencing from the week of 24 September 2012 lasting for a total of four weeks.

## Quality Assurance

### *New Programmes*

2.11 It is reported that between the 9-month period of September 2011 to May 2012, 69 programme proposals were developed. After consideration at various committees in accordance with the programme proposal and management mechanism, among these programmes, 47 were approved by the Senate for launching. Please refer to the following table for details.

#### Number of Programmes Considered and Approved at Various Levels of Meetings between September 2011 and May 2012

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Arts considered (approved)</b>	<b>Business considered (approved)</b>	<b>Social Sciences considered (approved)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Advanced Diploma</b>	4 (2)	13 (10)	10 (7)	<u>27</u> <u>(19)</u>
<b>Associate Degree</b>	17 (9)	7 (6)	10 (9)	<u>34</u> <u>(24)</u>
<b>Higher Diploma</b>	3 (2)	2 (2)	3 (0)	<u>8</u> <u>(4)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>24</u> <u>(13)</u>	<u>22</u> <u>(18)</u>	<u>23</u> <u>(16)</u>	<u>69</u> <u>(47)</u>

Sources of information: Minutes of meeting(s) of the Management Committee of CC and the Management Board of LIFE.

### *Teaching Resources*

2.12 It is noted that the total number of teaching staff newly hired for 2012-13 academic year (as at 22 October 2012) were as follows:

	<b>No. of Teaching Staff Newly Hired for 2012-13</b>	
	<b>No. of Full Time Teaching Staff</b>	<b>No. of Part Time Teaching Staff</b>
<b>CC</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>104</b>

2.13 It is noted that there is relatively a larger number of new staff and many part-time teachers for LIFE programmes. The Inquiry Panel was informed that due



to late staff recruitment this year, many candidates did not show up and a larger number of part-time teachers have been recruited subsequently.

- 2.14 It is reported to the Inquiry Panel that there was insufficient administrative support in the two units. As a result, teachers are heavily engaged in administrative work. It is noted that a consolidated request of CC and LIFE for additional administrative staff was presented on 22 October 2012, which was approved by the AVP (AQA) for adoption on 30 October 2012. There were 11 and 38 additional administrative posts requested respectively for CC and LIFE.
- 2.15 It is noted that in previous years, the maximum student number in a language course was 25; however, based on the information available, there are 12 out of 105 classes and 11 out of 121 classes over the class size of 25 in Chinese and English language courses respectively in CC this year. For the case of LIFE, there are relatively larger number of language courses over the class size of 25, viz. 99 over 103 classes in Chinese language courses and 116 over 125 classes in English language courses.

*Class Hours Reduced from 3 to 2 hours for 4 weeks*

- 2.16 According to the information presented to the Inquiry Panel, it is noted that due to the non-availability of the two new education centres in Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) until 22 October 2012, special class schedule was arranged (i.e. to reduce one contact hour during the period of 24 September to 20 October 2012). The former Dean of CC and Further Education set up a Task Force to work out a series of workshops/seminars/activities (subsequently named as Integrated Learning Experience Programme (ILEP)) for both CC and LIFE students as a remedial arrangement for students. The inaugural meeting of the Task Force was held on 6 September 2012. However, the Inquiry Panel observed that most of the teachers were not informed about the details of the ILEP all along. Students only received a short message via their mobile phones and a written notice on the first day of class informing them that all classes would be reduced by one hour for the period from 24 September to 20 October 2012 so as to facilitate the implementation of the ILEP. After an open forum held on 9 October 2012 in which many students complained about the

reduction of class hour, it was announced on 15 October 2012 that class hour resumed to 3 hours and make-up classes would be arranged. Despite of those new developments, students received no further information of the ILEP till now.

### *Advanced Diploma Programmes*

- 2.17 With Lingnan University's self-accreditation status, CC and LIFE can offer new programmes by follow through its own management mechanism. Nevertheless, it is noted that the new programmes on offer would still need to be placed on the Qualifications Framework (QF) (pitched at Level 4) for an external Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) to consider and approve. It is further noted that JQRC has three sets of submission dates for consideration of programmes for verification of the QF, viz. Match, July and November of the year.
- 2.18 It is noted that the new Advanced Diploma programme details as approved by the Senate were submitted to the JQRC for verification on 31 July 2012. At the time of the student admissions, there was no mention of the pending status in the Level 4 of the QF Register.
- 2.19 It came to light that the admissions requirement of Level 2 in four Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) subjects including English Language and Chinese Language approved by the Senate had been relaxed during the admissions exercise. As a result thereof, 123 out of 748 admitted students are non-standard admittees. According to the stipulated procedure, remedial workshop would be arranged for such students. However, no such remedial workshop was conducted up to today's date.

### *Class scheduling*

- 2.20 It is noted that courses of LIFE programmes are scheduled as 3-hour session in the current term. Members were informed that for undergraduate courses offered in the University proper, two teaching patterns were commonly adopted, i.e. 2 + 1 hours or 1.5 hours x 2. These two approaches have been widely accepted pedagogically, which allow time for students to reflect and

digest the learning.

## **Facilities and Administration**

### *Education Centres*

2.21 For the programmes concerned, the following eight education centres are used:

<b><u>Education Centre</u></b>	<b><u>Programmes offered in the education centre</u></b>
New Academic Block	Associate Degree Pre-Associate Degree Higher Diploma
Tsim Sha Tsui Education Centre	Associate Degree Advanced Diploma Higher Diploma Diploma
Tsim Sha Tsui ChinaChem Education Centre (w.e.f. 22 October 2012)	Advanced Diploma Higher Diploma Diploma
Tsim Sha Tsui Houston Education Centre (w.e.f. 22 October 2012)	Reserved for remedial classes
Tsuen Wan Hoover Education Centre	Associate Degree Pre-Associate Degree Diploma
Tsuen Wan Cheong Wah Education Centre	Advanced Diploma Higher Diploma
Jordan Ocean Education Centre	Advanced Diploma Higher Diploma
Jordan Austin Education Centre	Advanced Diploma Higher Diploma Diploma

It is noted that request of the set up of WiFi infrastructure for the above eight education centers were only received by the Information Technology Services Centre of the University proper on 5 October 2012 and were expected to be completed by 21 October 2012.

2.22 The normal practice for preparing an education centre calls for at least three months from initial site visiting, rental appraisal by independent real estate

valuers, approval of paper on tenancy by respective approving authority, tendering for design and renovation works, procurement of furniture and equipment to installation of teaching facilities. However, the confirmed request for the two additional education centres in TST was only received by the Office of the Comptroller (CO) for processing on 13 August 2012, only about one and a half months before term start of 24 September 2012.

### *Transfer of Courses Offering from CC to LIFE*

- 2.23 In the UGC Report on “Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong released in December 2010, there is a recommendation that “The community college operations of UGC-funded institutions should be completely separated from their parent institutions within three years of acceptance of this recommendation.” Nevertheless the Education Bureau subsequently “agreed that greater separation of self-financing sub-degree operations from UGC-funded institutions should be accepted as a long term direction. Specifically, community colleges should be separated from parent UGC-funded institutions financially and in quality assurance, but we will not mandate physical separation, legal separation, independent school registration and severance of name ties in the medium run.” In essence, there has never been any set deadline in implementing the “separation”.
- 2.24 During the inquiry process, the Inquiry Panel observed that staff of CC and LIFE was given the impression by the former Dean of CC and Further Education that CC and LIFE was needed to push up the student number since there was an urgent need to formally separate the two entities of CC and LIFE both structurally and financially.
- 2.25 It is noted that CC and LIFE have undergone a rationalisation process resulting that from 2012-13, CC would offer associate degree programmes, and LIFE is responsible for other programmes including higher diploma, advanced diploma, diploma and Yi Jin Diploma. However, all letters of admissions for 2012-13 intakes were issued on the letterhead paper showing both CC and LIFE logos. Without any clear indication to students concerned of the new demarcation of programme administration of CC and LIFE, students were only aware of the new arrangement upon receipt of the student identity cards.

### *Media Statements*

- 2.26 It is stated in the CC and LIFE media statements in late September 2012 that the non-availability of two new education centres was due to delay in renovation work. It is also stated that the student number was in accordance with those in planning, and that the CC operations in admission, curriculum and personnel are monitored and confirmed by its Management Committee.

### **Human Resources**

- 2.27 Teaching staff recruitment commenced in May 2012 with advertisements dispatched on 3 May 2012 for Yi Jin diploma programmes. However, for LIFE further education and CC pre-associate/associate degree programmes, advertisements were just issued on 26 June 2012. Most of the interviews were held from mid to the end of August 2012. The entire process appeared to be rather late since classes for associate degrees and others started on 10 and 24 September 2012 respectively. Interviews were completed only on 31 August 2012, which was only 10 days prior to the commencement of associate degree programmes. According to Human Resources Office (HRO) of the University, CC and LIFE had been urged to process the teaching staff recruitment as early as possible. The Director of HR met with the former Dean of CC and Further Education on that shortly upon her return from leave on 28 August 2012.
- 2.28 It is noted that the staff recruitment exercise started rather late for 2012-13. On 24 August 2012, the AVP (AQA) delegated to the former Dean of CC and Further Education to the hiring of additional teaching staff for CC and LIFE during his leave period of 27 August to 7 September 2012 with the adopted faculty-student ratio.
- 2.29 Subsequently, the summary of manpower plan for CC and LIFE full time equivalent teaching staff for 2012-13 was provided to HRO on 28 August 2012. Details of this plan were:

	<u>Required no. of teaching staff</u>	<u>Existing no. of teaching staff</u>	<u>No. of staff to be recruited</u>
CC	63	29	34
LIFE	87	26	61

Out of the total of 95 new staff to be recruited, there were 22 and 21 respectively for Chinese/Putonghua and English. Due to late staff recruitment this year, it is noted that many candidates did not show up and a larger number of part-time teachers (especially in the language subjects, viz. English Language) have been recruited subsequently.

- 2.30 On 10 October 2012, some part-time teachers expressed concerns about their status for conducting classes, as they were not yet issued the contract of employment. In this connection, the Inquiry Panel was informed that there was verbal advice of the term of employment to these part-timers before the issuance of formal letter of appointment.
- 2.31 CC and LIFE expected substantial increases in applicants and admissions due to the double cohort year, and had requested further three education centres be rented in March 2012 for the increased student number. With the above expectations, additional administrative and supporting staff should have been anticipated and recruited to handle the admissions and other support services needed.
- 2.32 By the third week of July 2012, it should also have been quite clear that due to the large enrolment in associate degree and higher diploma, diploma and advanced diploma programmes, a large number of administrative and supporting staff was obviously needed to handle all the teaching and student support services required at the commencement of the term in September 2012, especially as another three new education centres would be rented and utilized for the programmes. However, request for the required staff members was never made at that point of time. The process was only initiated after a great deal of teaching staff and student complaints in September and October which finally resulted in the establishment of the required administrative and supporting staff as received by the HRO in November 2012. According to the memo dated 22 October 2012, which the AVP (AQA) only approved on 31

October 2012, on the Administrative Posts Establishment of CC and LIFE (2012-13), the requested new establishment of administrative staff for CC is 11 out of existing 22 (50% increase) and LIFE is 38 out of existing 33 (115% increase). The Inquiry Panel observed that CC and LIFE was under huge shortage of manpower in the past few months for its operation.

- 2.33 During the process of interviewing various parties, the Inquiry Panel observed the low staff morale, the inadequate administrative support and the related confusion, and hence the need of having a full-time senior in-charge person to actively and fully engaged in overseeing and addressing the immediate needs and issues of CC and LIFE. These have been conveyed to the management (the President) in mid-November 2012.

### **Communication with Various Parties Concerned**

- 2.34 During the inquiry process, the Inquiry Panel observed that most of the teachers, administrative staff and students were not informed or there was miscommunication about many important issues, *inter alia*, the arrangement of reducing class hours from three hours to two hours from 24 September 2012 for a total of four weeks and details about the ILEP. Students were not be able to acquire information/assistance they needed especially at the outbreak of the admission crisis.
- 2.35 The Inquiry Panel was informed that there was a request for new staff establishment of CC and LIFE from 2012-13 dated 22 October 2012 for AVP (AQA)'s consideration and approval. As indicated in the said memorandum, such request was also copied by CC and LIFE to HRO at the same time. However, for this 22 October's request, the HRO was not aware of the situation as well as this approval on 30 October 2012 until some time in early November when a copy was scanned to HRO for action. It is considered that communication between CC and LIFE and the administrative units of the University proper should be strengthened so as to avoid any similar delay in future.
- 2.36 It is noted that the Student Affairs Office (SAO) of CC and LIFE as well as the Student Services Centre (SSC) of the University are responsible for liaising

between the CC and LIFE/the University and students and act as a bridge in solving communication gaps and thus promoting mutual understanding and harmonious relationship. This will also help in the quick resolution of conflicts as a result of better understanding from both side minimizing unnecessary and damaging confrontational discussions. However, it is seemed that the SAO and SSC were not involved in liaising with the affected students or addressed students' needs at the early stage before the incident escalated.



## **Chapter 3 Responsibilities**

### **Associate Vice-President (Academic Quality Assurance)**

- 3.1 The Shun Hing Chair Professor of Marketing has been concurrently appointed as AVP (AQA) since 2008. Prior to that, he was AVP (Administration and Planning). He has been assigned to oversee the operations of LIFE and CC upon their establishment respectively from 2001 and 2003. He is Chairman of the University's Academic Quality Assurance Committee since 2008, Deputy Chairman of the CC's BoG and Chairman of the Management Committee of CC as well as Management Board of LIFE. With these designated roles and substantial experience in this line of works, he is obviously the chief person who is ultimately responsible for the management of CC and LIFE. He was also the immediate supervisor to whom the former Dean of CC and Further Education reported.
- 3.2 Under the current governance structure, right under the BoG, there is the Management Committee of CC. As Chairmen of the CC's Management Committee as well as LIFE Management Board overseeing the operations of these two affiliated institutions, even in the face of growing public concern on the issue of student over enrolment starting in late September through the entire month of October, there was no action being taken on his part in a timely manner, noting that a meeting of the Management Committee of CC was only convened on 31 October 2012, and the Management Board of LIFE did not meet until 19 November 2012.
- 3.3 The AVP (AQA) advised the Inquiry Panel that he had taken the former Dean as an experienced executive who managed CC and LIFE since 2008. Furthermore, his contract has recently been renewed and he is entering his fifth year in CC and LIFE. For the supervision of the former Dean, he therefore confined himself on a macro management level and not going into details, and hence he should not be responsible for the unfortunate events.
- 3.4 Although the AVP (AQA) expressed himself adopting the macro management approach hereinbefore mentioned, the AVP (AQA), serving as Chairmen of the Management Committee of CC and Management Board of LIFE, was clear

about the student admission plan for the academic year 2012-13. At the CCLU Administrative Meeting held on 18 July 2012, the AVP (AQA) also received the latest update on the projected student number. In addition, request on staff establishment and request on rental of additional teaching centres should have sought approval from the AVP (AQA).

- 3.5 In accordance with his thinking, budget can be flexible depending on the number of student enrolment and the budget can subsequently be aligned with student enrolment. However the budget is indicative of the institution's target enrolment and hence the basis from which the related infrastructure and resources be arranged accordingly. The AVP (AQA)'s viewpoint on budget was demonstrated by his attending the CCLU Administrative Meeting in July 2012, in which, he made no comment when the target student enrolment number for CC and LIFE were proposed as 2,020 and 2,660 respectively, whereas the corresponding budget figures that had been approved were only 1,230 and 2,100.
- 3.6 Knowing that the former Dean has been viewed as having his own questionable management style with CC and LIFE, management control measure was not in place and the former Dean was allowed to continue making important management decisions alone. The Inquiry Panel has reservation about the AVP (AQA)'s management approach in this regard.
- 3.7 The AVP (AQA) indicated that the ILEP would be an extra programme for new students and would not reduce the existing course. The original intention was that the 1 hour took out would be compensated by other learning activities during the term break and hence the actual teaching hours remain the same. This message, however, did not seem to get across to the students. Somehow, students perceived this as class cancellation.
- 3.8 As former Chairman of the JQRC, the AVP (AQA) and the former Dean who had worked in the position for years should be well aware of the related reviewing and processing time schedule. To this end, an appropriate time frame in relation to the introduction and launching of the new Advanced Diplomas should be drawn up so as to ensure a timely decision of the JQRC be obtained at the start of the admission process. With the proposal of the

nineteen new Advanced Diplomas which only started preparing in late 2011 or early 2012, it was unlikely that the programmes after Senate consideration could be submitted to the JQRC for consideration of placing in QF to meet the March batch deadline and possible inclusion of the outcome as decided by JQRC at time of student recruitment publicity materials.

- 3.9 The AVP (AQA), as Chairmen of the Management Committee of CC and Management of Board of LIFE, who is responsible for overseeing the operations and for making key decisions including HR establishments of CC and LIFE, was clearly slow in making the decision to establish additional teaching and administrative staff even after student enrolment had already exceeded 8,000 in late July and early August. His inaction led to academic staff having to perform additional administrative work to support the insufficient administrative staff resulting in complaints and dissatisfaction among the teaching staff. This also affected the teaching quality and administration of the education centres raising complaints from the students.

#### **Former Dean of CC and Further Education**

- 3.10 The former Dean joined the CC in April 2008. As head of CC and LIFE, he was supposed the key person in supervising all administrative and operational procedures in both units. His direct supervisor, the AVP (AQA), with many important decisions, including student admission, had entrusted him. However he has made a lot of aggressive decisions. His staff has also charged him for his dictatorial management. More importantly, he should be responsible for the mis-management of 2012 student admission exercise which subsequently leads to the damage of the reputation of the University.

#### *Student Enrolment*

- 3.11 As a member of the BoG, he should be well aware of the number of students that should be recruited and could be admitted in the 2012-13 academic year. He did attend the BoG meeting held on 29 May 2012 in which the target of student intake of 3,330 has been clearly stated, discussed and endorsed. It is evident that, however, from his letter to his immediate supervisor, the AVP (AQA), dated 23 August 2012, he alleged that the BoG meeting held on

December 2011 had budgeted 8,000 total full-time students for the academic year 2012-13 but no record was found in BoG's meeting records.

- 3.12 He has been well reminded by some members of the AMC (at the meeting held on 16 January 2012) of the fact that “the existing venue arrangement and capacity would be impossible to accommodate the projected number of student intake” (Minutes of the Second Meeting of CCLU and LIFE Admission Management Committee, 3.3-3.6 in p.2).
- 3.13 He was the one who gave direct instruction to staff to admit applicants as many as possible, as expressed by the majority, if not all, of the staff involved in the admission exercise that the Inquiry Panel interviewed.
- 3.14 He was also well informed and updated by his staff, including academic and administrative staff, of the figures regarding the number of applicants and payment records categorized by programmes.
- 3.15 The Inquiry Panel received documents showing that the former Dean was informed that the number of students admitted (by payment records) has reached 5,076 on 2 August 2012 (well over the internal projected target of 4,680 as noted in the Administrative Meeting held on 18 July 2012) and the figure extended to 5,737 on 30 August 2012. It was 6,794 as recorded in the Summary of Manpower Plan for CC and LIFE teaching staff for 2012-13 which was submitted to HRO on 28 August 2012. The Inquiry Panel is unable to track down any written record of how the admission was conducted. There were also no traceable details of when the admission of students was “stopped”. In the admission process, there was absolutely no monitoring of the student quota. As a result, the students admitted far exceeded the permissible capacity of the education centres available, despite the Inquiry Panel heard that reminders had been given from some of his staff alerting to the insufficient facilities.
- 3.16 It was puzzling to see the ‘enlarged’ recruitment advertisement on the newspaper in mid-August 2012, noting that the total student number on 10 August 2012 was already 5,259, well above the internal projected target of 4,680 (as in mid-July). There could only be two reasonable assumptions.

Either the former Dean was still not satisfied with the new intake number and wished to recruit as many as possible, or there was no coordination in CC and LIFE's publicity work. In any case, this reflected the mis-management of the former Dean.

### *Education Centres and Facilities*

- 3.17 The initial request to CO for rental of additional education centres located in TST (including Houston Education Centre and Chinachem Golden Plaza Education Centre) in coping with the rapid increase in student intake after a few days of the release of the result of HKDSE on late July 2012, however, the full set of formal request were not issued until 13 August 2012. Not until 28 August and 31 August 2012 the lease of these two centres were confirmed respectively. CO received from LIFE relevant information for preparing the tender for the design and renovation (build) of the two education centres on 27 August 2012 and the invitation of tender was then issued on 28 August 2012. Given the late confirmation on the lease and tendering request for the two new education centres, the completion of renovation not meeting the start of school term had been reasonably anticipated.
- 3.18 When it was confirmed that the two new additional education centres would not be ready in time for the start of the LIFE programmes commencing on 24 September 2012, no prompt necessary arrangements were made, noting that students concerned were merely informed of the 'reduced' class hours arrangements on 24 September 2012.
- 3.19 It is with much regret to learn that the important timeline in the procedural time frame in set up of new education centres was 'oversight'. Had he been more sensitive to the usual time frame for the installation of an education centre (leasing, tendering, renovation, teaching facilities and equipment, teaching and administrative staff as well) and not being 'carried away' by the great enrolment target, the unfortunate crisis could have been avoided.

### *Quality Assurance*

3.20 He is also responsible for his decisions on lowering the approved admissions requirements of the Advanced Diplomas as so to meet the target student intake and on cancellation of interviewing applicants as so to expedite the admission process. The former decision has led to the admission of non-standard students and the latter decision violated the normal practice of admissions process, *inter alia*, assessment of the suitability of applicants in pursuing a particular study programme.

### *Management*

3.21 The Inquiry Panel also queries about the former Dean's personnel management style. Given the important task of admissions in the self-financing sector, the Inquiry Panel cannot find a reasonable explanation in his appointment of a Senior Manager to chair the joint AMC. Apart from the former Dean, there was in fact two more senior staff (*viz.* the Associate Director and the Assistant Director) than the Senior Manager attending the AMC meeting. Judging from the fact that despite the Senior Manager reported the admission figures during mid-July up to end of August 2012 to all his superiors and did not receive any feedback at all, there were obviously serious management issues. Another evidence is his deployment of a teaching staff without much relevant experience or professional training background to serve as Head of Student Affairs Office. It is seen to be undesirable for both the teacher concerned as well as students.

3.22 On the other hand, the batch of close to 100 recommendation forms for part-time teaching appointment in LIFE were only sent by LIFE to HRO for processing on 5 October 2012, with classes taught by these teachers already started on 24 September 2012, *i.e.* two weeks before.

3.23 The Inquiry Panel also noted that all the major and important decisions made by the former Dean were usually conveyed verbally to his subordinates (*e.g.* cancellation of interviewing applicants, lowering of admission requirements for advanced diplomas, continuation of admitting students, *etc.*).

### **Associate Director of CC**

- 3.24 She had been working in CC as the Assistant Registrar since 2007 and was promoted as Assistant Director in 2008 and had been involved in QA work. In the academic year 2009-10, she was deployed to the Dean's Office to work on the monitoring of college advancement programme and quality enhancement grant. Upon the departure of the former Associate Director, she has been appointed as the Acting Associate Director and promoted as the Associate Director in October 2012. During the past two years, she has stationed in different education centres in town for about nine months to a year. She attends the BoG meeting as observer and serves as members of the Management Committee of CC as well as Management Board of LIFE. With her seniority and respective role, she has access to all important information.
- 3.25 As the second most senior staff besides the Dean, she was not able to provide the support and advice at the level expected of her grade and role. It is also not known why the task of chairmanship of the AMC was not assigned to a higher rank staff, for instance the Associate Director if the former Dean decided to delegate the work to his subordinate, but to a relatively more junior staff who had only been responsible for further education programmes of LIFE before.
- 3.26 After the outburst of the admissions crisis in late September and despite the clear indication of the priority to handle the 'reduced class hour' issue, no substantial action has been taken to tackle the associated issues promptly when she was charged with such responsibility. Furthermore, the CC's plan of leaving the matter of "make-up class" to be worked out among teachers and students concerned did not prove to be the most effective option and in fact attracted criticism both from teachers and students. It is also noted that she had no knowledge of the procedure in the admissions of non-standard admittees in the 2012-13 exercise, viz. how are these processed.
- 3.27 As the direct supervisor of the Senior Manager and Head of Financial and General Administrative Services and the Administrative Manager of LIFE, she had failed to properly supervise her sub-ordinates which resulted in poorly

formulated budget as well as delay in preparation for corresponding teaching and administrative resources to align with the student number projection.

**Former Assistant Director (Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance) of CC**

- 3.28 She joined CC in March 2011 mainly responsible for quality assurance (QA). As the staff responsible for the important aspect of QA, the Inquiry Panel cannot understand why she did not take any action when she became aware of the lowering of the admission requirements of Advanced Diplomas and non-standard admittees. It is unfortunate that the expected QA monitoring role was not carried out to safeguard the interests of the University.
- 3.29 As the person in charge, she should have advised the AVP (AQA) and the former Dean that the Advanced Diplomas should either be submitted earlier to JQRC for approval or offering it on a later date and not promoting or delivering it prior to approval from JQRC. Given the placing of this new Advanced Diploma programmes in the QF was an the important information, its pending status in the Level 4 of the QF register should have been provided during the admissions process for applicants to make an informed choice. This important information should have been given to the applicants, such as printed on the relevant programme leaflets as well as the related application form. Unfortunately, the quality assurance measure was not seen, which had added to the CC and LIFE admissions crisis.
- 3.30 The confusion on ILEP purpose has been the result of poor information dissemination on the part of the person in charge of QA. It created unnecessary misconception among the staff and students resulting to public outcry. It has indeed affected the quality of academic offerings of CC and LIFE due to misguided perception of using it to cover up the shortened hours of academic courses during the first few weeks of the semester. She should have advised the AVP (AQA) and former Dean on how to concretely and clearly present its purpose to all concerned parties.
- 3.31 It is the current practice that a name stamp for the position of the Assistant Director (Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance) is used for issuing admission letter so as to streamline the process, and admission teams were



responsible for the whole admission process while the Administrative Officer in the team was requested to check whether the applicant meets the entrance requirements and to make offer or not. For the 2012 admission exercise, there were non-standard admissions of the Advanced Diploma programmes. It is evident that the internal control measures have to be strengthened to ensure the admission procedures are strictly adhered to, in particular using the name stamp on the admission letters to make offer to students. However, ideal situation dictates for the authorized signatory to have physical possession of the Admission documents for a quick review/verification of its accuracy before affixing his live signature over the Letter of Admission. Otherwise, in the absence of the authorized signatory, the person-in-charge may delegate another to sign on his/her behalf.

## **Governance**

### *Strategic Plan*

- 3.32 As stated in the Lingnan University Statute 6, “the Community College at Lingnan University” (CC) was established within the University for provision of Associate Degree programmes. Moreover, in the University’s strategic plan for year 2009 – 2016, CC has to implement the University’s liberal arts mission, and to implement an effective management structure ensuring continued stability and administrative efficiency.
- 3.33 At present, there are 2,828 students in the CC and courses are conducted in three venues, namely the main campus (NAB), Tsim Sha Tsui Education Centre (TST) and Tsuen Wan Hoover Education Centre. In the last academic year 2011-12, CC had a total of 1,006 students and two teaching venues which were NAB and TST.
- 3.34 Small student population and on-campus students’ life are two distinctive areas for Lingnan University continuing to strive for liberal arts education in Hong Kong. The Inquiry Panel considered that the CC should be working in line with these two aspects by maintaining a small student population and conducting teaching in the main campus, noting that the total student number

of undergraduate programmes (3-year and 4-year) of the University is 2,634 for 2012-13 academic year.

### *Governing Body*

3.35 The Inquiry Panel was concerned that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the BoG are President and AVP (AQA) respectively as it may be easily lead to self-review threat.

3.36 The AVP (AQA) chaired the Management Committee of CC and the Management Board of LIFE for over ten years since their establishment. The Inquiry Panel considered that job rotation was necessary for enabling better governance.

### *CC*

3.37 The University Council authorized the BoG as the supreme governing body of the CC for proper administration of the CC. The BoG meets twice a year. The BoG consists of 16 members, inclusive of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, who are at present the President and AVP (AQA) respectively. The remaining 14 members are made up as follows:

Two members nominated from the University Council;

Two members from the senior academics of the University;

Three members from the stakeholders in the community;

Three ex-officio members are University Comptroller, Secretary to the Council and Dean of the Community College and Further Education;

Two student representatives from undergraduate and associate degree programmes respectively;

Two members elected from among the full time associate degree programmes teaching staff.

In addition to the 16-membership, there are 2 observers who are Assistant Directors of CC and one of the Assistant Directors acts as the Secretary. Moreover, the Senior Manager in charge of Financial and General Administrative Services has always been in attendance. In summary, during

the last couple of years, there were 19 persons to attend the BoG meetings, whereas 6 of whom were staff of CC, inclusive of the Dean of CC and Further Education.

- 3.38 At the BoG meeting held on 29 May 2012, budget for the coming year 2012-13 was approved and the forecast number of the CC students was 1,230. In other various meetings, like AMC meeting held on 16 January 2012, the estimated number of students was 2,400; and in the Administrative Meeting held on 18 July 2012 (2 days before HKDSE result released), the estimated student number was 2,020. The Inquiry Panel understood that it was hard to make student number prediction in the double cohort year, but the CC should set a maximum number of student enrolment based on the existing available resources and facilities.
- 3.39 The Inquiry Panel observed that the BoG only met twice a year. It is noted that no special BoG meeting was convened after the outbreak of the crisis until 4 December 2012. In addition, the function of the BoG and the Management Committee of CC are not clearly defined and somehow overlapping.
- 3.40 The day-to-day management of CC has been delegated to the Management Committee of CC, which is chaired by AVP (AQA), who was also the Deputy Chairman of the BoG and the immediate supervisor of the former Dean. Members of the Management Committee of CC included the Dean of CC and Further Education, senior management staff of CC, University Comptroller and Director of Human Resources of the University. The Inquiry Panel queried whether the Management Committee of CC could manage the CC effectively as it only met twice a year.
- 3.41 The Academic Committee and the Personnel Committee of CC were both chaired by the Dean of CC and Further Education. That meant all matters included but not limited to admission exercise, staff appraisal, staff contract renewal are all under the Dean's authority. The Inquiry Panel considered that check-and-balance may not function.

## *LIFE*

- 3.42 The Management Board of LIFE (MB) has been set up to set directions for the LIFE, as well as to monitor quality and standards of courses and programmes offered. The AVP (AQA) is the Chairman of the MB and its members are from senior academic and administrative staff of LIFE plus three academic representatives from the University. LIFE's annual report is presented to the University Senate, the supreme academic body, for noting and its annual operating plans and budget as well as the annual accounts and financial statements will be submitted to Council for approval.
- 3.43 The Inquiry Panel considered the reporting line was inadequate to provide proper governance as all check-and-balance was within the University and the LIFE, external members were not engaged to provide governing role.
- 3.44 Though there were three University academic representatives in the MB, it was found that in the total three meetings held during the year 2011-12, two representatives did not attend all the meetings.

## *Admission Management Committee (AMC)*

- 3.45 The AMC was formed in December 2011 to handle all matters in relation to the student admission of both CC and LIFE. As stipulated in its terms of reference, its works include, *inter alia*, formulating policies, guidelines, criteria, procedures and budgets for student admissions of CC and LIFE. It was chaired by a Senior Manager of Business Development and Programme Monitoring of LIFE. This committee had more than 20 members from academic and teaching staff of both CC and LIFE. The Inquiry Panel considered that the AMC was only a mere working committee. Most important and critical admission decisions made during the admission, especially after the release of HKDSE result, were made by the former Dean.
- 3.46 The Inquiry Panel also queried the appropriateness of appointing a senior management staff to chair the committee in considering its importance on admission exercise.

## Chapter 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

### Student Enrolment

- 4.1 The Inquiry Panel appreciates the 2012-13 term is an unique double cohort year. It is understandable to have “moving” student number target as there exists huge demand for study opportunities from an exceptionally great population of student.
- 4.2 However, it is of utmost importance that the related infrastructure and resources be set up and arranged in a timely manner to align with the student number plan. These ranges from education centres with sufficient facilities (audio-visual, teacher space, computer and WiFi services together with library support); teaching resources and other administrative support.
- 4.3 The Inquiry Panel cannot find any proof within the huge submissions received from various parties that would suggest any indication of pressure to CC and LIFE to ‘push up’ the student number for profit making purposes.
- 4.4 The Inquiry Panel cannot accept the explanation from top management of CC and LIFE that there is no over enrolment when their enrolment figures are taken as a whole, given the fact that these two academic arms are separate and distinct from each other with different requirements for facilities, venues as well as faculty.
- 4.5 From the figures presented in the Table shown in 2.2 of Chapter 2, the Inquiry Panel observes that the Approved Target Student Number for CC was 1,230 and LIFE was 2,100. The total budgeted enrolment is therefore 3,330 (excluding Yi Jin). The respective budgets of CC and LIFE based on these figures were subsequently approved by the Council on 18 June 2012. The Inquiry Panel also observes that there were differences on the projected figures presented at the CC and LIFE’s internal meetings, including the AMC meeting on 16 January 2012 and CCLU Administrative Meeting on 18 July 2012, with figures of 2,400 for CC and 2,100 for LIFE for a total of 4,500 (excluding Yi Jin), and 2,020 for CC and 2,660 for LIFE for a total of 4,680 (excluding Yi Jin) respectively.

- 4.6 It is worth mentioning that Yi Jin presented an opposite scenario where the Actual Student Number of 1,346 is a lot lower than the Approved Student Number of 2,500, which is -46% lower than the total approved figure  $((1,346 - 2,500) / 2,500)$ . Attempts were made by some LIFE management to offset this under enrolment by trying to boost enrolment on other programmes, an act which the Inquiry Panel believes is inappropriate, as this is a unique programme and has a different entry level, aside from the fact that the quota allocated for Yi Jin is non-transferrable. The same line of reasoning can be applied between sub-degree programmes of CC and LIFE where the basis of projection is aligned on the availability of school facilities, faculty and staff and budget rather than just focusing on pure numbers, hence the under enrolment of one programme does not justify raising the numbers of another for the sake of achieving the maximum number of intakes.
- 4.7 It should also be noted that the internal projected figures, which were much higher than the approved target student numbers, were never conveyed to the Management Committee of CC and Management Board of LIFE nor to the BoG and the University administration.
- 4.8 Excluding Yi Jin, it can be observed that the actual student number figures are beyond any of the student projections to a certain degree. For the case of CC, the percentage ranged from 17% (compared with figures presented at the AMC meeting) to 128% (compared with approved student projection at the BoG meeting of 29 May 2012). For the case of LIFE, it ranged from 54% (compared with the figure presented at the CCLU Administrative Meeting) to 95% (compared with approved student projection at the Council meeting of 18 June 2012).
- 4.9 Therefore, in assessing whether there was over enrolment from the BoG and the Council's perspective, the student target figures approved by the Council should be used and not the internal projected figures of CC and LIFE which were unknown to other parties. Backed with the clear evidence, the Inquiry Panel concludes there exists over enrolment in both CC and LIFE in the 2012-13 academic year.

## **Governance**

- 4.10 It is noted that the various units in the University coordinate the current administrative procedures of CC and LIFE centrally. CC and LIFE should follow the same set of procedures in staff hiring, purchasing and procurement. The University's Office of the Comptroller, Human Resources Office, Information and Technology Services Centre and the Library provide support to CC and LIFE. The University charges a fixed percentage of overhead recovery rate and staff cost to CC and LIFE. CC and LIFE should work closely and openly with the University for ensuring prompt response and adherence to adopted procedures.
- 4.11 With the existing large student population of CC and LIFE (comparatively three times of the University proper's undergraduate students), it is deemed necessary to have a thorough review and revamp of the CC and LIFE governance so as to ensure an effective management system is in place to oversee administration, quality assurance and financial matters.
- 4.12 In the current set up of CC and LIFE, notwithstanding the considerable control over its two academic arms taken by the University, the recent over enrolment crisis could be taken as a strong indication that an even tighter control and monitoring should be in place to ensure that the directions are aligned with that of the University.
- 4.13 The Inquiry Panel expects that accountability and transparency should be strengthened for avoiding self-review and conflict of interest threat.

## *Accountability*

- 4.14 The governing role of the BoG of CC should be strengthened to enhance its accountability. The Inquiry Panel suggests that composition of membership of the BoG should be reviewed by adding more external members who are not staff member of CC as well as the University.

- 4.15 The Inquiry Panel recommends that the Chairman of the BoG should be a Council Member of the University to strengthen the check-and-balance purpose while the President serves as an ex-officio in the BoG.
- 4.16 Under the BoG, subcommittees for handling academic, personnel and finance matters should be set up for monitoring the CC management. External members should chair these subcommittees.
- 4.17 A full review is necessary to oversee the functions and composition of various working committees within the CC, for example, the Management Committee, the Admission Committee and the Admission Management Committee.
- 4.18 Frequency of meetings and business to be discussed in the BoG meetings should also be reviewed.
- 4.19 LIFE is at the moment governed by its Management Board. The only built-in check-an-balance mechanism is the presentation of its annual report to the Senate. In view of the increasing size of students in LIFE (4,432) and its self-finance nature, the Inquiry Panel recommends the Council to review the governance structure of LIFE and in particular to set up a separate governing body for the proper administration of LIFE.
- 4.20 An interim measure the Inquiry Panel suggests is a full review of the terms of reference and the composition of member of the Management Board of LIFE. Furthermore, the attendance record of the Management Board members should be closely monitored to make sure adequate contribution can be made.
- 4.21 The Inquiry Panel also considers that limitation should be imposed on the maximum number of terms an individual may serve as chairman of the Management Committee of CC and the Management Board of LIFE to maintain healthy turnover of chairmanship of the two institutions. As the Chairman of CC and LIFE has been in the position for over 10 years, the rotation of chairmanship would be a healthy development for CC and LIFE.
- 4.22 With the resignation of the former Dean of CC and Further Education, the AVP (AQA) has been appointed as the Acting Dean from 17 October 2012.



He is also the Chairmen of the Management Committee of CC and the Management Board of LIFE. The Inquiry Panel deems this arrangement not appropriate and the University should appoint different individuals to take up the chairmanship of the Management Committee of CC and the Management Board of LIFE so as to avoid self-review and conflict of interest threat.

### *Transparency*

- 4.23 At present, important decisions of the BoG and the Management Board of LIFE are not disseminated to the CC and LIFE staff and students. It is recommended that similar arrangements as being adopted by the University Council in disseminating a summary of discussions of the Council meetings on the University's website be also adopted in CC and LIFE.

## **Quality Assurance**

### *Teaching Resources*

- 4.24 While it is understandable for teaching staff to get involved in administrative duties, it is necessary to have an optimum balance to ensure there is no adverse effect on the course delivery. The Inquiry Panel recommends a benchmarking exercise to be conducted with other institutions in Hong Kong. The teaching load as well as the arrangement of teaching remission for various administrative duties should also be fully reviewed.

### *Adherence to Adopted Procedures*

- 4.25 It is noted that there are established procedures and guidelines for the operations of various management functions, *inter alia*, search and rental of new education centre, placement of staff recruitment advertisement and student admissions. There is evidence to suggest that CC and LIFE did not adhere to the adopted procedures in a considerable number of occasions. In some cases, actions were carried out without prior approval by the relevant approving authority. It is recommended that CC and LIFE should act in accordance with the adopted procedures and guidelines, unless a different system has been approved for adoption. Even if there is time constraint, the

management and administration of CC and LIFE should inform the approving authority to speed up the approving process as appropriate, instead of just reporting afterwards and posing the relevant parties to make “post-dated” approval.

- 4.26 With the great number of new recruits and large proportion of part-time teachers, and especially in the language subjects (English Language in particular), the Inquiry Panel considers that sufficient support has to be provided to these newly recruited and part-time teachers and much effort has to be engaged in quality assurance aspect. It is also important that sufficient administrative support in coordination work should be in place to ensure the consistency in course delivery to maintain the quality of LIFE programmes. It is the top priority to strengthen the administrative support so that the teaching quality will not be compromised.
- 4.27 The practice of ensuring proper documentation contributes to efficient and transparent administration. During the inquiry process, it was revealed that there was lack of documentation of the key and important decisions made in the admission exercise which hampered the transparency of the administration. The Inquiry Panel recommends that the administration of CC and LIFE should keep proper records; *inter alia*, decisions and minutes of committee meetings.

#### *Admission Procedures*

- 4.28 It is considered that the lax admission exercise was undesirable and improper. CC and LIFE should follow strictly the stipulated admission procedures.
- 4.29 As a responsible sub-degree programmes provider affiliated to the Lingnan University, the admissions exercise should be conducted in a proper manner, with each admissions decision carefully deliberated before offers are made to applicants. The processing of applications via the phone line is deemed inappropriate as it easily gave rise to the perception of money making driven. CC and LIFE should ensure that for future reference the stipulated admissions and interview procedures should be strictly followed.

### **Class Arrangement and Education Centre**

- 4.30 In relation to the standard 3 hours sessions for LIFE courses, the late evening teaching duties followed by early classes on the following day (the Inquiry Panel however cannot gauge the extent of such class scheduling arrangements across the CC and LIFE teachers and students for the latter), should be avoided or minimised as far as practicable.
- 4.31 It is strongly recommended that the future timetabling exercises for LIFE programmes adopt a similar class scheduling as for the undergraduate degree programmes, i.e. the pattern of either 2 + 1 hours or 1.5 hours x 2 so as to maximize the benefits to students, unless there are strong pedagogical reasons to do otherwise.
- 4.32 Following the availability of the two new education centres in October 2012, it is advisable to have better class scheduling from Term 2, 2012-13 for the benefit of teachers and students. In case Saturday evening classes are necessary, this should be communicated to parties concerned as early as possible. In addition, the class schedules should be disseminated as early as practicable, not just a few days beforehand.
- 4.33 Furthermore, members of the Inquiry Panel had visited some of the current education centres. Generally, these centres are found to be acceptable with one exception. Members deemed the location and environment of the Hoover Education Centre in Tsuen Wan less than satisfactory, given its vicinity to the Yeung Uk Road Market, as well as the surrounding hawkers. Efforts should be made to explore the possibility of re-arranging some of the classes in that education centre to other venues, e.g. the two new centres in TST, in consultation with, and upon agreement of, parties involved.
- 4.34 Noting that students expressed concerns on various teaching and facilities of the education centres, it is recommended that CC and LIFE should closely monitor the situation to ensure that the teaching and learning facilities available is able to cope with students' needs.

- 4.35 It is noted that for the 2012-13 admission exercise, applicants were allowed to choose classes in their preferred education centers. However, due to the capacity of various centres, it might not be possible to arrange classes as per applicants' choices. In this connection, it is recommended that for future admission exercise, the types of programmes offered in various education centres should be made known during the admissions exercise, e.g. be specified in the application form enabling the applicants to make an informed choice.

### **Advanced Diploma Programmes**

- 4.36 It is noted that currently in the Education Bureau's Common Descriptors for AD and HD programmes, there is specified special admission quota for those applicants falling short of the minimum entrance requirements. While it is not clear whether the special admission quota is applicable to Advanced Diploma (also pitched at Level 4 of QF), it is important that the approved admissions requirements should be closely adhered to, and extreme caution be exercised, with full justifications provided for exceptional cases. In practice, there are built-in remedial measures for such admittees. This should be followed up without delay.
- 4.37 For future programme offering, it is highly recommended that the JQRC set time frame of consideration be strictly followed, i.e. all new programmes be submitted by March of the year to JQRC for timely scrutiny with a view that all the relevant information including the outcome of the verification be made available at the start of admissions.

### **Early Involvement of Relevant Units in Resources Planning**

- 4.38 In the process of securing an education centre for use of CC and LIFE, it is noted that the Office of the Comptroller, the Information Technology Service Centre and the Library of the University providing essential support were not involved at an early stage to provide their expert advice. It is recommended that in future, the units concerned be invited to participate and contribute as early as possible, i.e. as early as the lease rental is confirmed, so that they

could provide expert input and advice, instead of a last-minute rush and requests for urgent work done.

4.39 It is noted that CC & LIFE are well aware of the projected number of student intake and the actual increase in student admission, following the release of HKDSE results in the latter part of July 2012. They should therefore have also well known the follow up administrative demands. However, the Inquiry Panel observed that there was insufficient action taken by CC and LIFE management to tackle the problem until the end of October 2012 when mounting complaints reached their way into the media. Have there been recruitment even with minimal additional staff in August/September, some of the problems could have been avoided or better handled and that the crisis impact could have been minimized.

4.40 The Inquiry Panel considered the problem of insufficient teaching and administrative staff could be avoided if the CC and LIFE management made timely actions to recruit suitable staff. The Inquiry Panel recommends that proper plans with a specified time line should be in place on staff recruitment. The management should also respond promptly to approve the staff recruitment request.

#### **Further Study and Career Counseling**

4.41 It is noted that at present, CC and LIFE have signed inter-institutional agreements with a few overseas universities to offer top-up degrees awarded by these overseas institutions. Noting that a large student population will graduate in the next two years and the very limited higher diploma and associate degree study places available in CC and LIFE as well as senior year student places in the University, CC and LIFE should start working on measures to address the issue of students' articulation.

4.42 Given the large student population, it is deemed necessary to engage additional staff with relevant expertise to enhance service and support for students including career planning and counseling.

### **Communication with Various Parties Concerned**

- 4.43 The Inquiry Panel observed that there is lack of a proper means/channel for staff and students to air their complaint and/or grievance. It is recommended that CC and LIFE should establish a complaint handling mechanism to address and handle student and staff complaints effectively.

#### *Staff*

- 4.44 It is noted that after the open forum held on 9 October 2012 organised by the Concern Group CCLU and LIFE Action Group, the normal class contact hours, viz. 3 hours per course was resumed. However, it seemed that there is some miscommunication as teachers have not received clear information and some of them resumed their classes back to 3 hours with immediate effect while some of them started in the following week. Had there been better communications, such as having Staff Forum regularly, this kind of misunderstanding could have been avoided. It is strongly recommended that CC and LIFE should strengthen and enhance its communication with staff.
- 4.45 On the other hand, noting from the interviewees, most of the teachers and administrative staff were not informed about the details of the ILEP. CC and LIFE should disseminate relevant details of the ILEP implementation details to both staff and students without further delay, noting the proposal was approved by the Associate Director and Acting Dean on 16 October 2012.

#### *Students*

#### Course Selection

- 4.46 It is noted that in Term 1 of 2012-13, all the elective courses for LIFE programmes were assigned to students without any possible choice or selection. Although later on upon students' protests and complaints, arrangements were made for students to make changes to the assigned elective, subject to quota constraints. Nevertheless, no information on the number of such 'successful' changes of electives is available.

- 4.47 On the other hand, it is noted that new admittees received no information on the 'add/drop' process at all. It is recommended that for future course registration exercise, sufficient information be provided to facilitate a smooth registration process. These included placing of detailed process on the web for information of students.
- 4.48 As regards elective course, the full list of available electives for selection should be disseminated to students as early as possible.
- 4.49 With the Term 2 of 2012-13 classes commencing respectively on 21 January 2013 and 4 February 2013 for CC and LIFE, it is necessary that all the relevant materials for classes be made available early; say at least two to three weeks for dissemination beforehand.
- 4.50 It is recommended to consider the arrangement of having student class representatives as focal point of contact between the administration as well as teachers and the different classes of students. Furthermore, staff and student consultation committee/sessions can be arranged as the feedback loop to further enhance communication and attend to students' needs.

#### Programme Offering

- 4.51 The revised arrangement of programme offering by CC (mainly associate degrees) and LIFE (higher diplomas, diplomas and advanced diplomas) should be clearly conveyed to students, *inter alia*, the year of implementation.

#### Students' Enquiry and Dissemination of Important Information

- 4.52 Noting from the interviewees, at the outbreak of the admissions crisis, the enquiry phone lines were always busy and went unanswered. Student helpers engaged to provide support for counter services in the education centres were not able to provide answers for enquiries from fellow students. It is also noted that late dissemination of important information (such as the arrangement of reducing class hours for the first few weeks) to students also escalated students' discontent. It is recommended that sufficient notice should be given to students for any important changes, and CC and LIFE should also deploy

sufficient and necessary resources in handling students' enquiry in a timely manner. Now that it was already three months after the incident, it is expected that additional human resources have been recruited and deployed, and the CC and LIFE management are urged to follow up if this is still not yet the case.

### *Student Liaison*

4.53 It is noted that the incident of the 2012 admission exercise of CC and LIFE aroused great concern among students of CC and LIFE. With insufficient administrative support in the Student Affairs Office (SAO) of CC and LIFE, students' concerns/complaints were not addressed effectively. As a result, some students brought the issues forward to media and the government agencies subsequently. On 9 October 2012, the Students' Union of the University was also involved and organised a public forum for students to air their concerns. The issue was further escalated when the forum was widely covered by the media. The Inquiry Panel considers that the SAO as well as the Student Services Centre (SSC) of the University have missed the opportunity to communicate with the affected students and address their needs and concerns in the early stage. It is recommended that the SAO and the SSC should take a more active role in liaising between the University and students, and act as a bridge in solving communication gaps and thus promoting mutual understanding and harmonious relationship.

### **Crisis Management**

4.54 It should be highlighted that in cases of crisis, prompt action at the earliest possible time is of the essence before the issue escalates. Inter-units meetings to coordinate contingency arrangements should be arranged as soon as possible time to handle the matter. It is also recommended the University should establish a crisis management plan with clear structures and support mechanisms that enable speedy response to a crisis.

### *Media*

4.55 In addressing any crisis, the most obvious priority is to ascertain all the relevant facts at the earliest possible time. This was apparently not in the mind



of the management of CC and LIFE and there were no serious or concerted efforts to ascertain all the relevant issues concerning the 2012 admission exercise upon receipt of media enquiry. It is recommended that the CC and LIFE administration should enhance the awareness of the importance of gathering relevant facts and evidence without any delay in handling any crisis, before the matter further escalates. In the process, expert and professional advice should be sought from the relevant units in the University.

## **Epilogue**

- 4.56 For the 2012 admission exercise of CC and LIFE, the Inquiry Panel cannot find any evidence to suggest that there is any indication or pressure to CC and LIFE urging them to ‘push up’ the student number for profit making purpose. Taking into consideration the high student demand for study opportunities in 2012 and with the much larger than previous years’ potential applicants in this double cohort year, it is understandable to have “moving” student number target. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance that corresponding preparation and adjustment in the related infrastructure and resources, ranging from education centres with sufficient facilities, teaching resources and administrative support be set up and arranged in a timely manner to align with the student number plan.
- 4.57 In line with the liberal arts mission, the University has decided to keep its undergraduate student number small at 2,600 from 2012 onwards. With the large number of CC and LIFE students which actually outnumber the UGC ones, the management should seriously consider measures to ensure the effective utilisation and allocation of resources and facilities on campus, for the benefit of both UGC and non-UGC students.
- 4.58 Given the 2012 CC and LIFE admission exercise has attracted extensive negative media reporting, the University’s reputation has been tarnished. It is important that the University management ensure that CC and LIFE strive every possible effort that all matters, including the teaching and learning of teachers and students and programme administration are functioning smoothly and quality assurance mechanism in place. In the process, suitable candidate(s) with the relevant experience and expertise is to be recruited to fill the Dean of

CC and Further Education post, and to lead the two units in the years to come. With the review and re-think on the most appropriate system to be adopted for these units bearing in mind the self-financing nature, the new leader(s) for the two affiliated associations is expected to help to re-build its brand name and regain the confidence of the public, and continue to offer quality sub-degree programmes for the benefit of students and Hong Kong.

- 4.59 The Inquiry Panel considers that the AVP (AQA) is the personnel assigned to oversee and ensure the smooth operations of CC and LIFE and Chairmen of the Management Committee of CC and the Management Board of LIFE. The Inquiry Panel notes that he was the immediate supervisor of the former Dean and his delegation of crucial parts of his responsibilities to the former Dean should not be a relinquishment of his duties, that required his planning, organising, leading as well as control, which under the circumstances, were lacking. His macro-management style could not be used as an excuse for his inability to respond to the demands of the present crisis that plagued the CC and LIFE and ultimately the University. And due to these reasons, the Inquiry Panel is of the view that the AVP (AQA) should take primary responsibility for the crisis of CC and LIFE 2012 admission exercise. Moreover, the former Dean of CC and Further Education has made various serious administrative mistakes at different points of time. His leadership in the 2012-13 admission exercise is also in great doubt. Although the former Dean has resigned in late October 2012, the Inquiry Panel deeply regretted his mis-management. The Inquiry Panel also considers that the Associate Director of CC and the former Assistant Director (Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance) of CC have failed to perform their respective expected roles.
- 4.60 On a pleasing note, the Inquiry Panel witnessed the collegiality of colleagues in the Information Technology Services Centre as well as the Office of the Comptroller. The hard work of technical staff in setting up of the computer facilities in the education centres within a very short period of time is highly appreciated. On the other hand, the good work rendered by the Office of the Comptroller for providing a pro-active and prompt assistance in the leasing of the education centres as well as renovation works of premises is well noted. Without their great efforts, the new education centres could not have been ready for use on 22 October 2012, a week earlier than the original completion

date, while students of the other education centres would have to wait long before the IT related facilities are upgraded.

- 4.61 The Inquiry Panel would like to express its deep appreciation to those faculty and administrative staff of CC and LIFE involved in the 2012 admission exercise, who, despite being forced to work more than what is expected of them due to over enrolment, have extended their very best in providing the necessary services and support during the whole student recruitment exercise.

4 January 2013