

LCQ15: Employment of academic staff by post-secondary institutions

Following is a question by the Hon Ip Kin-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

Regarding the employment of academic staff by universities funded by the University Grants Committee, by departments of self-financing programmes of those universities and by self-financing post-secondary institutions, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows if the various institutions have formulated retirement policies applicable to academic staff; if they have, of (i) the retirement ages, and (ii) the policy concerning applications for further appointment by staff members who have reached the retirement age (including the maximum number of years for which they may be further appointed);

(2) whether it knows the respective highest, lowest and median ages of those academic staff members in the various institutions who retired in each of the past five academic years (with a breakdown by gender, as well as the institution and faculty to which they belonged);

(3) whether it knows, among the academic staff members on tenure employment in the various institutions, the numbers and percentages of those who departed in each of the past five academic years (with a breakdown by gender, as well as the institution and faculty to which they belonged);

(4) whether it knows the numbers of academic staff members at the rank of Associate Professor or above newly employed by the various institutions in each of the past five academic years, and their percentages in the total numbers of academic staff (with a breakdown by gender, as well as the institution and faculty to which they belonged); and

(5) how the Government ensures that the various institutions, when dealing with matters on the promotion of academic staff members and further appointment of those who have reached the retirement age, treat persons of different age, gender, race and family status fairly and in a manner which is free from the influence of political factors?

Reply:

President,

The eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities (including their self-financing arms) are independent autonomous bodies

established pursuant to their respective ordinances and each has a council to serve as the supreme governing body. The respective ordinances and statutes of the universities set out their objectives, functions and governance structure, and provide the universities with the power to carry out their objectives and functions.

The UGC's Notes on Procedures clearly state that UGC-funded universities enjoy autonomy in the development of curricula and academic standards, selection of staff and students, initiation and conduct of research, internal allocation of resources, etc., and they are accountable for their decisions in these matters. The UGC has all along supported and safeguarded academic freedom and institutional autonomy in accordance with the Notes on Procedures, in the context of appropriate financial and public accountability. Appointment, promotion and retirement of academic staff is a matter within the autonomy of the universities, and the Government and the UGC are not involved.

Based on their individual circumstances, all UGC-funded universities have their personnel policies and mechanisms for handling the appointment, promotion and retirement of academic staff taking into account the merits of the cases and teaching needs, with an appeal mechanism to ensure fairness and impartiality in the conduct of such matter. We understand universities have put in place relevant mechanism and procedures which have been made known to the staff through suitable channels, e.g. publication of internal circulars or the universities' intranets, etc. Universities will, on a need basis, review and enhance the relevant arrangements in a timely manner. Academic staff may convey their views, if any, to the universities and relevant committees through different channels.

As far as the self-financing post-secondary sector is concerned, the institutions are also highly autonomous in internal management. The Education Bureau (EDB) does not collect information requested in this question regularly, and does not issue guidelines to these institutions in relation to the appointment, promotion and retirement of their academic staff. The Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education published the "Code of Good Practices on Governance and Quality Assurance" in June 2015 for self-financing institutions' voluntary compliance. The Code contains the following two provisions, among others –

"3.1.1 Institutions should have a fair and transparent human resources system which includes policies such as, but not limited to, recruitment and appointment, appraisal, complaint/grievances, promotion and termination, as well as policies and measures to facilitate staff development and to encourage and recognise good performance.

3.2.2 Institutions should publish annually information on staffing (including academic staff profiles) and learning and teaching facilities available to support programme delivery and student admission targets."

In view of the question raised by Hon Ip Kin-yuen, the EDB has invited UGC-funded universities and self-financing post-secondary institutions to

respond. Information provided by the institutions which have provided responses is at Annex 1 to 21. It should be noted that the information originates from individual statistical systems of institutions. Since individual systems may adopt different basis for data collection, the figures reported by different institutions are not directly comparable.

LCQ9: Financial implications of reclamation projects under Lantau Tomorrow Vision

Following is a question by the Hon Claudia Mo and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

The Chief Executive (CE) announced the Lantau Tomorrow Vision in this year's Policy Address, proposing, among others, the formation of land with a total area of 1 700 hectares by reclamation in the Central Waters. It has been reported that the reclamation works and related infrastructure works may cost as high as \$1,000 billion and may possibly exhaust the Government's fiscal reserves, thus arousing public concerns. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the area involved in the aforesaid reclamation projects has exceeded, by almost 700 hectares, the area proposed in an option of 1 000-hectare reclamation in the Central Waters put forward by the Task Force on Land Supply, and the CE has indicated that the extra area was proposed by the planning departments, of the Government's justifications (including those justifications provided by the technical departments concerned) for significantly increasing the reclamation area;

(2) whether it has considered changing its approach by adhering to the option of 1 000-hectare reclamation in the Central Waters, and providing the extra 700 hectares of land by undertaking reclamation projects at nearshore locations where infrastructure networks are already in place, with a view to reducing the expenditure on reclamation works; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether the scope of the on-going planning study on the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" covers the reclamation projects under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision and assessment of the related transport infrastructure needs; if so, whether this is tantamount to the Government commencing the planning and works studies of the Lantau

Tomorrow Vision before submitting the funding proposal for such studies to this Council;

(4) of the revenue from the sale of the reclaimed land, as anticipated by the Government; how the Government will address the following concern raised by some members of the public: that the purpose of land formation by reclamation is not for meeting the housing needs of the grassroots, but for selling land to private developers for building luxurious properties, so as to perpetuate the high land-price policy and collusion between the Government and the business sector;

(5) as the Financial Secretary has indicated that funds can be raised for the reclamation projects through issuance of bonds, whether the Government has commenced work in this regard; if so, of the details;

(6) of the details of the infrastructure projects financed by issuance of bonds in the past 10 years (including the details of the fundraisings through bond issuance);

(7) given that (a) huge waves as high as 10 metres were pushed up by super typhoon Mangkhut when it hit Hong Kong in September this year, (b) the Kansai Airport on an artificial island was closed for several days due to seawater inundation during the onslaught of super typhoon Jebi in Japan, and (c) a former Director of the Hong Kong Observatory has refuted a project consultant's remark that the waves that the proposed artificial islands would need to withstand would only be two metres high, whether the Government will assess (i) the safety and feasibility of the proposed artificial islands; and (ii) whether there are proposals to ensure the safety of the artificial islands; if such proposals are unavailable or they involve huge expenditure, whether the Government will shelve the reclamation projects; and

(8) as there are comments that the trade war between China and the United States will continue to escalate and the Hong Kong real estate market bubble may burst at any time, and as pointed out by the report of the Working Group on Long-Term Fiscal Planning in 2014, if public services were to be maintained at the existing levels, Hong Kong's economic growth until 2041 would continue to slow down or remain at a low level and a structural fiscal deficit would even emerge, how the Government assesses the financial risks associated with the reclamation projects, and of the circumstances under which it will withdraw the reclamation proposal?

Reply:

President,

Lantau Tomorrow is a vision spanning two to three decades. It takes time to realise the vision, and studies have to be conducted before relevant details and specific development parameters could be firmed up. The project costs for reclamation and infrastructures are not yet budgeted at this stage. The projects proposed under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision will be taken forward in phases and the project costs will spreadover a number of years. Besides,

with the completion of some mega projects in coming years, including the Express Rail Link (Hong Kong Section) and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Hong Kong Section) which have just commenced operation, the expenditure on these projects will reduce gradually. In formulating the implementation strategy, the Government will carry out detailed financial assessment by taking into account relevant factors like fiscal sustainability to ensure that the project expenditure is fiscally affordable.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Claudia Mo's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The formation of artificial islands of 1 700 hectares in the central waters is a vision aiming to increase land supply for meeting the social, economic and housing needs of Hong Kong people in the medium and long terms. In the public engagement booklet in April this year, which sets out 18 land supply options, the Task Force on Land Supply (Task Force) quoted the Planning Department's estimate that Hong Kong has a shortfall of land of at least 1 200 hectares. This figure, however, has not factored in the land required for improving the average living space per person and catering for the demand arising from ageing population and buildings. It is expected that land shortage is much higher than 1 200 hectares. In fact, preliminary observations provided by the Task Force in September also pointed out that Hong Kong needs more land (even beyond the shortfall of at least 1 200 hectares estimated in "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" ("Hong Kong 2030+")) and build up a land reserve as a precautionary measure to avoid recurrence of the dilemma of land shortage. The new land reserve gained from reclamation can be used for improving the living environment, thinning out the existing densely populated urban areas and facilitating renewal of old districts.

In mid-2018, government departments deployed internal resources to conduct a preliminary broad technical review on whether the reclamation study area in the central waters could be enlarged. The review made reference to the proposal in "Hong Kong 2030+" for the reclamation in the central waters for development of the East Lantau Metropolis of about 1 000 hectares. Taking into account factors such as water flow, water depth, marine traffic, marine ecology and conservation of natural shorelines, it is preliminarily considered that there is potential to enlarge the reclamation study area for the artificial islands in the central waters to about 1 700 hectares.

It should be pointed out that the 1 700-hectare reclamation area is only a preliminary proposal, the details of which are subject to further studies and assessments. In the first phase, we will focus on the studies for developing the artificial islands of about 1 000 hectares near Kau Yi Chau. As for the remaining artificial islands of about 700 hectares near Hei Ling Chau and the waters south of Cheung Chau, the studies will collect technical data for future reference in long-term planning, and there is no concrete implementation timetable at the moment. Having said that, the Government will take into account the findings in the final report to be submitted by the Task Force in December tentatively, and then firm up the details of the upcoming studies. The ultimate extent of reclamation should be subject to the

results of the studies.

(3) Under the conceptual spatial framework proposed by "Hong Kong 2030+" in end-2016, one of the proposals was to develop the East Lantau Metropolis through reclamation of about 1 000 hectares into a strategic growth area with the third Core Business District (CBD3). Another strategic growth area in the New Territories North was also proposed. The broad assessments conducted under "Hong Kong 2030+" only explore whether the two strategic growth areas are acceptable from the social, economic and environmental aspects. These broad assessments are significantly different from the detailed studies proposed for the reclamation for artificial islands near Kau Yi Chau in the aspects of study objective, scope and depth, and therefore cannot replace the latter.

(4) One of the objectives of the Lantau Tomorrow Vision is to provide sizable developable land to meet housing needs, boost economic development and provide employment opportunities. While the overall land use planning of the artificial islands in the central waters is subject to further studies, the 2018 Policy Address has clearly stated that 70 per cent of the housing units to be built on the artificial islands will be public housing. It is believed this could help ease the grassroots' housing demand. The studies concerned will also include financial assessments to assess the fiscal viability of the development plan.

It is roughly estimated that the artificial islands of about 1 000 hectares near Kau Yi Chau in the first phase can accommodate about 150 000 to 260 000 housing units for a population of about 400 000 to 700 000. In addition, the CBD3 planned on the artificial islands can provide commercial/office space of approximately four million square metres so as to expand Hong Kong's economic capacity, enhance the potential of economic growth, and bring ample as well as diverse employment opportunities to Hong Kong people.

(5) The Government will commence the studies regarding the Lantau Tomorrow Vision soon. On financial aspects, we will make proper arrangements according to the scale of the plan and having regard to different considerations such as how to implement the plan in phases, the expenditure and revenue involved.

(6) According to the information of the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Government did not issue bonds to finance the Government's capital works projects in the past 10 years.

(7) The Government is much concerned about the impacts of climate change and inclement weather on the infrastructures in Hong Kong. The Civil Engineering and Development Department updated the "Port Works Design Manual" in early 2018, taking into account the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change set up under the United Nations. We will pay close attention to the latest reports on climate change issued by the United Nations and timely update the design standards of port works as appropriate. Relevant departments will make reference to the latest design standards when designing the seawall and site formation levels of the

artificial islands in the central waters in future engineering studies so as to ensure the artificial islands are resilient against climate change and extreme weather. Subject to the outcome of the studies, the resilience of the artificial islands against climate change and extreme weather can be further enhanced through practical measures including provision of breakwaters and buffer zone along the shore line.

(8) As always, the Government will closely monitor changes in the economic environment. The reclamation plan is put forward in view of the long-term development needs of Hong Kong. With regard to future financial arrangements, we will continue to abide by the principle of prudent financial management and use resources derived from the community for the good of the community, invest for the future and alleviate people's burdens. The Government will properly carry out financial risk management when formulating the implementation strategies for the Lantau Tomorrow Vision to ensure that the project expenditure is fiscally affordable by the Government.

Tender awarded for site in Kai Tak

The Lands Department announced today (November 7) that the tender for a site, New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6574 at Kai Tak Area 4B Site 3, Kai Tak, Kowloon, has been awarded to the highest tenderer, Voyage Mile Limited (parent company: Wheelock Properties Limited, New World Development Company Limited, Henderson Land Development Company Limited and Empire Development Hong Kong (BVI) Limited), on a 50-year land grant at a premium of \$8,333 million.

The tenderers, other than the successful tenderer, in alphabetical order, with the name of the parent company where provided by the tenderer in brackets, were:

- (1) Centenary Investments Limited (CK Asset Holdings Limited);
 - (2) Gold Smart Capital Investment Limited (Golden Sphere Developments Limited);
 - (3) Macfull Limited (China Overseas Land & Investment Limited);
 - (4) One Gold Investment Limited (K&K Property Holdings Limited);
 - (5) Sky Notion Limited (K. Wah International Holdings Limited and Sino Land Company Limited);
 - (6) Vast Prosperity Investment Limited (Jantix Renewal Development Limited);
- and
- (7) World Dynasty (H.K.) Limited (Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited).

New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6574 has a site area of about 9 706 square metres and is designated for private residential purposes. The minimum gross floor area and the maximum gross floor area are 32 030 sq m and 53 383 sq m respectively.

Suspected MERS cases reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 7) reported two suspected cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The cases are detailed below:

Sex	Female	Female
Age	42	27
Affected areas involved	Israel and Jordan	Israel and Jordan
High-risk exposure	Nil	Nil
Hospital	Queen Mary Hospital	Queen Mary Hospital
Condition	Stable	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

“Gilded Glory: Chaozhou Woodcarving” exhibition to showcase customs and lifestyle of Chaoshan region

The exhibition "Gilded Glory: Chaozhou Woodcarving" will open tomorrow (November 8) at the Hong Kong Museum of History. With around 120 exhibits, the exhibition will reveal the practical uses and artistic qualities of Chaozhou woodcarving, while also giving the audience a taste of the customs and humanistic spirit of Chaoshan region.

An opening ceremony was held today (November 7). Speaking at the ceremony, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li, said that the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Exchange and Co-operation Development Plan 2014-2018 in 2014 to strengthen co-operation among the three places. The Hong Kong Museum of History and Guangdong Museum also launched an exhibition exchange programme this year, demonstrating the close relationship between cultural institutes of Guangdong and Hong Kong.

Ms Li expressed her gratitude for the support of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Museum and the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations, and said she hopes to continue working with Mainland cultural institutes and community organisations to bring treasures of traditional Chinese art and culture to Hong Kong.

Highlight exhibits include a gilt wooden diamond-shaped food container featuring a pigmented lacquer painting of "Wine from Wang Maosheng"; a small gilt wooden shrine featuring a biwu dingshuai (awarding marshalship through a martial arts contest) motif; a gilt wooden divine sedan chair; painted queti brackets featuring "Tale of the lychee and mirror carved in relief"; a gilt wooden beam cushion featuring crab and plum blossoms in openwork; and a large gilt wooden lobster and crab cage in openwork provided by Mr Gu Liuxi, who inherited the national intangible cultural heritage of Chaozhou woodcarving.

Chaozhou woodcarving is known as "gilt wood", as lacquer and gold foil are often applied to give key parts or the entire work a magnificent gold finish. The ingenious openwork carving techniques, together with meaningful folk motifs and patterns, showcase the traditional lifestyle of the Chaoshan region. The exhibition will also illustrate customs and traditions of the Chaoshan community in Hong Kong through various woodcarving works, including the Yu Lan Festival of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community, Chaozhou opera, Chaozhou music, dietary habits, customs and religious rituals.

Chaozhou woodcarving is a traditional Chinese folk handcraft with a long and distinguished history, and was popular across the Chaoshan region.

Chaozhou woodcarving, along with Dongyang woodcarving, Huangyang woodcarving and Longyan woodcarving, are known as the "Four Greatest Schools of Woodcarving in China". In 2006, Chaozhou woodcarving was inscribed onto the first national list of intangible cultural heritage.

Other officiating guests included the Director of the Guangdong Museum, Dr Wei Jun; the Executive Vice Chairman of the Federation of Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community Organizations, Dr Ko Wing-man; and the Museum Director of the Hong Kong Museum of History, Ms Belinda Wong.

The exhibition, which will run until February 25 next year, is jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, and jointly organised by the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Guangdong Museum.

The Hong Kong Museum of History is located at 100 Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui. For details of the exhibition, please visit hk.history.museum/en_US/web/mh/exhibition/current.html, or call 2724 9042 for enquiries.