

CE meets University Grants Committee members (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, met members of the University Grants Committee (UGC) today (January 14) in a video conference to exchange views on the latest developments of the higher education sector.

The UGC Chairman, Mr Carlson Tong, briefed the Chief Executive on the concerted efforts by the UGC and the universities to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and adapt to the "new normal" with an online teaching and learning environment when most face-to-face classes are suspended. Specifically, the UGC had allocated additional funding for the strategic development of virtual teaching and learning, research projects related to COVID-19 and other novel infectious diseases, as well as support services for students in need. The UGC has worked closely with all universities to address various challenges throughout the pandemic together with the implementation of a number of major initiatives, including the Planning Exercise for the 2022-25 triennium, the Research Assessment Exercise 2020 and the Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes Fellowships Scheme.

The Chief Executive expressed her gratitude to Mr Tong and all UGC members for the tremendous efforts they have made during an unprecedented challenging environment brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. She said this was her fourth annual meeting with the UGC and she was pleased to note sterling progress made on each and every initiative announced in her previous Policy Addresses to promote Hong Kong's higher education sector. She was particularly grateful to the research and expert support given to the Government by UGC-funded institutions in the enduring battle against the pandemic.

Mrs Lam said that significant developments would take place during the year 2021. These include discussions between the UGC and the Government on the 2022-25 triennium funding and the outcome of the Research Assessment Exercise 2020. She also briefed UGC members on the Global STEM Professorship Scheme she announced in the 2020 Policy Address and looked to members for their support, in particular overseas members, in identifying suitable talents to come to teach and conduct research in UGC-funded institutions.

Mrs Lam remarked that the city's quality universities represented Hong Kong's strengths in national, regional and global contexts, and she was appreciative of the vision and commitment of some institutions planning to set up a new campus in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The Government would continue to render support to such endeavours.

Mr Tong thanked the Chief Executive for her tremendous support for UGC-funded universities over the past few years. The UGC would continue to spare no efforts in performing its role as a bridge between the Government and

universities, and would provide expert advice to the Government on the funding and strategic development of higher education in Hong Kong.

