The Vision, Challenges and Opportunities in Continuous Development of Co-curricular Activities in Higher Education in Hong Kong and the Region

Professor Cheng Kai Ming is Chair Professor of Education at The University of Hong Kong. He is also Senior Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor, concentrating on fundraising. He was Dean of Education and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University. He currently co-hosts the cross-disciplinary Strategic Research Theme on Sciences of Learning at HKU, which involves over 80 academics in various disciplines. Trained as a mathematician, he was a school teacher and a principal before he pursued doctoral study at the London Institute of Education. His research projects are initially about rural basic education in China and India, but have also moved into reforms in various systems, with special attention on higher education. He taught every Spring at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as Visiting Professor 1996-2006.

He has undertaken various projects related to education policies and legislation in China, and participated in evaluation of major higher education institutions in Mainland China and Taiwan. He has been consultant with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF. Recently, he advises on national reform projects in Swaziland, Indonesia and Pakistan, and participated in national policy discussions in many other countries including Malaysia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Columbia, Lesotho and Vietnam. He plays advisor to institutions in Japan and China on fundraising and internationalization. His recent research interest concentrates on the change in the workplace and the challenges to education. He delivers keynote speeches in various international occasions over more than 20 countries.

Most recently, he has been appointed to the State Advisory Committee on Curriculum Reform which helps the Ministry of Education, China in the implementation of its Education Bluepring 2020. He is also appointed to the Advisory Board on Education Policies in Shanghai. Locally he is member of the Education Commission, and is instrumental in the comprehensive reform of the education system in Hong Kong which started in 1999. He is currently also Chairman of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research. He writes a weekly column in the Hong Kong Economic Journal Daily and a monthly column in Shanghai Education.

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Bridging Co-curricular Activities in Secondary & Tertiary Education

Society has changed, so are expectations on individuals. If we restrict to the workplace, there are fundamental changes that have led to expectations on individuals beyond specialized knowledge and technical skills, and to expectations on ethical values and moral standards. Changes in society has also prompted us to look beyond young people’s first jobs, and think of what they would encounter in their future life. Beyond the workplace, increasingly people are conscious of the importance of family lives, cultural lives, political lives, religious lives, and other commitments beyond the income-generating categories. There are recent calls to revisit the notion of human resources, and to restore the attention on human beings. Such calls are widespread in the developing and developed countries alike, vis-à-vis newly emerging concerns of the humanity, such as health, climate, natural hazards, social cohesion and war.

All these have pointed to the need to genuinely prepare our young people for an optimistic future, and hence to provide them with the broadest possible learning opportunities. This perhaps explains a general trend in higher education across the globe, where there are continuous and rather forceful efforts to restructure and compress the formal curriculum, to broaden learning beyond specialised training, to introduce common cores across campuses, and to create new learning opportunities beyond the campus, beyond students’ family social environments, and beyond the homeland. Such a move is also underpinned by advancements in the sciences of learning, where genuine learning comes from real life experiences.

The expansion of student learning experiences is met with considerable challenges. First, there is a required paradigm shift to see such learning experience as essential rather than peripheral. Second, there are resource implications and hence anticipates a change in the resource strategies for institutions. Third, most of the learning experiences would require a new framework to look at the structure, content and assessments, and would demand alternative concepts of accountability.

Presentation Synopsis:

Learning Experiences in Higher Education: Visions and Challenges

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