

## **CUHK Council Meeting on 20 January 2009**

### **Statement by Dr. Edgar Cheng, Council Chairman**

1. Prof. Lawrence J. Lau informed me that he would not seek re-appointment as Vice-Chancellor upon the expiry of his term in June 2010. I asked him to re-consider, but he finally decided to adhere to his original plan. With reluctance, I have to respect his decision. You have just heard from Prof. Lau what he had to say.
2. Since taking up the vice-chancellorship in July 2004, Prof. Lau has set in motion many initiatives of great significance to lay down a firm foundation for the future development of the University. Under his leadership, CUHK has expanded in all directions into a prominent centre of higher learning in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. It is Prof. Lau's belief that the success of a university depends on the quality of its students and teaching staff. He worked to enhance the quality of the programmes of the Faculties and departments, established the Faculty of Law, revamped the curricula in the biomedical disciplines, and upgraded the Department of Architecture into a professional school. The construction of the University hotel and other teaching and research complexes were completed. Much was accomplished since Prof. Lau's arrival, and CUHK has become a preferred institution for students from Hong Kong and the region and been able to recruit the best of local as well as mainland and overseas students in recent years.
4. Prof. Lau recognized CUHK's distinctive advantages in its bilingual and bicultural heritage and its unique collegiate system and spared no effort in accentuating the same. To prepare for the reversion to the "3+3+4" curriculum and cater for the increased 3,000 undergraduates in 2012, Prof. Lau devoted much of his efforts in raising funds for the establishment of five new Colleges to implement a fully-residential and communal dining college experience. He also helped the Constituent Colleges enhance their infrastructure and facilities. His vision and efforts have won the support of the Council and the community.

5. In early 2006, Prof. Lau led the way in formulating the University's Ten-Year Strategic Plan and identified five areas for focused research investment. The University's other research capabilities were also strengthened against the international benchmark of excellence. CUHK has been successful in establishing two state key laboratories on its campus and two research institutes in Shenzhen, attracting many scholars and researchers of high caliber. All of this would not have happened without Prof. Lau's strategic vision.
6. Internally, Prof. Lau has reformed the Faculties and the departments, re-organized the Senate, and engaged on a global search for deans and provost with a view to professionalizing academic leadership. CUHK's campus master planning will soon be completed, laying down a blueprint and creating the necessary conditions for the future planning and sustainable development of the University.
7. With Prof. Lau at the helm, CUHK has gone from strength to strength. The quality of its students, the education it provides and its research achievements have been remarkable. The University has been recognized and affirmed by the University Grants Committee, its Quality Assurance Council and other professional bodies to be one of the foremost universities in the Asia-Pacific region and internationally. All of this can be attributed to the leadership of Prof. Lau whose contributions to CUHK are both comprehensive and far-reaching.
8. On behalf of the Council members, I would like to move a most sincere vote of thanks to Prof. Lau.