

Professor Michael M LOY
 Former UGC Member (April 2001 - June 2004)
 Former RGC Member (July 2001 - June 2005)



It was my great pleasure serving as a Member of the RGC under the most able leadership of Professor Kenneth Young. From an admittedly rather modest start in the early 90's, the RGC has gone a long way, and I am proud to have been a part of its growth. Looking forward, with research encouraged to be part of the activities of all UGC supported institutions (as compared to a selected subset a decade ago), the challenge is how to make possible more projects funded without making the funded amount to be too small for high quality research. Mediocrity should not be encouraged. Excellency must be the goal.



Sir Colin LUCAS, BBS
 Former UGC Member (April 2003 - March 2014)
 Former QAC Chairman (January 2012 - March 2014)



I joined the UGC at the moment of SARS. Indeed, my first meeting was held in London for that reason and so I had no idea then of how pleasurable familiar 7/F Shui On Centre, its business and its staff would become. I was a member under three Chairmen and three Secretaries-General. They each had distinctively different styles but shared a real commitment to the welfare of higher education in Hong Kong.

My time on the Committee coincided with the on-going impact of the considerable changes in university teaching and research throughout the world, wrought mainly by globalisation and technology. The UGC was preoccupied with how to help its universities adjust to these changes, to introduce productive new methods and ambitions without falling for fashionable dead-ends, and to perform effectively in the increasingly competitive international context. The central issue is always that, in international terms, Hong Kong is a relatively small system with finite resources. How to enable the obvious talent and ambition in these universities to operate successfully on the international stage? How to reconcile these interests with a necessary focus also on the local requirements of Hong Kong and its population?

My experience in Hong Kong is that the UGC system is remarkably successful and dynamic. This is of course the achievement of the universities. The UGC cannot curtail their autonomy and, in my experience, does not try to do so. But it can incentivise creative change and it can provide strategic thinking for the whole sector. So, I think that UGC can claim some credit for the success of these universities. This is true, for example, both of research funding and of the significant move to a four-year undergraduate curriculum.

The job of a non-local member is challenging. They bring experience from universities elsewhere in the world and they have no vested interest locally. At the same time, however, they are there for the interest of Hong Kong; they are there to offer advice from experience, not to insist on external ways of doing things. But it is a wonderfully rewarding job: in part because of all that one has to understand about Hong Kong, but also because of the excellent colleagues, the new insights and the sense of contributing to an enterprise that really works.

Professor William F MASSY
Former UGC Member (January 1990 – January 2003)

My service on the UGC from 1990 to 2003 spanned the transition of Hong Kong's higher education sector from being oriented mainly toward teaching to an internationally competitive mix of teaching and research (It also spanned the 1997 governmental transition but I, for one, did not notice any change in the Sector or the operations of the UGC). A primary task of the Committee during those years was to help each institution build research capacity appropriate to its mission, while at the same time ensuring that the drive toward research did not hollow out the teaching function.

The primary vehicles for maintaining the quality of teaching were the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews (TLQPR) conducted circa 1995 and 2007. I was privileged to chair the subcommittee that designed the TLQPR, and to serve as the Panel's Chair for the first round and Vice-Chair for the second round. We built the design around international best practices in higher education quality assurance — specifically on a variant of "academic audit", which we improved significantly in the process of adaptation to Hong Kong's unique circumstances. We were pleased with the results, and that an international review panel organised by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente, NL, described the TLQPR as the "right method for Hong Kong, at the right time".

My experience as a UGC member made a profound difference in my career direction and in my personal development. I am deeply grateful to the chairs, colleagues, and secretary generals with whom I served, a number of whom I count as close personal friends.



Professor John NILAND, AC
Former UGC Member
(April 2003 – March 2010)



As I observed in the Preface to the *Report of the Institutional Integration Working Party*, in 2004, the greatest challenge in formulating public policy for higher education is to find the right path to the future. Importantly, this will entail protecting values of scholarly communities and encouraging necessary resourcing; while at the same time stimulating transformations to assure strong and internationally competitive universities into the future. The UGC has, indeed, played an indispensable role in delivering on this high ideal.

Much of the day-to-day work of the UGC addresses the many prosaic requirements of a healthy higher education sector, and the importance of this should not be underestimated. But the truly distinctive role of such a body is to help universities navigate their way through the shoals of reform and advancement, particularly on the international stage.

Hong Kong, quite rightly, aspires to be the education hub of the region. This cannot happen by accident, but only through active strategies to embrace changes, wisely chosen. In delivering this, the UGC has drawn on input from both its own immediate environment of eminent scholars, and on university leaders from abroad. To have been part of this mix is something I will always treasure. And the flow is by no means one way. Since retiring from an active role with the UGC, I have become particularly aware of how the lessons and insights from that affiliation have helped guide policy development in other countries. Well done UGC.

Sir Edward PARKES, SBS
Former UGC Member (July 1975 - March 1997)

In the 1970's I was Professor of Mechanics at Cambridge. Much of my time, however, was spent in chairing the committees responsible for the academic and financial development of the university. In 1974 I accepted an invitation to become Vice-Chancellor of City University, recently created from a College of Advanced Technology. It was probably my experience of guiding both a traditional university and a technological university that led, in 1975, to my being invited to join the Hong Kong UPGC. In 1978 I became Chairman of the UK UGC.

The UPGC had three institutions: Hong Kong University, taking mainly English-speaking students who had spent two years in the sixth form, and providing three-year degree courses, the Chinese University, recently created from three post-secondary colleges, taking mainly Chinese-speaking students who had spent one year in the sixth form, for whom it provided four-year courses, and the still-under-construction Polytechnic.

The UPGC membership consisted of local businessmen and overseas academics. There were no members from the institutions. It took us some years to persuade the Hong Kong Government that local academic input would be valuable. The Committee met alternately in Hong Kong and London. In Hong Kong we were always entertained by the Governor, who had a Scottish sense of frugality. One of our Australian members, who believed that the Queen's representative should show more lavish hospitality, used to mutter "We had lunch at Government House, and were given Shepherd's Pie!"

Shortly after joining the UPGC I was invited to Beijing. Chinese higher education had followed a Russian model of specialist institutions, and China wanted to change to the broader Western pattern. My wife was also invited because she was Chairman of Radio London, and it and Radio Beijing had similar problems. When she walked into the street a crowd gathered: they had never seen a woman in a skirt. We were taken to The Great Wall and the Ming Tombs. We were the only people there.

In 1989 the Government decided on a massive expansion of higher education. I chaired the Sub-Committee on Revision and Expansion which steered much of the work. My last task for the UGC was to write, in longhand with a fountain pen, the 1996 report on Higher Education in Hong Kong.

In my twenty-two years of membership of the UGC I greatly valued the support of the very able permanent staff and I enjoyed working with fellow members of diverse backgrounds and interests. I am sure that these qualities will continue and I wish the Committee every success.



Professor Joseph Sriyal Malik PEIRIS, SBS
Former RGC Member (July 2007 - June 2011)

It is a pleasure and a privilege to contribute to this commemorative book marking the 50th year of establishment of the UGC.

During my 20-year career in biomedical research in Hong Kong, the UGC has been pivotal to the work done by our research team at many levels; as an academic in an UGC funded institution benefiting from the infrastructure at my university, through collaborations with other universities within Hong Kong and from the research funding activities of the UGC, primarily via the RGC. I had the opportunity to interact with the RGC as a research grant applicant for its different research funding schemes, as a panel member of the RGC Biology and Medicine panel and for a short time as a member on the RGC Council.

Thus I have felt the pain and anguish of rejected research grant applications as well as the elation of success with others. From serving on the RGC Biology and Medicine panel, I have seen first-hand the dedicated work of many people, the local and external panel members as well as the RGC support staff that goes into the annual cycle of the RGC General Research Fund grant evaluating process.

Research funding from the UGC and RGC provided the foundation for building a great inter-disciplinary team of researchers - academics, post docs, postgrads and support staff - who have served Hong Kong and mainland China locally, and contributed to research globally, in responding to the many infectious disease threats that confronted us over the past decades. Through this process we have nurtured the next generation of researchers.

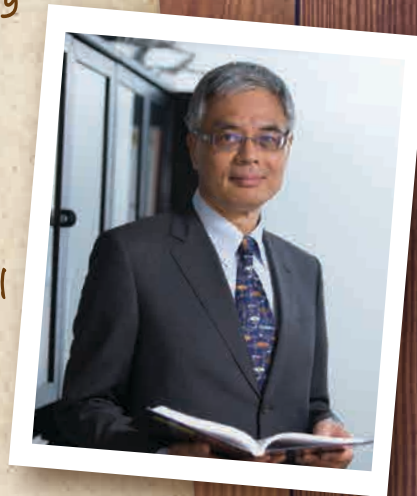
Looking more broadly at the biomedical research output from Hong Kong overall, which is the area I am familiar with, it would be fair to say that Hong Kong "punches above its weight" in relation to the size of its pool of active researchers and to the research funding disbursed. This is indeed a tribute to the efforts of the UGC and RGC as well as the research community within Hong Kong, and we applaud the unceasing efforts of the UGC and RGC in their attempts to increase the overall funding for research in Hong Kong so that it is more in line with comparable economies globally.



Professor Wei SHYY
UGC Member (January 2014 – Now)

For 50 years, the UGC has played an instrumental role in leading sweeping changes as well as establishing clear standards for Hong Kong's higher education sector. In particular, the past decade had been momentous because of the successful introduction of the 4-year undergraduate degree in 2012, which is once-in-a-generation opportunity in reinventing our undergraduate curricula. Untiring efforts are also being made to enhance students' educational experience, to further advance internationalisation, to promote original and frontier research, and to address societal interests and needs. These efforts not only help higher education institutions meet Hong Kong's need for establishing a robust economy but also advance Hong Kong's comprehensive educational mission, making sure that graduates are globally competitive and well-prepared to be engaged citizens.

As we usher into another decade, the higher education institutions globally are adapting to better address topics of special interest such as innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, democracy and governance, health care, and complexities resulting from the business and financial sectors. With its size, distinct history, and unusual characteristics, higher education in Hong Kong has clear roles and missions. In particular, Hong Kong's universities, with strong public support, need to become creator of frontier knowledge and new disciplines, and to contribute and support society to address its critical needs. With such an expectation, the UGC will surely play a prominent role in championing the cause of higher education in Hong Kong. It is my sincere hope that the UGC will lead Hong Kong's higher education to ride on challenges and scale new heights.



Professor Helen F H SIU
Former UGC Member (April 1992 – March 2001)

The decade I served on the UGC (1992-2001) was challenging. Hong Kong experienced dramatic shifts in demographics and uncertainties under a sovereign change. China was on the rise. Global economy was volatile. Amidst all these the UGC had the daunting task of advising the Government and a growing tertiary education sector on how to provide the younger generation with both the mindset and skill-set to engage locally, regionally, nationally, even globally. I have always maintained that the best kind of preparation for students in the 21st century is a liberal arts education — one that emphasises multi-lingual competence, cultural openness, global exposure, and critical thinking. These qualities are not meant for short-term fixes in policymaking or meeting family priorities. Indeed, at the time, deliverables in basic research and pursuits in the humanities appeared intangible for those with a business mind and an affinity for quantitative assessment exercises.

Brian Smith, engineer and novelist from Australia, and I, cultural anthropologist, used to see ourselves as the two that brought only comic relief to the council. Nevertheless, fellow members' commitment to quality and their much-needed sense of humor spurred us on. Since I retired from the UGC fifteen years ago, China's global reach has expanded, and Hong Kong is facing new challenges. I sincerely hope that colleagues will appreciate the timeless value of a humanist, globally-oriented education, because it would give our next generation not only versatility, but also principles, directions, and even aspirations in a world that transforms itself at an unimaginable pace.



Photo Credit:
David Ausserhofer,
Berlin

Lord Stewart SUTHERLAND, KT, FBA, FRSE
Former UGC Member (April 1995 – March 2004)

It was a great delight to serve under more than one Chair, but Alice Lam was a very distinctive and engaging leader for the largest part of my time. Argument, evidence and evaluation were all part of her armoury, but most decisive of all was her deployment of metaphors from the cooking stove. More than one meandering discussion was ended with a reminder that "When the rice is cooked, it is too late to change the menu"! There is no adequate academic response to that.

The system expanded during my time from two to eight universities. This produced some strains and a bit of academic rivalry, but was the right trajectory.

The grounding was that the system remained a UGC, rather than simply a Funding Council to translate Government instructions into academic structures. The Committee changed the weighting of members to enhance local influence - Local Chairmen, and majority of local members. This was absolutely right and related responsibility to future action in the local community. However, the mistake of enhancing parochialism was avoided and a modicum of international members was retained.

The message had been accepted that university education was now an international business and involved international comparisons, international competition, and from a strong Hong Kong base, international co-operation.

As a result of the twenty year projection review which I, at times with trepidation, chaired, key planks of future development were noted, evaluated, and for the most part absorbed.

The key message was that each university should have its own distinctive mission - not all should strive to be the Harvard of the East.

From that followed a series of guidelines.

Within the overall policy and strategy of the UGC, each University should develop academic structures appropriate to its mission.

These structures should be supported by appropriate patterns of governance.

In particular, senior academic appointments should be filled by rigorous search and selective procedures. They should be advertised internally and externally - the cosy days of buggin's turn to be Dean or Head of Department were no longer adequate for Universities seeking to be benchmarked by international standards.

Finally, UGC funding practices should not be driven by assumptions that all Universities were the same. Funding should be tied to mission, and nowhere was this more important than in the support of research.

These were hard lessons that Universities in Australia and the UK, for example, are still absorbing. For Universities in Hong Kong things were no less contentious, but I have had reports, which did not in the least surprise me that the good sense of Hong Kong was having a prevailing and positive influence.

It was a great privilege and education to be allowed to play a part in this, and I look forward to the continuing success of Hong Kong Higher Education on the world's stage.



Professor Kar-yan TAM
RGC Member
(July 2014 – Now)



The research accomplishment of Hong Kong's higher education sector in the past decade has been nothing short of spectacular. Not only do local institutions appear regularly in global league tables, many are consistently ranked among the top in a number of disciplines.

For the past 50 years, the UGC has played a pivotal role in developing the teaching and research capabilities of local institutions. The outcome has certainly exceeded the expectations of many. While we should be proud of our collective achievement, we cannot afford to be complacent. There are areas of improvement. In particular, progress has been slow if not nonexistent in diversifying Hong Kong's industrial base beyond real estate, finance, and tourism through talent development. The irony is that Hong Kong is able to produce creative and competent technologists and scientists who are welcomed by high-tech firms in Silicon Valley and mainland China yet there are few opportunities for these creative minds in Hong Kong. Investment in talent development and recruitment should be aligned with the trajectory of an innovation-driven economy.

While it is important for the UGC to maintain an independent role in the development of higher education in Hong Kong, it should also work closely with Government bureaus and stakeholder groups of the society to articulate a vision of talent development that not only sustains but also propels Hong Kong to the next level of socioeconomic development. I firmly believe that with the collective efforts of all sectors, this can be accomplished. The UGC has done very well in the past and I am confident that it will continue to be an integrated part of Hong Kong's higher education sector for many years to come.



Mr Carlson TONG, SBS, JP
Former UGC Member (January 2011 – March 2013)
Former QAC Member (January 2012 – March 2013)

When I was asked by Laura Cha, the former Chair to join the UGC back in 2010, I had no idea what it does. I understand Laura asked me because she found out I was about to retire and to qualify as an independent member, I must not be involved with any of the eight institutions. She wanted to grab me before I get "contaminated"! Gradually, I realised and appreciated the importance of the work of the UGC for our future generations. Whilst one of the key roles of the UGC as I see it is to ensure that our tax payers get value for its money but at the same time, it has to be sensitive at all times of not interfering with academic independence. Finding the balance between oversight and interference is an art and not a science which requires trust and respect between the UGC and the institutions.



Professor Amy Bik May TSUI
QAC Member (April 2013 – Now)

Google "the future of university education" and you will find hundreds of millions of links. Spurred by the launch of MOOCs and the rapid adoption of various forms of MOOCs worldwide, discussions of what universities of the future will look like has never been more heated.

The discussions so far have largely centred on how the free access of MOOCs has posed a serious challenge to the "business model" of traditional universities and could lead to the demise of the latter. What is much neglected, and yet is the most exciting dimension of MOOCs, is their impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the higher education sector. Teaching no longer takes place behind closed doors: Curricular contents, pedagogies and assessments are subjected to public scrutiny - by academic peers, professionals, students and parents, and the quality of teaching is evaluated instantaneously and continuously by the number of views and Likes. This challenges universities to reflect on their existing practices, to collaborate and to innovate.

Universities which continue to ignore the centrality of teaching and learning will not survive. In this context, the UGC's commitment to teaching and learning as the core mission of universities is far-sighted. Particularly commendable is the enormous amount of resources invested in enabling institutions to re-imagine undergraduate education in the past decade. I had the privilege of leading the reform at HKU as Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) from 2007-2014 and I would not have been able to bring about some fundamental changes in the curriculum without the unfailing support of the UGC. I am therefore more than pleased to have been able to contribute to the promotion of excellence in teaching and learning through the work of the QAC.

Professor Judy TSUI LAM Sin-lai
 Former UGC Member (July 2008 – December 2013)
 Former RGC Member (July 2008 – June 2014)



Congratulations to the UGC on its 50th Year of commemoration. As an educator who was born, bred and educated with a PhD in Hong Kong, I have benefited both as a student at The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and served at the City University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University as an academic and educator.

I am particularly proud to have been associated with the Committee as a member for 6 years. During those 6 years, I have also served as a member of the RGC. Both roles helped me understand and experience the key professional role that the Committee plays in Hong Kong's tertiary education.

Though the UGC role is not always widely understood and supported by academics and administrators in Hong Kong, the Committee's achievements in serving Hong Kong's tertiary education can only be highly recognised and regarded. The strategic direction and policies guided by both local and renowned overseas academics have resulted in ranking Hong Kong's tertiary education sector as one of the highest in the world, each with its different roles in serving Hong Kong and supporting its future development.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the quality interaction with all the distinguished members in the Committee with quality outcomes towards its strategic direction and policies that ultimately benefit Hong Kong's young generation. The most notable policy is the Committee's strategic conviction on its drive towards internationalisation, while integrating with Mainland development for all tertiary institutions. This is a far-sighted vision for the Committee which will benefit Hong Kong for years to come.

Professor Dr Frans A van VUGHT
 Former UGC Member (August 1996 – March 2007)
 Former QAC Member (April 2007 – March 2010)



It was a pleasure and an honour for me to have been a member of the UGC during the years 1996 – 2010. I learned many things, not only about higher education and research in Hong Kong, but also about Chinese culture and society. My visits to Hong Kong have enriched my life. In addition, I got to know lots of new colleagues, many of whom remain good friends. I look back at my days in Hong Kong with gratitude and a feeling of solidarity.

A very special aspect of the UGC's work was its acronyms, and particularly those given to some special processes and committees. Incomprehensible letter combinations such as Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews (TLQPR) and Performance and Role-related Funding Scheme (PRRFS) have stuck in my mind and take me back to those special sessions at the UGC's headquarters or on different campuses. During our meetings we spoke in these acronyms and we all understood their meanings and intentions. The Secretariat produced clever and challenging reports about them and we were able to base some good decisions on them.

The processes and committees lying behind some of these acronyms have found their way to other higher education systems around the world. It seems to me that the UGC has set a world standard with respect to several higher education policies. I hope that our contributions have had a positive impact on the development of the Hong Kong higher education system. The UGC's views certainly appear to have inspired policies in other countries.

Professor Benjamin W WAH
UGC Member (January 2013 - Now)
RGC Chairman (January 2013 - Now)



I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to the UGC on her 50th Anniversary. It is truly my honour to have met and worked with a team of dedicated, energetic and committed staff members in the capacity of Chairman of the RGC.

Ever since its establishment, the UGC has played an important role in the development of the higher education system in Hong Kong. Throughout the last five decades, the UGC acts as a bridge to link up the UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong. This bridge has led the institutions to a higher level of excellence and to enhance their competitiveness internationally in the areas of teaching, learning as well as academic research. The UGC has made the new four-year academic structure happen in the Hong Kong higher education sector, which has marked as one of the UGC's many significant milestones in its history.

Hong Kong, with its unique position as the region's education hub and unique relationship with the Mainland, will continue to rely on the UGC's strategic approach to further enhance the quality of the higher education sector and drive forward economic and social developments. There will no doubt be other challenges ahead. Yet I am confident that, under the leadership of the UGC Chairman and members, and together with members and stakeholders, all obstacles and difficulties will be overcome and the UGC will achieve further success.

Emeritus Professor Mark S WAINWRIGHT, AM, FTSE
UGC Member (January 2011 - Now)



I was delighted to be appointed as a member of the UGC in 2011. It is a most important organisation which for the past 50 years has worked closely with the Government-funded universities of Hong Kong to deliver their missions for international excellence in teaching and learning, research and knowledge transfer. In 2012 the current Chairman of the UGC, Mr Edward CHENG Wai-sun, SBS, JP, asked me if I would be willing to be the Convenor of the 2014 HK RAE and I was most pleased to accept. The 2014 RAE was the most comprehensive research assessment exercise previously undertaken in Hong Kong, or anywhere else in the world. It was based on the 2008 UK RAE but was much more comprehensive and was conducted by 214 non-local and 90 local experts who comprised 13 discipline-related panels, led by non-local Convenors and Deputy-Convenors.

This huge exercise was expertly managed by the UGC Secretariat, led by the Secretary General Dr Richard Armour JP and the local RAE Deputy-Convenors, Professors Benjamin Wah and Roland Chin. Panel Convenors and panel members commented on the outstanding quality of the UGC Secretariat staff and the service they provided. This is in line with my own experience as a member of the UGC over the past four years. During that time I have frequently commented on the outstanding work of the Secretariat staff. These people contribute so much to the success of this great organisation.

Professor WANG Gungwu, CBE
Former UGC Member (January 1984 – November 1985)

When I joined the UGC, I was Chairman of the Professorial Board of the Australian National University and keen to learn how the UGC helped to strengthen the position of universities while protecting their need to be free from direct Government control. I was not disappointed and learnt a great deal from my colleagues on the committee about Commonwealth traditions of higher education.

I served under very experienced chairmen who kept an eye on what was happening in the UK and were not afraid to deviate from the practices there if they thought that Hong Kong's small size and special requirements should be dealt with in different ways.

It was also a great introduction to the kinds of Anglo-Chinese cooperation in a Hong Kong that was about to be transformed from a colony to a special administrative zone of China. My years on it was invaluable when I took up the position of HKU Vice-Chancellor in 1986. But I also discovered how chastening it was to find myself on the opposite side of the table when meeting the UGC in my new capacity.

It was helpful that I already knew what we had to do to keep the UGC apprised of HKU's aspirations and needs. Understanding the Secretary-General's concerns enabled me to prepare our presentations succinctly.



Dr Eleanor WONG, OBE, DSSc, JP
Former UGC Member (April 1984 – March 1987)

I was appointed to the UPGC in 1984, when just four institutes—HKU, CUHK, Baptist College and Hong Kong Polytechnic—served nearly 4 000 students. Today, the UGC funds eight higher learning institutes, with about 18 000 students. What a remarkable increase in 30 years! I offer my heartfelt congratulations.

I have seen Hong Kong change from a manufacturing centre, to a hub of trade and finance, to today's emphasis on the service sector. Our educational system has changed in tandem with these shifting roles. Whatever our future, higher education must evolve in the same direction.

My firm conviction is that standards of English, as well as Chinese, must be improved across the board. English will remain the language of international relations and is pivotal for business. English should be treated from an early age as a second mother tongue, rather than a foreign language. This will give our students the much-needed edge in the midst of regional and global competition.

Higher education ought to highlight innovation, entrepreneurship, critical analysis and creative thinking. This applies equally to the humanities, science and technology, business and medicine.

I would like to see more talented professionals from the global educational community invited here to conduct research and help us upgrade our education system.

All these endeavours will, of course, necessitate increased funding. However, education is the future—and people are our greatest asset. More of our youth should therefore be educated to the highest possible standards to benefit all of our society and ensure we thrive.



Professor Paul WONG
Former UGC Member
(April 2000 – March 2002)



During my service on the UGC, it was remarkable that this august body had brought together some of the most talented and experienced thinkers as well as decision makers in the global higher education to address important issues in the development of the universities in Hong Kong. The assembly of UGC external members from the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, Australia, and China, together with the internal members from Hong Kong, encouraged deep discussions which reflected the traditions, diversity, and emerging trends in the best of global higher education. Looking back on my career, I had first visited The Chinese University of Hong Kong in the 1960s, having been sent by the University of California, Berkeley, to conduct a project on China based in Hong Kong. In the subsequent decades, I have had a number of opportunities to return to Hong Kong, including serving as the dean of social sciences at Hong Kong Baptist University. Unquestionably, the UGC has played a pivotal role in the tremendous progress that Hong Kong has made in building the academic excellence of the entire higher education sector in the Special Administrative Region.

Professor WONG Yuk-shan, PhD, FIBiol, BBS, JP
Former UGC Member (April 2005 – December 2011)

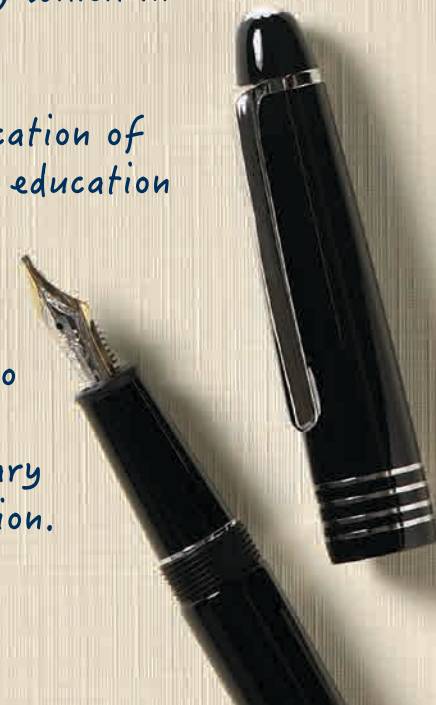


The UGC is unique. Having been with the UGC for six years and now heading up a non-UGC institution, I know how important the UGC is in facilitating the development of Hong Kong's higher education sector, and how difficult life could be without the UGC's facilitation.

It is rightly said that the higher education sector determines the development of secondary schools, whose educational activities have to dovetail with the universities' preference to maximise the chances of student admission. For the same reasons, the secondary school system shapes the development of primary schools, which in turn shapes the development of pre-school learning. Sitting at the apex of the system for allocating resource and advising the strategic direction of higher education, the UGC's influence thus cascades down from the top to the bottom of our education system.

This role is strategic for Hong Kong. With no natural resources, talent is Hong Kong only asset. Through the allocation of our higher education resources, the UGC determines how Hong Kong's best young minds are to be nurtured, which in turn shapes our talent pool, and shapes our future.

But the UGC is not only a talent shaper. In co-ordinating the allocation of institutional research funding, it ensures that Hong Kong's higher education institutes as a whole pushes forward the frontier of our knowledge in directions that best serve Hong Kong's needs. Hong Kong's miraculous growth from a manufacturing centre in the past to today's knowledge economy gives eloquent testimony to the rich harvest our eight million people have reaped from the UGC's intelligent and responsive resource allocation that is visionary in outlook, strategic in direction, and professional in implementation.



Professor Edward YEUNG Sze-shing
RGC Member (July 2014 – Now)



It is my honour and pleasure to have served the RGC in various capacities. Over the years, the RGC has clearly raised the level of research in Hong Kong by setting standards, by providing funding, and by advocating the value of such activities.

The lay person may wonder why research should be conducted within the universities at all. One only needs to point to the important role of institutions of higher education in generating new knowledge in addition to disseminating existing knowledge. If it were only the latter, one might as well rely on Google or Baidu. Intellectual property that is derived from university research may even benefit Hong Kong immediately through technology transfer.

Besides, research provides training to the next generation of citizens since advanced learning is often through apprenticeship rather than from textbooks. To maintain high standards, the RGC solicits reviews of proposals and projects from international experts. This practice has elevated the research funding mechanism in Hong Kong to become one of the fairest in the world.

The RGC has also developed a host of funding categories, from small single-investigator grants to large thematic consortiums. They all have their unique places in driving curiosity and innovation and in directly serving the needs of the region. We have seen the transformation of the research scene in Hong Kong from being a secondary activity in academia to being internationally leading centres of knowledge. Naturally, the credit goes to not just the RGC, but also the research community as a whole. Congratulations, everyone!

Professor Peter Y YU
Former RGC Member (July 2010 – June 2012)



Postsecondary education in Hong Kong started in 1911 with the founding of The University of Hong Kong (or HKU). Before that there was only the College of Medicine founded in 1887. Thus by the time the UGC was created by the Hong Kong Government 50 years ago, more than half a century has passed with only one university existing in Hong Kong.

I graduated from HKU with a B. Sc. degree in 1966. I was appointed a Physical Science Panel Member of the RGC in 2007 and a Council Member in 2010. In addition, I have visited the Physics Department of nearly all the universities in Hong Kong. I can say that I have first-hand knowledge of university education in Hong Kong before and after the existence of the UGC.

The changes in the past 50 years can only be described as "remarkable but true". Not only the number of universities in Hong Kong has increased by an order of magnitude, the quality of teaching and research in all the universities is now "world class". There was very little research in the science departments in HKU when I was a student there. Part of the reason was simply there was no funding for research. Nowadays, the RGC support for research in the physical sciences alone exceeds hundreds of millions of Hong Kong dollars each year.

Congratulations to the UGC on its 50th Anniversary and thanks for putting the universities of Hong Kong on the world map. Because of you, I can proclaim proudly that I am a HKU graduate!