



香港賽馬會
The Hong Kong Jockey Club

賽馬事務執行總監

利達賢

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25 June 2013

Mr Roland Chin
Convenor, Veterinary School Task Force
University Grants Committee
7/F Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chin,

Your letter to Mr T Brian Stevenson, Chairman of The Hong Kong Jockey Club (dated 5th June 2013), regarding the revised proposal of The City University of Hong Kong (CityU) for the establishment of a School of Veterinary Medicine in Hong Kong, has been forwarded to me as Executive Director of Racing.

I assure you that the proposal will remain in strict confidence. In response to some of the general questions raised in your letter, I have taken them in the order in which they were presented (Annex A). I hope this will meet with your satisfaction.

In general, we see the prospect of a veterinary school in Hong Kong as a positive step forward in Hong Kong's continued maturation as an overall leader in this region of the world. There are undoubtedly significant challenges that would need to be addressed but we see these challenges as surmountable and we believe that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

I hope that these comments are helpful to the task force.

Yours sincerely,

William A. Nader
Executive Director, Racing

Enclosures: 3 pages

cc Mr T Brian Stevenson, Chairman, HKJC
Mr Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges, CEO, HKJC

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General Questions

- (a) General View of HKJC towards setting up a vet school in Hong Kong?
- (b) Appropriate number of annual graduates for Hong Kong?

The Club is generally supportive of a veterinary school in Hong Kong, though we do not feel well positioned to define the number of annual graduates that might be appropriate to fit Hong Kong's specific needs. The Club employs 14 veterinarians, the majority of whom must be highly experienced to work in such a specialized environment as ours, providing primary and referral care for world-class racehorses. We do operate, however, a postgraduate training programme for junior staff (two interns and a surgical resident) to gain specialist experience.

Demand and Supply of vets in Hong Kong

- (c) General views on the demand for and supply of vets in Hong Kong in 5-10 years' time?
- (d) Small number of vets (around 30) currently employed by The Government; difficulty in employing vets in Hong Kong?
- (f) Animal/zoonotic disease research

The Club is not a large employer of veterinarians and our general view on the demand for equine veterinarians in Hong Kong. This is unlikely to change significantly over the next 5-10 years, because the horse population here is limited. Having said that, we appreciate that rapidly evolving technology, and the demands of owners and trainers for the most effective use of state-of-the-art facilities may in itself drive a need for further staff. The Club has embarked on a project to open a horse training centre in Guangdong Province, which will create another, limited, opportunity for more veterinarians (probably four in total) to be recruited to work for the Club in China. The Club is looking to further develop graduate veterinarians from Mainland China with a view to employing them in the Guangdong centre in the longer term. A local school would be a significant advantage in this respect. Most of our veterinarians are currently recruited from overseas and the turnover rate is limited to approximately one senior expatriate veterinarian every three years. We usually have a number of international applicants for positions, although it is rare for suitably qualified individuals of Chinese nationality and/or who can speak Cantonese to apply. If qualified vets were available from Hong Kong, we would be highly motivated to employ them within our limited structure and provided they have the relevant work experience and qualifications.

Our veterinarians maintain close links with The Government's veterinarians and have collaborative links with several academic institutions with whom we collaborate on several research projects. However, we are not currently involved in research into zoonotic diseases.

Promotion of animal welfare and development of equine industry

- (g) Existing policies/measures taken to promulgate animal welfare in Hong Kong?
- (h) Role of vet school in promoting the development of equine industry?

There is legislation in Hong Kong to protect animal welfare and the Club is highly motivated to support institutions that promote and advance the care of animals. We are aware that animal welfare is becoming an increasingly important topic among the community in Hong Kong and that we must all respect this by taking proactive measures to advance the standard of care of all animals in our

society. A veterinary school would provide a greater pool of veterinary clinical expertise and a local body to collaborate with our veterinarians in undertaking applied clinical research for the betterment of horse welfare.

Establishing a vet school in Hong Kong

- (i) Pros and cons, key factors
- (j) Types of programmes, meeting the needs of Hong Kong, The Club and the Mainland
- (k) Basic trainer required
- (l) Research capability
- (m) Any agreement/collaboration been reached between CityU and The Club in the use of the facilities

The advantages of establishing a veterinary school in Hong Kong are:

1. That we would have greater access to local veterinarians who are knowledgeable about conditions in Hong Kong and who can communicate effectively with our local work force.
2. These individuals would be more likely than expatriate staff to remain in Hong Kong, thereby reducing long-term professional staff turnover.
3. A local, government-funded veterinary school would open up the profession to all sectors of society, and in our experience, individuals from less privileged backgrounds are more likely to accept the hardships of the job.
4. We would have access to an independent academic body that could augment our existing veterinary department.

The disadvantages are that locally trained veterinarians would have limited experience outside Hong Kong, although this could be overcome with a suitable externship programme.

We understand that establishing and maintaining a veterinary school would be expensive but this cost must be offset against the outlays associated with having to turn overseas for support in veterinary training and research and the overall cost to the Hong Kong community in training local students overseas.

We do not feel in a position to comment on the suitability of any particular academic institution in Hong Kong to establish a veterinary school other than that complete commitment to the project is essential. We do not see operation of a medical school as an advantage or a disadvantage. However, we are well aware of different strengths in different sectors between the various universities in Hong Kong and we would look to The Government to ensure that academic institutions collaborate in a manner that is to the overall benefit of the veterinary school and of Hong Kong.

If a veterinary school were to be established in Hong Kong then it should primarily provide training for veterinarians to serve the local community and the region. It makes sense that it should take advantage of facilities established for this purpose to train para-clinical staff (e.g. veterinary nurses). It would be difficult for a veterinary school in Hong Kong to train specialists in our field, although we can envisage collaborative efforts that would facilitate our current projects to undertake such training. While a veterinary school in Hong Kong should primarily produce veterinarians for employment in Hong Kong, we do see that it could have a very positive impact on the needs of the wider region. The Mainland is in desperate need of programmes to support the training of equine veterinarians. The Club is currently involved in several projects that focus on developing the standard of veterinary care for the horse in Mainland China. A local veterinary school could coordinate such programmes and add credibility to their academic status.

We are aware that international accreditation currently relies on training in all domesticated species and, therefore, it would be necessary to establish facilities to provide training across the board. However, it is apparent that as veterinary clinical practice becomes increasingly specialized, some form of species selection is likely to become increasingly important at the undergraduate level. A Hong Kong veterinary school would have to give students the opportunity to gain exposure to all areas necessary to achieve international accreditation as well as focused experience in areas that fulfill the local community's needs. The Club would expect to assist in this process for students intending to become specialists in the equine field.

If a veterinary school were to be founded in Hong Kong it must be sufficiently well resourced to build dedicated facilities to allow the construction of state-of-the-art training facilities (e.g. anatomical teaching facilities, modern clinical training laboratories etc.) and the recruitment of leading academic staff, making a clear statement to the local and international community that Hong Kong is committed to developing a regional centre of excellence in the field of animal health.

We do not feel qualified to comment on the research facilities required.

Informal discussions about this topic have been held between the Club and the CityU but no formal agreement has been reached. Our Department of Veterinary Clinical Services currently provides experience to almost 100 undergraduate students, who visit from all over the world annually. Therefore, we are well placed to support a local veterinary school if one were to be developed.

