



Report on the “Blue Book of Hong Kong” Issue

Submitted by the Investigation Panel
appointed by the President and Vice-Chancellor

(The Report is written in English, with a Chinese Translation.)

6 December 2012

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Chapter One INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 1 November 2012, the Office of University General Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (“CUHK”) issued a public statement complaining that the Advanced Institute for Contemporary China Studies (“ACCS”) of the Hong Kong Baptist University (“HKBU”) had made allegations about its General Education courses in the Hong Kong Blue Book (《香港藍皮書 - 香港發展報告(2012)香港回歸 15 周年專輯》)(“Blue Book”). The statement in question (“Statement”) appears in the Education Section of the last chapter (Chapter B.16, p.206) of the Blue Book titled “The Political, Social and Economic Problems of Hong Kong and Recommendations for Improvement”. It reads (in English translation):

“On the change of subjects, universities, secondary and primary schools were required to set up general education and national education, which not only squeezed and reduced the time dedicated to other subjects, but also in practice facilitated the intrusion of a multitude of universal values from the West. For example, the Chinese University of Hong Kong’s general education curriculum is sponsored by, and its materials written with the assistance of, a US fund. Its teaching direction has, in practice, been directed by that fund.”

1.2 In the original text, it reads

“在學科的變動上，大學與中小學被要求設立通識教育與國民教育，擠壓和減少正當學科的教時外，實際上方便了大量西方普世價值侵入學校，例如中文大學的通識教育課程，由美國一個基金贊助並協助撰寫教材，其教學方向實際上已由該基金主導。”

1.3 In fact, prior to this incident, CUHK had issued two letters to ACCS, dated 20 September 2012 and 15 October 2012, demanding an apology from ACCS and the removal of the relevant part from future editions of the Blue Book. The ACCS responded to CUHK by letter on 3 and 17 October 2012 respectively and a statement was posted on the web on 3 October 2012.

1.4 CUHK was not satisfied with the responses and issued a further statement describing the Blue Book’s allegation of the influence of an American fund on its General Education courses as “irresponsible and fictitious”.

1.5 HKBU takes this matter very seriously. The complaint of CUHK raised three issues.

- a. An issue of fact: whether the example of CUHK cited in the Blue Book was accurate and can be substantiated, or whether this is a misrepresentation or fictitious.
- b. An issue of implication: whether the Statement that there has been an “intrusion of a multitude of universal values from the West” applies to CUHK and beyond.
- c. An issue of academic integrity: whether, in terms of (a) and (b) above, the complaint calls the author’s academic integrity into question.

1.6 HKBU sets great store by truthfulness in scholarly writing. It acknowledges five basic values in academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.¹ The University therefore resolved to establish the facts of the case and to examine whether the relevant claims in the Blue Book could be substantiated.

The Enquiry

1.7 Professor Albert S C Chan, President and Vice-Chancellor of HKBU, appointed Professor Rick W K Wong, Vice-President (Research and Development), to set up an Investigation Panel to investigate and report on the case.

1.8 On 6 November 2012, a four-member Investigation Panel (“Panel”) was set up. The composition and Terms of Reference of the Panel are stated below.

Composition of the Panel

- Convenor: - Professor Rick W K Wong, Vice-President (Research & Development), HKBU
- Members: - Professor Huang Yu, Acting Dean of Communication, HKBU
- Professor Li Si Ming, Director of David C Lam Institute for East-West Studies, HKBU
- Professor Cheng Pei-kai, Director of Chinese Civilisation Centre, City University of Hong Kong

¹See The Center for Academic Integrity, *The fundamental values of academic integrity*. October 1999.

Terms of Reference

- a. To investigate the complaint of CUHK about the “Blue Book of Hong Kong -- Annual Report on Development of Hong Kong (2012)” on the discourses of General Education at CUHK.
- b. To collect evidence and verify the facts to establish if there are any misrepresentations and/or fictitious discourses with reference to the CUHK’s complaint.
- c. To examine if the case involves issues of academic integrity.
- d. To report and make recommendations to the President and Vice-Chancellor of HKBU.

1.9 The Panel met intensively between 7 and 30 November 2012.

Principles and Methods

1.10 At the outset, the Panel agreed on the following principles and methodology to govern the investigation:

- a. The enquiry will adopt the principles of fairness, due process and respect for confidentiality throughout the course of the investigation.
- b. The methods used will include relevant information-gathering, fact-finding meetings and examination of evidence, which includes statements by interviewees, documents and drafts at various stages for the production of the Blue Book, hand-written comments, published and unpublished materials, and relevant media coverage.
- c. During the course of the investigation, the Panel will invite all relevant people to attend the fact-finding meetings, including members who were involved in the preparation for the Blue Book, and will consider both oral and written testimony.

Explanatory Notes

1.11 The term “general education” is used to describe the liberal studies subjects in the four-year university curriculum. In the English edition of the Blue Book the term was translated as “liberal studies”. For the purposes of this Report

the two terms have the same meaning, that is, “liberal studies” and “general education” are treated as the same.

Chapter Two ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACTS

2. The following is an account of the progression of events pertaining to the publication of the Statement about CUHK and General Education in the Blue Books. It is based on information gathered and verified by the Investigation Panel according to the Terms of Reference of this enquiry. It covers the background and context of the Statement in terms of a chronological narrative of events.

Stage 1: The Commissioned Project Report (July-November 2011)

- 2.1 On 7 July 2011, ACCS accepted a consultancy project to prepare a study on the political, economic and social problems of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”) (“Project”) and to produce a report (“Project Report”).
- 2.2 Professor Victor F S Sit was responsible for the overall supervision and direction-setting of the Project and the editing of the Project Report. Five other members of ACCS staff were involved in background research, content production and data collection for the Project.
- 2.3 On 12 September 2011, an article was dictated by Professor Sit and transcribed the same day into a 2,987-word text (which had no tables and charts) (“Article”). At this stage the Article was relatively colloquial in terms of language style. The Article states in Chinese under Section 4, para 1, g: 學科上，大學與中小學普遍設立通識教育與國民教育，擠壓減低正當學科的教時，也容許學校與教師接受大量西方普世價值的侵入，例如中文大學的通治²、教育，由美國一基金贊助以撰寫教材，方向由基金主導；³大等其他學校也有同類性質需求，形成在大學層而⁴美國價值觀與勢力滲透的新渠道。 This is the first appearance of the reference to liberal studies and CUHK.
- 2.4 On 14 September 2011, a “finished” draft containing the majority of the content of the Project Report, with no mention of General Education at CUHK, was submitted to Professor Sit.

²Typo in the original text.

³Identity removed by authors of the Investigation Report.

⁴Typo in the original text.

- 2.5 Professor Sit completed his editing of the Article based on his dictation, resulting in a 4,997-word final version (including tables and charts) titled “The Political, Social, and Economic Problems of Hong Kong and Recommendations for Improvement” (“香港政治社會經濟的問題及改善建議”). It bore his name as author and was dated 16 September 2011. Compared to the initial version described in paragraph 2.3, this version of the Article was presented in a more literary style. It states under Section 4 “The Problem of Education” para. 1 iii on p.7: 在學科的變動上，大學與中小學被要求設立通識教育與國民教育，擠壓和減少正當學科的教時外，實際上方便了大量西方普世價值侵入學校，例如中文大學的通識教育課程，由美國一個基金贊助並協助撰寫教材，其教學方向實際上已由該基金主導；XX⁵大學等其他大學也有收到同類性質的要求；這形成了美國價值觀與勢力在大學層面逐步滲透的新渠道；
- 2.6 The relevant portions of the 12 September Chinese version and 16 September Chinese version of Professor Sit’s Article are compared here: 在學科的變動上，大學與中小學被要求普遍設立通識教育與國民教育，擠壓和減少低正當學科的教時外，實際上方便了也容許學校與教師接受大量西方普世價值的侵入學校，例如中文大學的通治通識教育課程、教育，由美國一個基金贊助並協助以撰寫教材，其教學方向實際上已由該基金主導；XX⁶大學等其他大學校也有收到同類性質需求的要求；這形成了在大學層面美國價值觀與勢力在大學層面逐步滲透的新渠道；
- 2.7 The English translation of the relevant portion of the edited version of the Article dated 16 September 2011 is as follows: *On the change of subjects, universities, secondary and primary schools were required to set up general education and national education, which not only squeezed and reduced the time dedicated to other subjects, but also in practice facilitated the intrusion of a multitude of universal values from the West. For example, the Chinese University of Hong Kong’s general education curriculum is sponsored by, and its materials written with the assistance of, a US fund. Its teaching direction has, in practice, been directed by that fund. Requests of the same nature have also been received by XX⁷ University and other universities. This has*

⁵Identity removed by authors of the Investigation Report.

⁶Identity removed by authors of the Investigation Report.

⁷Identity removed by authors of the Investigation Report.

morphed into a new channel for the penetration of American values and powers at the university level.

- 2.8 Before the Project Report was submitted, the Article bearing Professor Sit's name was incorporated into the Project Report as Section C of Chapter 3, which is titled "The Political, Social and Economic Problems of Hong Kong and Recommendations for Improvement" ("香港政治社會經濟的問題及改善建議") (pp193-202). This is the exact same title as Professor Sit's Article dated 16 September 2011.
- 2.9 The Project was completed and the Project Report submitted in October 2011. It consisted of 247 pages of text and over 180 pages of tables and charts.

Stage 2: The Blue Book (The Chinese Versions)

- 2.10 At some time around November 2011 ACCS was approached by a publisher called the Social Sciences Academic Press (China) ("Publisher") and asked to compile a report on the major socio-economic and political issues of the HKSAR. This was intended to become part of the Publisher's series of "Blue Books" on different major Chinese provinces.
- 2.11 A formal agreement on the publication of "The Annual Report on Development of Hong Kong (2012)" also known as "Hong Kong Blue Book" ("香港發展報告 2012") ("Blue Book") in simplified and traditional Chinese and in English was reached and signed between Professor Sit of ACCS (who signed on 26 March 2012) and the representative of the Publisher (who signed on 5 April 2012).
- 2.12 The Blue Book was largely based on the original commissioned Project Report with editing and modification. Professor Sit was chief editor and final approver of the published books. An ACCS team supported him, but two staff members who worked on the original commissioned Project had by then left the team and had been replaced by a new member.
- 2.13 The first Chinese manuscript of the Blue Book consisted of 209 pages of text and 181 pages of tables, charts and figures. At some point

during this process the reference to XX⁸ University was removed on 27 March 2012. The manuscript was sent to the Publisher on 30 March 2012 for proof reading and editing. A second manuscript was sent to the Publisher on 17 April 2012. The Statement on CUHK General Education was in both the first and second versions of the manuscript.

- 2.14 On 19 May 2012 a third and final version (in PDF format) was provided by the Publisher for final proof-reading. Professor Sit told the proof-readers that they should remove all sensitive and controversial material from the text. Professor Sit, however, did not give detailed, explicit instructions as to how this should be done, nor examples of the exact parts to be removed. The proof-readers were left to decide on which material was to be removed.
- 2.15 On 21-22 May 2012, Professor Sit noticed an error on p.111 where Lee Hang-chi (“李行止”) should have been Lam Hang-chi (“林行止”), and instructed that this should be rectified. However, in neither the simplified Chinese (“簡體字”) nor the traditional Chinese (“繁體字”) versions of the Blue Book could the error be rectified because both editions had gone to print. On hearing this, Professor Sit mentioned that the same mistake should not appear in the English edition of the Blue Book, which was at that time being prepared for publication by the Enrich Professional Publishing (S) Private Limited.
- 2.16 In mid-June 2012, the simplified Chinese edition was published in Hong Kong. A launching ceremony for the release of the Blue Book was held on 28 June 2012. In July 2012, the traditional Chinese edition was published in Hong Kong.
- 2.17 The Chinese versions named Zhou Mingwei (“周明偉”), Xie Shouguang (“謝壽光”) and Victor Sit (“薛鳳旋”) as Editorial Directors (“主任”). Professor Sit was named as chief editor (“主編”) and five ACCS staff as editorial board members (“編委”). No author was named in these versions.

Stage 3: The Blue Book (English Version)

- 2.18 The Chinese version was translated into English for publication in that language. In mid-September 2012, Professor Sit marked changes in

⁸Identity removed by authors of the Investigation Report.

pen on p.317 of the final English manuscript, indicating that the words “*Chinese University of Hong Kong*” should be replaced with the words “*one of the local universities*”, and adding in the words “*thus being*” between “*is*” and “*determined*”, making the latter sentence into: “*Its curriculum direction is thus being determined by the fund*”.

2.19 The published English edition reads as follows: *Liberal Studies and national education are added in the university and secondary curricula. This reduces the time dedicated to other subjects, and allows Western values to spread in school. For example, the teaching materials of one of the local universities liberal studies course is sponsored and written by an American fund. Its curriculum direction is thus determined by the fund.*

2.20 In comparing the English and Chinese editions, there are the following differences:

- a. The Chinese edition states “Chinese University of Hong Kong (香港中文大學)”, while the English edition states “one of the local universities”, without explicitly mentioning the university’s name.
- b. The Chinese edition states “*the teaching materials are sponsored by and written with the assistance of an American fund (由美國一個基金贊助並協助撰寫教材)*”, while the English edition states “*the teaching materials [...] is sponsored and written by an American fund*”. The words “*with the assistance of*” have been removed.
- c. The Chinese edition states “*the curriculum direction is practically led by the fund (其教學方向實際上已由該基金主導)*”, while the English edition states “*Its curriculum direction is thus determined by the fund*”. The Chinese version emphasises the chronological aspect, while the English edition emphasises the causal aspect as suggested by the adverb “*thus*”.

2.21 The English edition of the Blue Book, retitled “Hong Kong 1997-2012: A Report on the HKSAR Since the Handover” was published in Hong Kong in early October 2012 by Enrich Professional Publishing. Professor Sit and two other ACCS staff members, whose names are given as editorial board members in the Chinese editions of the Blue Book, are now listed as authors at the front of the English version of the book. Professor Sit’s name is above the other two.

2.22 On 8 October 2012, one of the two staff members who had been listed at the front of the English version of the Blue Book wrote a letter to Professor Sit expressing strong objections to being named as the author and requesting the removal of the name as an author of the Blue Book. In this letter, the person even offered to bear the cost of recalling the printed copies and reprinting new copies without the name. Knowing that no change could be made, the person submitted an official resignation letter to Professor Sit and left HKBU.

Stage 4: The Aftermath

2.23 On 20 September 2012, CUHK issued a letter to Professor Sit requesting a public apology and clarification, as well as the removal of the Statement on CUHK's General Education in any future editions.

2.24 On 3 October 2012, Professor Sit replied to CUHK and issued an amendment statement (更正聲明) on the Hong Kong Blue Book on the ACCS website. In the statement, the words "truly sorry" (衷心歉意) were used in reference to the specific naming of CUHK and to the typographical error about Lam Hang-chi ("林行止"), but no apology was made for stating that an American fund supported liberal studies at CUHK.

2.25 On 15 October 2012, CUHK issued a second letter to Professor Sit saying that Professor Sit's reply dated 3 October 2012 was unacceptable.

2.26 On 17 October 2012, Professor Sit issued a second letter explaining that some misunderstanding might have taken place. He also suggested a technical difficulty with the ACCS website as a possible reason for CUHK not seeing the initial statement, which had been posted on the site. No further action, however, was taken to rectify the Statement about CUHK and General Education.

2.27 On 31 October 2012, CUHK issued a third letter to Professor Sit, further requesting him to rectify the situation. On 1 November 2012, CUHK issued a "solemn statement" (嚴正聲明) on the CUHK website with the same message and making a formal complaint against Professor Sit about the reference to General Education at CUHK.

- 2.28 From 2 November 2012, major local media reported the case, including Apple Daily, Ming Pao, Oriental Daily, Sing Tao Daily, Hong Kong Economic Times, Hong Kong Economic Journal, Wen Wei Po, and South China Morning Post, which quoted CUHK's words that the Statement constituted an "irresponsible and fictitious" allegation.
- 2.29 On 2 November 2012, Professor Sit replied to CUHK in a letter and attached the statement he originally issued on 3 October 2012.
- 2.30 On 6 November 2012, HKBU set up this Investigation Panel.
- 2.31 On 16 November 2012, late in the afternoon, Professor Sit posted an Apology and Clarifying Statement (道歉及澄清聲明) on the ACCS website about the Blue Book, acknowledging the "incorrectness" (不正確之處) of the Statement and offering apologies to CUHK.

Chapter Three

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Given the seriousness of the matter, during the course of the investigation, the Panel exercised great care when approaching witnesses and examining evidence. Taking into account all the evidence, members of the Panel deliberated carefully before arriving at their conclusions.

3.2 In line with the Terms of Reference, the Panel approached the issue with the following questions in mind: (i) could the Statement on CUHK's General Education courses be substantiated? If not, (ii) who was responsible for the Statement? Then, (iii) was academic integrity compromised during the production and publication of the Blue Books?

Could the Statement on CUHK's General Education courses be substantiated?

3.3 CUHK lodged a complaint to ACCS on 20 September 2012 and another on 15 October 2012 and the complaint went public through the media on 2 November 2012. Since ACCS responded to CUHK's first two letters but CUHK continued to complain, the Panel was intrigued as to why CUHK was not satisfied with Professor Sit's replies. In examining Professor Sit's two reply letters, the Panel found that the second repeated the first, but with an additional point suggesting that the reason for CUHK's continued complaint was possibly their not being aware of his statement posted on the ACCS website. He suggested that a possible reason for this was that the site had been hacked at about that time and had to be closed down for a while.

3.4 To clarify the issue of the General Education ("GE") programmes in Hong Kong, the Panel examined the history and practice of GE programmes, in particular that of CUHK. Since the establishment of CUHK in 1963, GE programme compulsory to all undergraduates was included in the curriculum. GE was also introduced to universities in Hong Kong in 2012-13 as part of the new "3-3-4" curriculum, where students spend four years on their undergraduate programmes. Reflecting the fact that the development of GE was a response to the general implementation of the new curriculum, the GE programmes of all Hong Kong universities have some similar features.

3.5 CUHK's GE Foundation Programme was set up according to the requirements of the University Grants Committee ("UGC") and is, like GE programmes in other Hong Kong universities, devised by the University itself and

funded by UGC. It is overseen by the University's Senate Committee on General Education. The approval of GE Foundation courses was governed by a stringent quality assurance mechanism and, in light of these processes, it would not be possible for a single external party to influence, let alone dominate, the curriculum design and implementation.

3.6 The reference to an "American fund" that sponsored and assisted in writing teaching materials for CUHK in particular and other universities in general seems to be to the Fulbright Scholar Program ("Program") that supported the introduction of GE courses to Hong Kong's universities. The following facts about the Program were established. A local donor and UGC provided the funds to bring the Fulbright Scholars to Hong Kong for this specific function.⁹ The selection of the Scholars was done through a rigorous academic peer review process, as with any normal international visiting scholar programme. No US government official was involved in the selection process. A final pool of scholars was selected in the US and local universities were given the choice of whether to take any and, if they wanted to, whom to take. The role of the Fulbright Scholars was to advise on the GE curriculum when asked, organise workshops for local academics setting up GE programmes, and help develop GE programmes that were suited to each individual university. They were there to provide support and advice, and not to direct the setting up of GE programmes.

3.7 Professor Sit provided no evidence to the Panel to substantiate the claim that an American fund (a) sponsored CUHK's GE curriculum, or (b) was involved in the writing of the said curriculum, or (c) dominated the teaching direction. The Panel also noted that on 16 November 2012, Professor Sit posted an "Apology and Clarifying Statement" on the ACCS website admitting the incorrectness of the Statement in question, retracting it, and promising that the Statement would not appear in any future editions of the Blue Book, both in its Chinese and English versions.

3.8 The Panel thus concluded that the Statement on CUHK's General Education courses could not be substantiated.

Who is responsible for the Statement?

3.9 "From 109 to 45 characters"

- a. CUHK's complaint referred to the full paragraph as cited in the Introduction to this Report, which contains 109 characters in Chinese

⁹This is clear from the job advertisement issued by the Fulbright Program in 2007.

(including punctuation). This paragraph covers first the general assertion that General Education and National Education (a programme for Hong Kong schools) “*facilitated the intrusion of a multitude of universal values from the West*” as well as the allegation about CUHK’s GE curriculum in particular. In Chinese this whole paragraph is a single sentence.

- b. In his public apology, Professor Sit cited only the last section of this paragraph, the part referring to CUHK. This part contains only 45 characters (including punctuation). In this public apology he left out the words “for example” and made this sentence fragment look like a complete sentence. In this way, Professor Sit removed from his apology the general assertion about Western influence in Hong Kong’s schools and universities. It must be added that in his statement to the Panel Professor Sit changed the sentence again slightly, putting ellipses (...) in at the beginning and reinserting the words “for example” (making 47 characters, including punctuation), indicating correctly that this was part of a longer sentence.
- c. This reference to only part of the paragraph disputed by CUHK, and the changing at different times of the format of the characters referred to, must be borne in mind when examining Professor Sit’s response to the complaint.

3.10 Professor Sit refused to acknowledge authorship of the Statement, that is, of the 47 words as noted in para 3.9 above. His words are:

*“The Statement was **not** written by me but by the staff member(s) of Advanced Institute for Contemporary China Studies (“ACCS”) in a previous, unpublished work done by ACCS for a client between July and October 2011.”*
(“Previous Work”)

3.11 He also remarked that he was not aware of the Statement in question in the Project Report and in the drafts of the Blue Book until the third and final manuscript, which he received around 19 May 2012.

3.12 Several pieces of evidence disprove these assertions.

- a. The early drafts of the Project Report bear no trace of the Statement in question, nor does the “first draft” of 24 August 2011 or the “finished draft” of 14 September 2011.

- b. The Statement made its first appearance in the Article dated 16 September 2011 bearing Professor Sit's name and titled "Hong Kong's Political, Social and Economic Problems and Recommendations for Improvement". This Article contained 4,997 characters including tables and charts and was based on the transcript of Professor Sit's oral dictation on 12 September 2011, which contained 2,987 characters and had no tables and charts.
- c. The Article appeared in the final Project Report which was submitted in October 2011. It was the same as the 16 September 2011 version of the Article except that the tables and charts originally included were taken out and placed in other chapters of the Project Report.
- d. On 30 March 2012 the manuscript for the Blue Book was submitted to the Publisher. This version included the Statement about CUHK and General Education in its entirety in the same words that had appeared in the version of the Article dated 16 September 2011. It removed the name of another university, a reference that was deleted from the text in March 2012.
- e. By referring only to the last part of the Statement on CUHK and General Education in the Blue Book, Professor Sit possibly by implication acknowledged that the first half of the sentence, before the words "*for example*", were authored by himself, or at least were his view, but the second part of the Statement, starting from "*for example*", was not written by him.
- f. In the English version of the Blue Book, Professor Sit removed the name of CUHK, though he reinforced the assertion about the role of the "American fund".

3.13 The fact that the English edition has Professor Sit's name at the front at the top of three names indicates that he is not only chief editor but also lead author. The difference between the authorship/editorship of the Chinese and English editions is intriguing. Regardless of these differences, Professor Sit is clearly designated as responsible for what was written in all versions of the Blue Book.

3.14 Professor Sit repeatedly said that the Statement about CUHK and General Education was not authored by him but written by his colleagues. The investigation has established that the authorship was Professor Sit's. Professor Sit suggested that the Publisher was also responsible for the Statement.

“I should also point out that as I understand it, under the Mainland system the publisher has the final say and ultimate responsibility on all aspects of the publication (including content), as he is the party who has the legal responsibility and liability for the publication. In this case the Blue Book was in fact published in the Mainland by a PRC publisher, though also circulated in Hong Kong. I am still awaiting the Publisher’s input on the vetting and editing it carried out in relation to the Statement.”

3.15 However, the contract signed between the Publisher and ACCS states that the Publisher had to maintain the integrity of the textual content of the publication (*Clause 1, Section 5*). The Publisher only had the right to change, add or delete the non-textual items, but only with the consent of ACCS (*Clause 2, Section 5*). According to the terms of the contract then, it is clear that responsibility for the content of the publications rests with the authors and not with the Publisher, and that the Publisher does not have the “final say” on content.

3.16 A further question that needs to be asked at this stage is whether the inclusion of the Statement about CUHK and General Education in the Blue Book was intentional. Professor Sit says he only noticed it around 19 May 2012 and instructed a staff member to ask the Publisher to correct it, along with another typographical error. Although Professor Sit definitely instructed his staff to remove sensitive materials in general, there is no evidence to suggest that he gave any specific instruction on the correction of the CUHK Statement.

3.17 The press release for the Blue Book, issued on 28 June 2012 and which was made accessible via a link on the ACCS website, includes reference to the Statement about CUHK and General Education that appears in the Blue Books. The link remains active at the time of writing of this Report in early December 2012. Professor Sit must have been fully aware of the Statement for it to have been included in this document.

3.18 In conclusion, the evidence shows that Professor Sit is the original author, the chief editor and final approver of the Statement cited by CUHK.

Was academic integrity compromised during the production and publication of the Blue Books?

3.19 The University highly values academic integrity and considers it the most important pillar for academic excellence. It promotes a system of values that brings out the best in human beings and is the baseline for scholars to exercise

academic freedom. As mentioned at the outset of the Investigation Report, the five basic values of academic integrity are: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Such values shall be upheld in all the processes of scholarly work, from data collection through delivery of the outputs. During the course of investigation, the Panel bore in mind these values and measured any actions against these standards.

3.20 Professor Sit had ample opportunity to correct the Statement in the Blue Book during the process of publication, but he failed to do so. In the case of the simplified Chinese version, he received three proofs to check for accuracy. In the case of the English version, he only replaced the reference to CUHK with “*one of the local universities*”. At the same time he employed even stronger wording than in the Chinese edition on the allegation that a “US fund” was directing General Education teaching at one of the local universities. He could actually have removed the sentence without changing his conclusion but he chose to keep it.

3.21 In responding to CUHK’s complaint, Professor Sit only said he was “truly sorry” for the specific naming of CUHK and for the misnaming of Lam Hang-chi (“林行止”). He failed to address the complaint itself, leading to the making of the matter public.

3.22 Professor Sit has acknowledged authorship, or at least agreement with, the first part of the paragraph in question. The investigation has shown this Statement to be unsubstantiated. Professor Sit has not changed, withdrawn or apologised for this section.

3.23 Professor Sit has not only failed to take responsibility for the most contentious part of the Statement, he also skillfully tried to shift responsibility to his subordinates and to the Publisher, who, it has been established, were not at fault, and has failed to apologise for a mistake that was his own.

3.24 The academic standard of the Blue Book itself is questionable. There are no references or acknowledged sources in the three versions. Members of the editorial board of the Blue Book expressed their views that proper footnotes, references and so on should have been used. Given that there were none in the published versions, the person in charge did not take these suggestions into consideration.

3.25 Another matter for the Panel’s consideration is the authorship and editorship of the Blue Book. No authors are identified in the Chinese editions of the book. Furthermore, three of the five people mentioned as members of the editorial board were not consulted about the appearance of their names under this designation. They did not give their consent for their names to appear in the book. A

fourth person disputes Professor Sit's statement that consultation had taken place before that person's name appeared.

3.26 In the English version, which differs from the earlier Chinese versions only in terms of language, two people named as editorial board members in the Chinese version were named on the cover as authors, following Professor Sit's name as first named author. Both indicated that they were reluctant to be named as authors of the book. One had strongly remonstrated with Professor Sit and asked for the removal of the name, and subsequently resigned from the Institute. It suggests Professor Sit himself changed the designations and included the names of his subordinates with little regard for their concerns. Professor Sit's explanation is that the change from "editors" to "authors" was made because, at the suggestion of the publisher of the English edition of the Blue Book, the English-language book was to be sold overseas, where having named authors would help sales. In the opinion of the Panel, this is not a convincing explanation, and the inconsistent listing and designation of names shows a disregard for normal academic practice.

3.27 The Blue Book's traditional Chinese edition also refers on the back page to the contributions of "authoritative experts in various fields" (業內權威專家), that is, experts well established in their fields and recognised by the community as such. However, the only named contributors are Professor Sit himself and his subordinates, but the latter are research staff on his team and not established experts. Professor Sit attributed the lack of such expert contributors to the Publisher's request for expediency in view of the tight timeline. He referred in this context to an email from the Publisher requesting the input of various experts, but there was no indication that the Publisher was demanding such speed that such expert contributions should be omitted. The absence of the contributions of "authoritative experts in various fields" contradicts the information given on the back page of the book.

3.28 The investigation concludes that Professor Sit willfully intended to promote ill-conceived information as scholarship, failed to properly and consistently identify and acknowledge contributors, and misrepresented the extent to which "authoritative experts in various fields" were involved. This shows that Professor Sit compromised academic integrity during the production and publication of the Blue Books.

Chapter Four

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Panel has the mandate to investigate the complaint lodged by CUHK concerning ACCS's claim in the Hong Kong Blue Books that CUHK's General Education curriculum is sponsored by and written with the assistance of an American fund, and that the teaching direction is dominated by that fund. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Panel was not able to identify any facts that could substantiate this claim. Therefore the complaint by CUHK was upheld by the Panel.

4.2 After completing the investigation, the Panel finds that the incident involves academic misconduct on the part of Professor Sit in the following manner:

- a. He compiled the publications with little regard for academic quality;
- b. He subsequently defended the ill-conceived information and made an inadequate amendment statement to CUHK;
- c. He misrepresented the authorship/editorship of the Blue Books;
- d. He attempted to shift the blame for the authorship and inclusion of the Statement to his subordinates.

4.3 The Panel has thus fulfilled its remit under the Terms of Reference of the enquiry into the matter.

Recommendations

4.4 The Panel believes that Professor Sit is no longer suitable to serve as Director of ACCS. The Panel recommends that Professor Sit be removed from any ACCS management duties with immediate effect and that an interim Director be called upon to oversee the Institute.

4.5 The Panel recommends that a full and sincere apology should be made to CUHK for the Statement in the Blue Books.

4.6 It is also recommended that the University consider ways to improve the operation and to enhance the future development of ACCS.