

## **The Review Panel on the Centenary Ceremony Held on August 18**

### **Progress Report (up to 2 January 2012)**

This monthly Progress Report sets out the work done by the Review Panel so far and in particular on an allegation that documents relating to the August 18 event had been destroyed and its conclusion on this allegation at this stage.

#### *Allegation on the destruction of the minutes found to be unsubstantiated*

1. On 23 November 2011, the Review Panel organized a forum (“the Forum”) open to HKU stakeholders to solicit views from students, staff and alumni. A total of 21 people expressed opinions at the Forum. The Review Panel takes this opportunity to thank all those who attended the Forum.
2. During the Forum, an alumnus (Dr. Au Yiu Kai) made an allegation in public that he had received information from a friend (“Individual A”, who was not identified to the Panel) working at HKU to the effect that an instruction had been given to destroy the minutes of meetings related to the August 18 event shortly afterwards. Given the gravity of the allegation and its impact on the integrity of university personnel, the Review Panel took the following steps to look into the matter:
  - (1) The Secretary of the Review Panel wrote a letter to Dr. Au to obtain more details of the allegation and the source of his information. The Review Panel learned from Dr. Au that Individual A had no personal information and had received the alleged information from an Individual X. The Convenor of the Review Panel spoke to Individual X who in turn said Individual X had heard the allegation from an Individual Y. The Convenor of the Review Panel spoke to Individual Y about the allegation. Individual Y denied having said anything about the destruction of any documents related to the 18 August event to anyone, including to Individual X. Nor had Individual Y heard or received any instruction relating to the destruction of documents.
  - (2) On 13 December 2011, the Secretary of the Review Panel again wrote to Dr. Au to seek further information, to which he promptly replied that he had nothing further to add.
  - (3) On 29 November 2011, the Secretary of the Review Panel also wrote to the

Registrar for information on how documents relating to University affairs were handled in general and how documents relating to the August 18 event in particular were handled.

- (4) On 2 December 2011, twelve members of the HKU staff collectively responded in the following terms: *“We are very disturbed by Dr. Au’s statement... we did not prepare minutes for our internal working meetings or the meetings with the Police... Since there were no meeting minutes ... the allegation that such meeting minutes were instructed to be destroyed... is obviously groundless... With regard to the working documents and communications relating to the 818 event, we are keeping the necessary papers in accordance with our normal office practice... We would like to point out that none of us has sent any message to request the destroying of papers or has received such a message...”*
  - (5) In addition, on 16 December 2011 the Review Panel met the Registrar and five members of the HKU administrative staff to discuss the handling of all documents relating to the August 18 event. They confirmed categorically that they had not given or been given, or caused anyone to give instructions to destroy documents relating to the August 18 event. The Review Panel was given details of the office practices for dealing with documents. The Registrar also offered to provide copies of any additional documents that the Review Panel wishes to have.
3. On the material available to the Review Panel, the Review Panel has no reason to doubt the evidence given by the Registrar and the members of the HKU administrative staff. The allegation is based on multiple hearsay evidence and, up to this stage, none of this evidence has been substantiated. The Review Panel is accordingly inclined to conclude that there is no evidence to support the allegation that any instruction was given to destroy minutes of meetings relating to the August 18 event. The Review Panel welcomes any additional information on the matter, and subject to any new information, the Review Panel will find the allegation that an instruction had been given to destroy documents to be unfounded.

*Progress up to date*

4. On 17 September 2011 the Review Panel convened its first meeting and decided that the scope of the review would include the security arrangements, the event arrangements and the post-event crisis handling. The review would be conducted in three stages, namely fact-finding, opinion gathering and formulation of recommendations. The Review Panel

is accountable foremost to the Council, to which it will make its recommendations.

5. Since that time the Review Panel has met on 27 other occasions spending more than 90 hours in meetings, and has interviewed 31 different people face-to-face. Those interviewed from the University administration included the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (University Relations), the Registrar, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Director of Development & Alumni Affairs, the Director of China Affairs and the Director of Communications as well as the Assistant Security Manager and security guards who were at LG2 of KK Leung Building at the material time. Other interviewees included the Council Chairman, the President of the HKUSU, Mr. Li Shing-hong, and representatives from the Police. During December 2011, the Review Panel has taken steps to verify its interview notes with each of the interviewees in order to ensure the accuracy of facts obtained. Many of the interviewees have also provided written supplementary information or documents in response to the Review Panel's requests, for which the Review Panel is grateful.
6. With the first two stages of fact-finding and comment-collecting coming to an end, the Review Panel is pressing ahead with the third stage of formulating recommendations and aims to complete its Report in January 2012. The Review Panel has been looking into precedents in relation to event and security arrangements at other universities and has been reflecting on the University's core values. Before the Review Panel finalizes its conclusions and recommendations, the Review Panel would welcome more views and recommendations through its e-mail address ([reviewpanel@hku.hk](mailto:reviewpanel@hku.hk)).
7. Please visit the Review Panel's webpage (<http://www.hku.hk/rpanel/>) for updates.

2 January 2012