



## Analysis of the Teacher Appointment System in the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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### Abstract

The trait combining Chinese and western characteristics of Hong Kong under the impact of protestant ethic and the traditional Confucian culture is a successful example of localization of Western universities. The author conducts a system text analysis of the academic organizational structure, teacher recruitment and promotion, and academic accreditation system of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and finds that Hong Kong University of Science and Technology emphasizes the separation of powers, the balance of the rule of law and the rule of man and the implementation of the spirit of professor governing the university in its teacher appointment system. Universities in mainland China should take the opportunity to establish a university charter and set up a university professor Council in the personnel system reform; use the guiding concept of professor governing the university and transfer from executive-led to academic-led; and take the personnel reform as the starting point to explore effective ways of academic accreditation.

**Key words:** Hong Kong university of science and technology; Teacher appointment; System analysis

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### INTRODUCTION

University teacher appointment system reform is the core content in building a modern university system.

Putting university teacher appointment system under the perspective of modern university system construction has become an inevitable choice. However, regarding current study of modern domestic university system, most universities adopt a tendency of “transplanting”. They stick to an introduction to modern university systems in developed Western countries; or they entangle themselves in a certain part or in a micro perspective while they don’t put the study basis of the modern university system under the context of local culture. The author believes that the modernization process of universities in China is in the process of introducing advanced Western university systems and integrating them with traditional Chinese culture. The reasons are as follows:

First, the development of the university system is derived from traditions. It is historical and cultural accumulation as well as the result of social changes and the integration of human values and concepts. Modern universities originated in medieval Europe and have gradually received their independent status in the race with religions. “If we want an opportunity for intellectual activities is not dissipated, then after obtaining the academic achievements, institutional responses must be made quickly. The medieval universities put more emphasis on this.” (Clark, 1994) From the perspective of rational institutionalism, we can believe that, “systems are game rules in society; or more widely speaking, they are some artificial designed constraints to shape the interaction between people.” (Douglass, 2009) Therefore, once formed, systems are relatively stable. They gradually change in the process of social changes and in the integration of values and beliefs. From this perspective, the university system is a “historical presence”: on the one hand, it originated in traditions from ancient European universities; on the other hand, it has long been soaked in the culture of social changes. Therefore, the research of modern university system in China should not only obtain a normative understanding from the institutional

framework, but also trace the cultural state of the university system in the nation's historical experience.

Second, the Western university system cannot be directly transplanted. Simple transplant won't produce good results. The actual modern university in China was generated in the end of the Qing dynasty. From the beginning of copying Japanese, German, British and American systems to a comprehensive study of the Soviet Union, we can say that, it is extremely rare in the history of education in the world that a country's education system experienced so dramatic transformation in just one hundred years. If seen from the perspective of the localization of Western university systems, this frequent mode conversion seems accidental but actually is inevitable. Since the end of the Qing dynasty, although western models have expelled traditional classical academy in China and become the dominant model in the process of university modernization, yet it is not easy for the spirits and concepts behind the system to integrate with traditional Chinese culture. The mode conversion is precisely the characterization of the conflict and its hidden implication is what Western university systems that traditional Chinese culture is going to choose to achieve the integration of eastern and western culture. In essence, it is the completion of the localization of Western university systems. We can learn from the West's curriculum, teaching modes and university governance structure; however, we cannot transplant the spirits and concepts hidden behind the university system, resulting in failure of Western university systems in fitting in China. Charles Eliot, once served as president of Harvard University for 40 years, said that,

a veritable university must be a locally originated seed and cannot be transplanted from England or Germany when it has luxuriant foliage and is maturely developed. It is not like a cotton mill which operates 6 months and then can meet a pressing need. A university is not built on editorials published in the newspaper, a lot of advertisements posted, or several telegrams sent....American universities at their early stage would never be a replica of a foreign system...it naturally and slowly grows up in America's social and political environment and reflects the common goals and ambitions of all well-educated classes in society. (On the Personnel Reform of Peking University, 2004, March 22)

Therefore, we must establish our own modern university systems based on local culture. About this point, Mr. Jin Yaoji in his book *Philosophy of Universities* also have brilliant exposition: besides shouldering the common functions of a modern university and meanwhile promoting the internationalization of Chinese higher education, how to make it play a role in the inheritance and development of Chinese culture and even contribute to the contraction of a modern ethnic Chinese civilization is a major challenge to the wisdom and imagination of today's higher educators in China. (Jin, 2008)

Based on the above understanding, the author believes that it is necessary to introduce the Western

university systems into local Chinese context to establish the theoretical system of modern university systems which can reveal local experience. In this process, the operation of the academic system is the core of modern university systems. To bring the research on university teacher appointment system into the analysis of the localization process of modern university systems makes it even more profound.

As for why choosing a university in Hong Kong to conduct the research, the author believes that the Southwest Associated University during the period of war and Peking University under the governance of Cai Yuanpei were the shining pearls in the short modern university history in China and they two are better examples of the integration of modern Western university systems and local Chinese context. However, there are huge differences between the war time with internal and external problems and the peaceful era with global competition. Although the reform conducted by Cai Yuanpei in Peking University caused a big impact in the intellectual circle, the ideal of freedom of "neutral value" he introduced was based on German "academic rationality", which was hard to be accepted by intellectuals who were in dire straits and hold the thought of national salvation and survival because it is hard to integrate with the traditional statecraft thought of "everyone responsible for the rise and fall of the country" in traditional Chinese culture. The success of Peking University benefited more from Cai Yuanpei's "Christmas style" leadership. Therefore, the success of the reform in Peking University is not universal. Hong Kong higher education has become a hub of higher education in Asia in just a few decades. The traits combining western and Chinese characteristics of Hong Kong higher education resulting in the mutual impact of Hong Kong protestant ethic and traditional Confucian culture makes the research of the localization of western universities is more typical in the modern sense. It is undoubtedly the success story of localization of universities transplanted from the west. Taking Hong Kong University of Science and Technology as a case to conduct in-depth analysis, no doubt, has a high reference value for the mainland China which takes efforts to establish a modern university system.

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## 1. TEXT ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHER APPOINTMENT SYSTEM IN HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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### 1.1 Academic Organizational Structure

The academic structure of HKUST is a typical university-school-department three-level mode. These institutions constitute the academia management center of HKUST. The Council is nominally the supreme governing body

of HKUST, but when it comes to academic issues, the Academic Board, the highest academic body, will take the responsibility. The Council generally doesn't intervene in academia affairs. It usually conducts and votes for final modifications regarding relevant systems based on recommendations from academic departments. Most decisions on academic affairs are concentrated in the department. Departments are the most basic and most important academic organizations in HKUST, led and governed by the director of the department, who is not only responsible for almost all the teaching and research work, but also take charge of part of the administrative work. For example, issues involving in all levels of professor recruitment, promotion and renewal, etc. are initiated by the department and then based on the level of the application are submitted to the school, the vice president for academics and the president. Schools in HKUST in the operation of academic issues play a connecting role between the department level and the university level. They collect the personnel comments and then submit to relevant academic bodies for final decision.

The committee system is also a very important system in HKUST. HKUST sets up different committees in the university, school and department levels. In the university level, under the Council, it sets up the audit committee and the finance committee and so on to deal with university-related matters. However, these committees only have the right of discussion, and they don't have the right of decision-making. It sets up undergraduate education committee under the highest academic institution, the Academic Board, to take charge of academic affairs in various aspects. Of the school level, four schools also set up a committee respectively, which is composed of staff with an assistant professorship or above to review the recruitment, promotion and substantive appointment of academic staff.

## 1.2 The Recruitment and Promotion of Teachers

At the beginning of the establishment of the university, HKUST has established a complete set of rules to select and hire teachers. During the localization process, the academic system of HKUST is basically adopted from the American system and changed in some way according to the actual situation of HKUST. The teachers' academic status is divided into three levels: professor, associate professor and assistant professor. According to international practice, HKUST expressly provides for the appointment of an assistant professor must for someone who has a doctoral degree in his research field and is creative engaging in research and teaching. An associate professor must have recognized contribution to the research field. In general, when appointed as an A level associate professor, the candidate must meet the following three requirements: In the teaching, the candidate is remarkably successful in undergraduate and graduate teaching and in the quality supervision of graduate

teaching; in the research, the candidate has outstanding performance; in terms of service, the candidate provides services to the public in the university and department. The department-level committee generally consists of three to five members. All members can vote in meetings regarding candidates' promotion for the same level or the level lower than that of the members. An assistant professor cannot vote on the appointment and promotion of associate professors and professors; an associate professor cannot vote on the appointment and promotion of professors. The voting takes a confidential form. The result of the vote will be delivered to the director of the department and the director of the department will submit it to the school. The school has a review committee which selects one member for each department to act in accordance with the above rules. The result will serve as a reference for the dean. After the dean has made a decision based on the two different committees of the department and the school as well as the independent review report from the director of the department, he or she will submit his or her decision to the academic vice president's office and then submit to the university-level review committee for appointment and promotion. The members of this committee come from four different schools and the committee has eight members. Its review comment nominally serves as a reference for the academic vice president, but in fact it has absolute power.

In addition to the recruitment and promotion, HKUST has established a substantive appointment committee. Members of the teacher substantive appointment committee are firstly recommended by the dean of each school. Each school can recommend two members and they must be professors who are academically successful and highly qualified and have outstanding teaching performance and a strong sense of judgment. Under normal circumstances, the academic vice president will agree on the opinion of the substantive appointment committee unless there is a more suitable candidate or the academic vice president has concerns about the candidate not qualified for the academic position. After the academic vice president and the dean of each school unify the opinion, a chairman is selected from the recommended name list and then submitted to the president for consideration. Finally it is submitted to the university Council for voting.

The university system in Hong Kong is attached to the civil service system, which is essentially the same with that of the United Kingdom. The civil service system institutionally is a level distinct framework in which civil servants are promoted step by step. Under normal circumstances, the starting point of the qualification of a newly recruited PhD graduate is B5. In the junior faculty list, he or she can get promoted to the highest of B15. There are 11 steps from B5 to B15 and in every three steps there is a so-called bar review, an evaluation once

every three years to conduct a comprehensive assessment to the teaching, research and social services in the past three years. After B15, he or she enters the list of senior faculty. There are ten steps from A1 to A10. There are over 20 steps from level B to level A and they can be divided into three layers. The salary level of an assistant professor is B1 to B15. The salary level of an associate professor in level A is A1 to A7. The salary level of an associate professor in level B is B11 to B15. The salary level of a professor is A5 to A10. With the success of the promotion of teachers, their salary changes accordingly. This transparent incentive mechanism greatly contributes to the internal positive interaction among teachers in HKUST and it also contributes to teachers' self-learning and improvement.

### 1.3 The Academic Evaluation of Teachers

Regarding the academic evaluation of teachers, HKUST mainly identifies it from three aspects: in teaching, it relies on students' evaluation; in research, it relies on peer evaluation; in service, it relies on colleagues' evaluation. The score in teaching is the score granted by students after a course is taught. In order to get high score in teaching evaluation, professors will try to please students in their assignments and grades to make up students' negative comments and assist with comments from other colleagues. In service, the evaluation is relative objective. Colleagues will have an objective evaluation of whether one works hard and provides enthusiastic services and there is not much misinterpretation.

Evaluation of faculty's research is a core element of academic evaluation system. When the review committee receives a teacher's application, two things need to be done: first, they must identify the professional expertise of the applicant. Now disciplines are finely divided. The research activities in each discipline are extensive. The committee has to decide where to put the applicant's research. Second, they need to select reviewers anonymously. There are "six not allowed principles" in HKUST when selecting the external reviewers: they cannot be your previous thesis advisors; they cannot be co-authors of your publications; they cannot be those who once hosted a research project with you; they cannot be your previous colleagues who worked with you in the same department in the past; they cannot be your present colleagues; they cannot be your relatives. The "six not allowed principles" make the review as objective and fair as possible. "Externality" and "anonymity" are the core elements of the academia accreditation system in HKUST.

According to the provisions of HKUST, applicants may nominate professors to conduct the review, but review opinions from external experts proposed by the applicant cannot be deemed as valid vote, only as a reference without any constraint forces. Applicants can also propose a list of avoidance. The department-level committee will send a review request letter to seven or

eight experts in the relevant field. They need to recover at least five experts' review opinions; therefore, all the request letters sent and experts' review feedback must be retained in archives. When the committee requests reviews, the applicant's self-evaluation, a summary report on his research in the past and not more than ten articles or books or his academic achievement should be enclosed in the request letter. After receiving the seven review feedback letters, the department-level committee will carefully read them and then write a comprehensive feedback on the applicant's teaching, research and social service. Then the seven experts' review will be sent to the director of the department. If the committee approves the applicant's application and so does the director of the department, the application will be sent to the school level. In order to avoid departments and schools sending complicated cases to the university level, HKUST takes an additional condition: if the approved cases are rejected at a higher level, the quota will be taken back into control by the level which rejected the application. If this happens, it means the department staff is fewer but they have to do the same amount of work. This approach promotes the review meetings at all levels to make a more careful decision when they conduct faculty academic evaluation.

On the basis of strict assessment, HKUST also leaves channels for legal remedies for applicants. Applicants may request to refer to experts' anonymous review letter. When approving an applicant to refer, the university will point out information indicating the reviewer's name and workplace and then allow the applicant to check to ensure that the applicant cannot use it as legal evidence. Even if the applicant's application is approved by the committee, if it is rejected by the academic vice president, applicant still has a chance to appeal. He can request a re-assessment of his case. If so, the academic vice president will have to organize a special appeal committee to re-evaluate this case.

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## 2. THE GOVERNANCE LOGIC OF THE TEACHER APPOINTMENT SYSTEM IN HKUST

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### 2.1 Separation of Powers and Consultation

Administrative management behavior and teaching and research behavior need to establish a clear and definite boundary and that needs to clarify which is administrative behavior and which is behavior of academic autonomy and democratic self-governance. From an institutional perspective, the management of administration and academics is integrated. How to make the two acts complement each other to play together and avoid conflicts is one of the key factors that lead to HKUST's success.



The Council of HKUST is the highest authority of the university. Its administrative authority can influence and interfere with academic freedom, but members of the Council almost never interfere with academic affairs. As Woo Chia-Wei, the founder and president of HKUST, once said:

The Council of the university is responsible for the government which stands for the public. It also tries to seek resources for the university from the government. Some council members are willing to raise additional money for the university from the society, but the university council members never interfere with the formulation and implementation of academic policies as well as daily management and operation. (Woo, 2007, p.71)

The non-interference policy of university council members is also well implemented in schools and departments. The administrative executive bodies in HKUST use the non-interference principle in their handling of daily work, follow the educational philosophy of taking academic orientation as the demand, and deal with academic affairs through the way of “consultation”. Woo Chia-Wei, the founder and president of HKUST mentioned in his book:

meetings (“four-member” meetings under the university management committee) are not regular. The content usually is immature ideas, particularly sensitive thoughts, or rough information as well as relatively big personnel issues. Once there is a better understanding of the issue or some consensus has been reached, a document will be drafted and then submitted to the academic committee or university management committee based on the nature of the issue. (Woo, 2007, p.310)

From the form and content of the administrative management, this approach makes the opinions of academic staff infiltrate into management and embodies “consultative democracy” in the management.

The governance philosophy of the separation of powers is also quite fully reflected in HKUST. This system is known as single line management system or line management system. Executives at each level are responsible for the immediate supervisor. Simply, the immediate supervisor of the academic vice president is the president. The appointment right rests solely in the hand of the president. The dean of each school is appointed after the consultation of the president and the vice president. The director of each department is appointed after the consultation of the vice president and the dean. Since the academic directors are appointed by the directors of the higher level, they can only be dismissed by the directors of the higher level. Under normal circumstances, when the dean is considering the appointment of the director of a department, he might consult the opinion of this department. As for how to consult and who to consult, it is the dean’s decision. Therefore, this process is quite flexible and the dean has great discretion and all the responsibility is borne by the dean. It is certain that professors of the department are absolutely not to vote to elect their embraced director of the department. In

HKUST, academic affairs such as teacher appointment follow this principle: professors manage affairs more comprehensively; associate professors manage less; and assistant professors manage even less. From this we can see that, the academic management feature of HKUST is that the management above the director of the department level is of more bureaucracy and the management below the director of the department level embodies more democracy.

## 2.2 The Balance of the Rule of Law and the Rule of Man

The spirit of the “rule of law” is a main feature of Hong Kong. This spirit naturally extends to university systems. Therefore, the education sponsored by the Hong Kong government relies more on the “rule of law”. They emphasize the role of written rules of law. Teachers in Hong Kong are anchored to the civil service system. Although this system pays attention to “bureaucratic” efficiency, it also has the features of dogmatism and backward, particularly in the educational and academic accreditation. President Woo Chia-Wei once said, “The rule of law culture in Hong Kong is good, but when it comes to outdated regulations or rigid execution, it will make things difficult for people.” (Woo, 2007, p.296) He believes the rigid and unfair “defects of the rule of law” that dogmatism brings are somehow reasonable. The characteristic of the rule of law is usually quantifiable logic. When applied to the evaluation of education and academics which are humanities and are difficult to quantify, it is clearly inappropriate in some way. “Professors governing the university” becomes an effective governance model to break through the “defects of the rule of law”, especially in academic-related matters. In a sense, executives such as the president and the vice president are conducting “governance” work; however, professors’ governance is a type of “the rule of man”. Woo Chia-Wei, the founder and president of HKUST, once said,

Kong Xianduo and I considered the evaluation and promotion as well as the salary of professors. Our discussion was thoughtful. His arguments were rigorous and factual. We did not have any disagreement. I believe in this major task, we have achieved the balance between “the rule of law” and “the rule of man”. (Woo, 2007, p.114)

Kong Xianduo, the academic vice president of HKUST repeatedly referred to his recruitment principle in his memoir, *My Decade in HKUST*: Recruit the best people and make them happy. He attached great importance to the power of the rule of man and put people-centered concept throughout the governance of academic affairs.

As a previous British colony, teacher appointment system anchored to the civil service system has a style of the rule of law. Western social organization and management model are a technological social operating model naturally formed after the industrial revolution

and the development of capital markets. However, in traditional Chinese society, the rule of man social management model which uses Confucian ethics as the core has become feudal, nonindustrial social operating model. Since the rule of law is blank in terms of values at the bottom of the system space, which is what we call “legal loophole”, the rule of law has some defects which depart from the original goals, which requires charismatic leadership. In occasions in which we need to break through some key points when facing difficulties, “the rule of man” shows its superiority. The rule of law and the rule of man complement each other and restrain each other. The combination of the two becomes a key factor in the success of HKUST.

### **2.3 The Manifestation of the Spirit of “Professors Governing the University”**

From the perspective of governance philosophy, academic governance should attach importance to both research and teaching achievements. It also should build a good academic ecology for scholars. Achievements can be quantified and the research level is easy to recognize. This can be done by the academic vice president and non-experts in the field. However, these senior administrative staff cannot really grape the research and teaching process of a discipline because they usually are experts in a particular field. Therefore, research and teaching process are the fields where scholars have personal freedom. This is the basis of “professors governing the university”. The Academic Board of HKUST takes the responsibility of “professors governing the university”, which can be seen from the ordinance of HKUST. Section 15 of the university ordinance provides for: The Academic Board is the highest academic body of the university. It may govern the teaching and research work of the university based on whether the Council will fund and it may govern university degrees and academic examinations. As can be seen from the ordinance, the political system in Hong Kong has a great impact on the university governance. According to the laws of Hong Kong, the government does not directly manage any university, but it sets up a medium organization, “University Grants Committee”. The government will allocate funds directly to the University Grants Committee and will not interfere with the specific affairs in universities. The university council uses the same practice of the Hong Kong government. In addition to allocating funds, it does not interfere with university affairs. This ensures that university professors have mastered autonomy to university affairs. We can also find the basis of “professors governing the university” from the members of the Academic Board. At the beginning of the establishment of the Academic Board of HKUST, there were 55 members, including 14 administrative staff, the president, the vice president, deans, the directors of academic support and service departments, 19 directors of departments, 19

professors and three academic representatives. (Woo, 2007, p.308) The president, vice president, deans and directors of departments belong to administrative faculty, but they all are senior professors. They have a better understanding of the academic logic of the university’s development and the meaning of professors governing the university. President Woo Chia-Wei believes that, in a research university, executives cannot work well without a strong academic basis; otherwise, when they are involved in personnel evaluation (including recruitment, compensation, fate, promotion, etc.), it would be like layman leadership. Then how could they convince the public? More importantly, if they have never done research work, it is hard for them to understand the basic rules of academic research and to experience the creative spirit of academic research. If they have never personally experienced the test of “no publications, then destruction”, it would be hard for them to understand the ups and downs of scientific research as well as the joy and sadness in scientific research career. (Woo, 2007, p.18) From this we can see that, the respect of the managers for the academic profession has laid the foundation for “professors governing the university”. On the other hand, there were 19 professors in the Academic Board and the president, vice president and directors of departments are all senior professors in their own discipline. They all combine together and professors governing the university can be achieved. Academic power occupies the dominant position in the Academic Board.

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## **3. HKUST TEACHER APPOINTMENT SYSTEM’S INSPIRATIONS TO THE REFORM OF PERSONNEL SYSTEM IN MAINLAND CHINA**

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In the localization process of “American model”, HKUST firmly grasped the core philosophy of professors governing the university, academic freedom, and university autonomy of modern American university system and conducted reform based on this to adapt to their own characteristics of universities in Hong Kong. For mainland China where university personnel reform is being conducted, the teacher appointment system of HKUST is undoubtedly worth learning. At presents, the personnel reform in mainland China should be conducted from the following aspects.

### **3.1 Set Up a University Professor Consultative Council by Using the Opportunity of Establishing the University Charter**

Hong Kong is a society ruled by law and it attaches great importance to legislation. Before the start of each university, the legislative council will formulate university regulations or charters as part of the local law and the “constitution” of the university. At the early establishment

of HKUST, the university ordinance was law made under the assistance of lawyers and repeated discussion of representatives from various fields gathered together by the Preparatory Committee. Once enacted, it will not be changed easily. Then it is officially released. It is the basic law of how university operates. Any individual, group, school administrator, professor, students and others who violate the university regulations will be subject to prosecution. The university ordinance is to resist any kind of interfering power and it is also a stable guarantee of the university power. In China, we are still in an embarrassing situation that many universities do not have a charter. University charter, as the bridge to connect national law to university regulations and rules, is the foundation to establish modern university system. Therefore, we must use the opportunity of setting up university charter to improve various systems in universities. We should comprehensively comb the internal and external relationship of universities to develop universities in a law and rule-based environment. University teachers are the soul of a university, and the development of their academic career is the core of the establishment of modern university system. Each university should respect the logic of academic development and give full autonomy to professors in handling of academic affairs.

In the history of Chinese universities, professor consultative council once flourished. Cai Yuanpei set a professor consultative council in Peking University and so did Mei Yiqi in Tsinghua University. At that time, there were so many famous scholars and masters in Peking University and Tsinghua University. Universities at a higher academic level would attach more importance to academic freedom and university autonomy. The two presidents absorbed the philosophy of governance from western universities and then they created the shining pearls in the history of Chinese universities. After the founding of China, in the shadow of politicized environment, the aura of scholars receded, and academic activities were repeatedly destroyed. Academic peel made universities the appendages of the government. Only with the establishment of professor consultative council will demonstrate the value of academics and return the original appearance of academic organizations.

### **3.2 Steer From Executive-Led to Academic-Led Under the Philosophy of Professor Governing the University**

The core philosophy of HKUST is the steering from executive-led to academic-led and the establishment of professors governing the university as the basis of university governance model. The early higher education in Hong Kong is basically the same with British university system and they both are anchored to the civil servant system. The civil servant system is a hierarchical and step-by-step promotional framework and it stresses step by step process and requires working

under rules. At the early establishment of HKUST, the president expressly pointed out that rigid civil servant system shackled the university; therefore, founders and presidents of the university took “American system” as the model which is relatively more flexible and has more freedom. Compared with the university ordinance of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, we can find the “bureaucratic” rational features of their ordinance; however, the ordinance of HKUST attaches more importance to academic autonomy and internal spontaneous order. President Woo Chia-Wei once said, “We can see that, the system of standardized ‘professors governing the university’ allows professors to use legal powers, and they really demonstrate their intensity and effects in crucial moments.” (Woo, 2007, p.308) From this we can find the determination of academic dominance in HKUST. The biggest problem of universities in mainland China is that administrative powers and academic powers entangle with each other; the academic environment becomes administrative; the dominant role of academics is not fully demonstrated. Essentially, a university is an academic organization and it is different from a business or bureaucratic system. The organization of a university is loose and the management center is low. It is a bottom-up distribution channel. Therefore, it requires university executives to change their governance philosophy, establish good academic environment and create channels for “professors governing the university”.

### **3.3 Taking Personnel Reform as the Starting Point to Explore Effective Ways for Academic Accreditation**

The academic accreditation system of HKUST can be referred as “three levels and one field” in short. The so-called “three levels” means the applicants have to pass the “assessment of three levels”: The first level is from the director of the department and the academic consultative council of the department; the second level is from the dean and the academic consultative council of the school; the third level is from the academic president and the academic consultative council of the university. “One field” refers to the external field, meaning the external academic field which has no connection with the university. The academic accreditation of “three levels and one field” makes HKUST own strong competitive edge in the academic market. From the perspective of the public welfare of academics, a university relies on the investment and use of educational resources to appoint teachers to produce “academic products”. The value of “academic products” is determined by agency appointed by the government and based on the value, the government will allocate funds accordingly. From the perspective of private profits of academics, university teachers get paid from the process of the investment in human capital. The honor

of academic achievements enables the university to gain peer recognition in academic exchanges in the world to improve the visibility of the university. The academic accreditation system of “three levels and one field” has a positive role in promoting the society and the university as well as university teachers. In contrast, in universities in mainland China, they lack motivation mechanism in current research evaluation criterial. Basically they evaluate the quality of papers from the academic journals where the papers were published. The advantages of peer evaluation are completely ignored. Universities in mainland China have never used evaluation of external fields and they don’t put university teachers in academic market. Academic accreditation system reform is extremely important for universities in mainland China in order to build a world-class university.

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## CONCLUSION

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Reform of teacher appointment system has drawn more and more attention in each university. I would like to conclude this paper by using the words of Kong Xiaoduo, the academic vice president of HKUST: HKUST is able

to hire excellent professors and that is because HKUST has a complete set of rules, that is the appointment rules and regulations, and they are strictly enforced. More importantly, HKUST has a core belief of “recruit the best people and make them happy”. ( Kong, 2011)

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