

# Caritas Institute of Higher Education acquires university title

Subsequent to the approval by the Chief Executive-in-Council today (January 9), the Permanent Secretary for Education has approved the change of the English and Chinese names of the Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) to "Saint Francis University" and "聖法蘭西大學," respectively in accordance with the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) (the Ordinance).

The Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, congratulated the institution. She said, "The granting of a university title not only represents a milestone for the CIHE but also bears testimony to the Government's commitment to promoting the parallel development of the publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors to provide young people in Hong Kong with quality, flexible and diversified study pathways. I trust that the self-financing post-secondary sector would continue to play a pivotal role in nurturing talent to support Hong Kong's manpower needs and its further development into an international hub for post-secondary education."

The CIHE is the fourth self-financing post-secondary education institution granted a university title. In line with the revised roadmap for post-secondary colleges to become private universities as published in 2015, the Government has taken relevant factors into account before granting a university title to the CIHE, including its breadth of programmes; research capability; size and scale; as well as governance and management, financial sustainability, academic environment and quality assurance.

To assess its readiness for becoming a private university, the CIHE invited the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to undertake an Institutional Review in 2022. The HKCAAVQ concluded that the CIHE met the standards expected of a private university.

Founded in 1985 as the Caritas Francis Hsu College, the institution became an approved post-secondary college in 2001 to operate sub-degree programmes. After acquiring an accreditation status for offering degree-level programmes in 2010, it changed its name to the CIHE in 2011. In the 2023/24 academic year, the CIHE operates 13 self-financing locally accredited post-secondary programmes, comprising 12 bachelor's degree programmes and one master's degree programme, with about 3 000 full-time and 500 part-time students in total.

The CIHE has attained Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) status in the areas of General Business Administration, Social Work, and Information and Communication Technology. The PAA status obtained will continue to be subject to periodic institutional reviews by the HKCAAVQ. Having acquired a university title, the CIHE will be required to submit a progress report

together with an audited financial report to the Education Bureau annually to ensure its teaching quality and financial sustainability. The Education Bureau has commissioned the HKCAAVQ to review the reports and provide independent expert advice to the Bureau.