

Speech by CE at Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong Chai Wan Campus opening ceremony (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony of the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (THEi) Chai Wan Campus today (April 18):

Dr Roy Chung (Chairman of the Vocational Training Council), Professor Christina Hong (President of THEi), Mrs Carrie Yau (Executive Director of the Vocational Training Council), students, teachers, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am pleased to be here today for the opening of the brand-new Chai Wan Campus of the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, or THEi, as the Institute is so smartly known. It is particularly delightful to attend this grand opening, just a few months after my attendance at the opening of another new Vocational Training Council facility, the International Culinary Institute in Pok Fu Lam. I understand that there is one person behind both projects of VTC who is unable to join us this afternoon, that is the Honourable Dr Andrew Leung, the predecessor of Dr Roy Chung's predecessor. For infrastructure projects like this, minimally you would require almost a decade of conceiving the project, planning the project, getting the approval and so on, so may I suggest we also give Andrew a big round of applause.

THEi was launched in 2012 in Tsing Yi, offering innovative, self-financed degree programmes. As Roy noted, it has gone from a modest half-a-dozen offerings, and only about 200 students, to 20 degree programmes catering to the interests of more than 3 000 students today. And it will continue to expand to 22 degree programmes in the 2019/20 academic year.

There are good reasons behind its soaring growth. THEi's close collaboration with the Hong Kong workforce is certainly one of them. At last count, more than 300 industry partners were associated with THEi, taking full advantage of its enviable flow of talented young graduates who are well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for employment upon graduation. Its bachelor's degree in horticulture and landscape development, for example, is Hong Kong's very first horticulture programme, graduating professionals in arboriculture, horticulture and tree and landscape management. Capitalising on its collaboration with industry, THEi also supports research activities, equipping graduates with leading-edge knowledge to meet the challenges of today's and tomorrow's workplace.

The opening of this Chai Wan Campus showcases our Government's ardent support of vocational and professional education and training (VPET)

institutions. Beyond the subvented programmes provided by the Vocational Training Council, we have, in recent years, promoted self-financing institutions, including THEi, through a variety of initiatives that enable their development and provision of quality programmes. These include the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors and the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies. In the current academic year, THEi offers 12 programmes under the Study Subsidy Scheme, in disciplines such as architecture and engineering, creative industries and computer science. It also provides 28 programmes under the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme, covering disciplines ranging from the culinary arts and management to fashion design.

In short, self-financing post-secondary institutions now play a significant role in offering and promoting VPET programmes. We are committed to supporting the sustainable development of the self-financing sector, and the Education Bureau is studying in detail the recommendations of a review on self-financing post-secondary education made by a task force led by Professor Anthony Cheung.

We are no less committed to VPET in higher education – to ensuring that our young people can choose from multiple pathways in gaining the education they need for the future they want. VPET is central to those options, not only because of its focus on technical education and practical training. Equally essential is VPET's whole-person development, the IT expertise and innovation it delivers and the soft skills and international exposure it imparts. Last April, my Government set up a Task Force on Promotion of VPET. It has been considering how VPET can better respond to the diverse abilities and interests of our young people, as well as create closer ties with business to meet the manpower needs of Hong Kong through this century of boundless opportunity. Next month, the Task Force will conduct a public consultation on its preliminary recommendations. Roy is the chairman of the task force, so I look to you to provide me with your recommendations after the public consultation.

The grand opening of THEi's new Chai Wan Campus takes us another vital step forward in the development of VPET in higher education and training. I had, just now, a quick tour around the campus, and was impressed by its many purpose-built facilities as well as the public space which will no doubt provide an innovative and sustainable learning environment for the students. I am grateful to all those who have contributed to the development of this dynamic campus. I wish THEi, its students and faculty the best of education and a flourishing future. Thank you very much.

