

## Supplementary Information on the Proposed Establishment of the School of Governance and Policy Science in the Faculty of Social Science

### 1. Background

1.1 The proposal to establish a new **School of Governance and Policy Science (SGPS)** was originally proposed to address the multi-faceted problems facing the Department of Government and Public Administration (the Department). These problems are summarized in Paragraph 1.2. Through a thorough study of the desirability and feasibility of establishing the SGPS, the Faculty of Social Science (FSS) recognized that the new school may create a platform for constructive synergy that enables The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) to re-establish its academic leadership in Governance and Policy Science (see Section II).

1.2 *There is mounting evidence that the Department is not sustainable despite all the attempts it has made to address its resource and performance crisis.*

1.2.1 **Budget deficit.** Financially, the Department has an annual budget of around \$12 millions. Since 2017, it has been struggling with a financial crisis. The cumulative deficit amounted to \$4.12 millions in 2020-21 after FSS had allocated an additional \$9.677 millions to pay for the Department's staff costs between 2018-19 and 2020-21. *The budget deficit was attributable to (1) the decrease in the number of students taking GPA courses, (2) unsatisfactory performance in the RAEs, and (3) lack of success in getting RGC grants.* In 2019, the Resource Allocation Committee offered evidence-based suggestions to and set concrete targets for the Department to improve its performance along all metrics in the funding model. In 2022-23, the Department balanced the budget after FSS had made another additional allocation of \$7.184 millions to cover the Department's staff costs.

1.2.2 **Shortage of teaching staff.** Because of the budget constraints, the Department could not replace the full-time teaching staff who left the Department. Consequently, there is a severe shortage of teaching faculties in the Department. The number of full-time teaching staff has dropped to 10 in 2023-24 and will drop to 9 in 2024-25. One faculty member was on sabbatical leave in 2023-24. Currently, the Department houses one undergraduate programme, 2 taught postgraduate programmes, and an MPhil/PhD programme, offering a total of 67 courses (7.44 courses per full-time faculty member!). To meet the teaching needs, the Department needs to rely heavily on part-time or outside

practices teaching. Teaching quality of the programmes might suffer and full-time faculty members' research time were reduced, creating a vicious circle.

**1.2.3 Reputation stains.** Negative publicity of a GPA faculty member's socially proscribed public behaviors in 2021 had tarnished the Department's reputation. The QS subject rankings of Politics at CUHK dropped from 36 in 2015 to 101-150 in 2023.

**1.2.4 Drop in programme popularity.** The number of JUPAS Band A applicants for the GPA undergraduate programme (GPAD) decreased from 167 in 2018-19 to 89 in 2021-22, and the number of students admitted also dropped from 37 in 2018-19 to 12 in 2021-22.

1.3 By 2021, at the GPA Department Board Meeting with the presence of the Dean of Social Science, the Department acknowledged that the challenges facing the Department were multi-faceted and possibly cannot be met with the Department's own resources. The Department agreed to explore structural reorganizations that would create synergy of the Department and other intellectually connected academic units in the Faculty. The Dean of Social Science further discussed the possibility of restructuring with the Data Science and Policy Studies Programme (DPS), the Global Studies Programme (GLSD) and the Global Political Economy Programme (MGPE). With the consensus from the Department and these three programmes, a Task Force for Interdisciplinary Programme Review (Task Force) was set in November 2021 to examine the desirability and feasibility of creating a School as an umbrella entity to house the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of four academic units (the Department, DPS, GLSD, MGPE).

**1.3.1 Membership.** The Task Force consisted of the Associate Dean (Interdisciplinary Programmes), Assistant Dean (Interdisciplinary Programmes), the Chairperson of the Department, the Former Chairperson of the Department, the Director of DPS, and the Director of GLSD. Three of the six members were affiliated with the Department.

**1.3.2 Working principles.** The working principles of the review exercise were: (1) the review should aim to foster synergy and achieve mutual benefits; (2) the participating units should involve in a voluntary and equal partnership; (3) the exercise should aim to 'add value,' instead of subtracting elements; (4) decisions were to be made on consensus basis; and (5) proposals made should be based on thorough discussion and sufficient consultations.

**1.3.3 Review.** The Task Force systematically reviewed the objective data on the financial and human resources provided by the Finance Office and the Human Resources Office, the student admission data provided by the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, and the curricula of the programmes provided by the four academic units. A preliminary report was issued following the systematic review and thorough deliberations.

**1.3.4 Consultation.** The review was followed by extensive consultation with major stakeholders. Four groups of stakeholders were identified: Faculty members, support staff, students, and alumni. Consultation included the following components:

1. Departmental and Programme-level meetings for the teaching staff
2. Four consultation forums with students from GLSD (1 session), DSPS (1 session), MGPE (1 session) and GPAD (1 session)
3. Four consultation forums with staff from GLSD (1 session), DSPS (1 session), MGPE (1 session) and GPAD (1 session)
4. A meeting with the DSPS Student Society, who conducted a survey of 26 students from the DSPS programme
5. An online survey of 42 GPAD alumni, 15 current undergraduates students, 5 current postgraduate students and 4 current staff members

The Task Force thoroughly considered the views and concerns collected in the consultation exercise. These views and concerns, as well as Task Force's recommendations, are presented in the Task Force Report released on August 29, 2022.

**1.4 Faculty Board resolution.** In October 2022, the Task Force's report and its recommendations were endorsed by the Faculty Board. The Board agreed that a new School with the name of School of Governance and Policy Science will be set up to house 3 undergraduate programmes (DSPS, GLSD, GPAD), 3 taught postgraduate programmes (MGPE, MSSc in Government and Politics (Greater China), MSSc in Public Policy), and the MPhil/PhD programme in GPA. The Task Force was dissolved, but consultation with the relevant stakeholders continued.

**1.5 Preparatory Committee.** In April 2023, the Faculty of Social Science set up a Preparatory Committee consisting of the Associate Dean (Interdisciplinary Programmes), Chairperson of the

Department, and the Programme Directors of MGPE, DSPS and GLSD. The Preparatory Committee was tasked to consolidate the past preparatory efforts, prepare a formal proposal for establishing the New School for the University to consider, and oversee new preparatory efforts. The Preparatory Committee also continued consultation with major stakeholders to gather relevant inputs and feedback for the vetting bodies (Faculty Board, AAPC, Senate APC, Senate, and the University Council) to consider, and to explain the proposal and update the stakeholders on the progress.

**1.6 Endorsement of University Committees.** The proposal drafted by the Preparatory Committee was endorsed by the Faculty Board in September 2023, the AAPC on October 3, 2023, the Senate APC on November 8, 2023 and the Senate on December 6, 2023. Comments and suggestions provided by the vetting bodies have been addressed and incorporated in the proposal submitted to the University Council.

## **2. Desirability of Establishing the New School**

The proposed restructuring, originally intended to find a possible solution to the multi-faceted problem facing the Department, offers the following (potential) benefits to the University, the students, and the faculty members in the four participating academic units.

**2.1 Increase and balance the GPAD disciplinary strengths:** The Department was established to offer quality education and thought leadership in the areas of political science, public administration and policy and international relations (see the Department’s website). Unfortunately, the Department’s resource constraints have severely undermined its teaching and research capacity in areas of public administration and policy and international relations. Currently, there is only one faculty member in public administration and policy and one in international relations. Relocating the DSPS, GLSD and MGPE to SGPS will increase and balance the disciplinary strengths of the Department.

**2.2 Enhance the contemporary relevance of GPS through repositioning and rebranding:** Contemporary scientific studies of politics have shifted its emphasis from government to governance. According to the *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance* (2017), compared to government, governance is a broader concept that focuses not only on governance structures, but also on the process of governance: “*Going from government to*

*governance* describes a shift in the processes of public decision-making and the governing of society and economy. In this context, *government* refers to the hierarchal regime characterizing traditional visions of the unitary state. *Governance*, meanwhile, points to multilayered points of policy-making involving a plurality of public and private actors.”

Meanwhile, advances in data science have transformed the research methodology in political science, policy studies and international relations. Renaming the Department of Government and Public Administration to the School of Governance and Policy Science signals (1) an increase in the size of the unit, (2) a shift of emphasis from static description of government structures to governance processes in both government and non-governmental organizations, and (3) an emphasis on evidence-based analysis of governance of policy making.

**2.3 Streamline the governance structure of the GPS-related undergraduate and postgraduate programmes:** Currently, 3 undergraduate and 4 postgraduate GPS-related programmes are housed in the Department or FSS (see Figure 1). The governance structure is both complicated and confusing. The proposed restructuring will simplify and rationalize the governance structure of these programmes, with all 3 undergraduate programmes administered by SGPS and all 4 postgraduate programmes administered by the School’s Graduate Division (Figure 2).

Figure 1

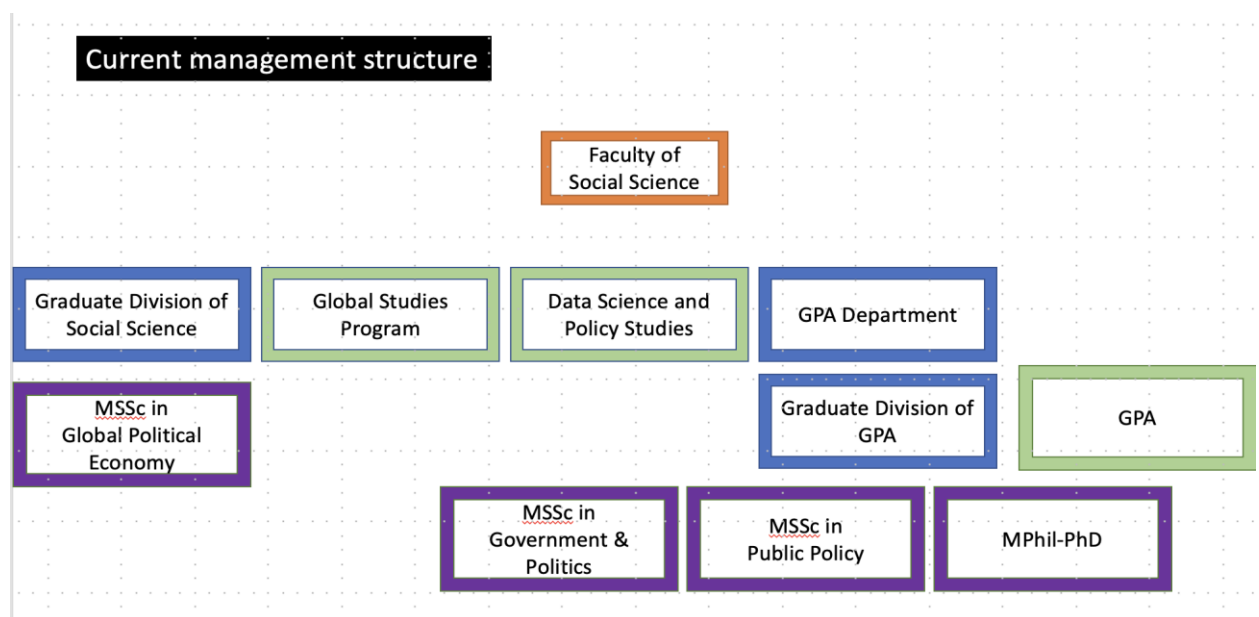
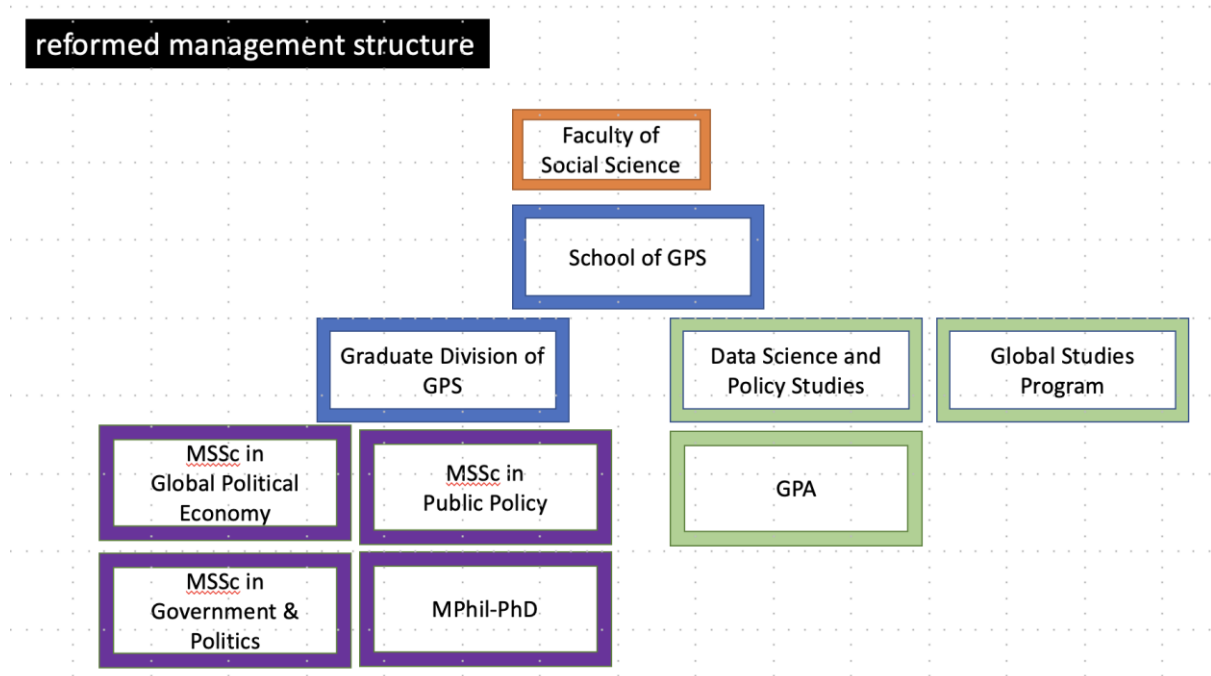


Figure 2



**2.4 Rebuild reputation of CUHK as a thought leader in GPS teaching and research.** According to Prof. Shui-Yan Tang, Frances R. and John J. Duggan Professor in Public Administration, Chair of the Department of Public Policy and Management of USC, and Fellow of National Academy of Public Administration, “all major universities in the US and mainland China have outstanding schools of public policy and affairs – Harvard, Princeton, Berkeley, Michigan, USC, Peking, Tsinghua, Remin, and Fudan, to a few. A hallmark of any top governance and public policy school is that it has a strong faculty contributing to research and practice in public policy and management that are evidence-based and transcend partisan politics. By placing students from their distinguished academic programmes in top government, consulting, nonprofit, and corporate executive positions, top universities enhance their reputation and societal influence. As a leading university in Asia and worldwide, CUHK’s reputation may diminish without an outstanding governance and policy school ... *none of the public policy and administration programmes in Hong Kong currently carry the status of an independent school, as they are either departments or divisions within larger academic units. By establishing the new School of Governance and Policy Science with a sizable faculty and multiple degree programmes, CUHK will immediately become a leader in governance and policy research and education in Hong Kong and beyond.*”

Prof. Tang is a distinguished alumnus of our Department of GPA. He was also a member of the Visiting Committee of the Department. He knew the history and the current situation of the Department very well and had studied our proposal very carefully before authoring these comments. Figure 3 provides a comparison of GPS-related academic units in Hong Kong’s public universities.

Figure 3

	Lingnan University	Hong Kong Baptist University	City University of Hong Kong	The Education University of Hong Kong	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	The University of Hong Kong
Name of Department	Department of Government and International Affairs	Department of Government & International Studies	Department of Public and International Affairs	Department of Social Sciences and Policy Studies	Division of Public Policy	Department of Politics and Public Administration
UG programmes	International Economy and Politics, Social and Public Policy Studies	Government & International Studies, European Studies	Public Policy and Politics, Public Affairs and Management	Global and Environmental Studies, Policy Science and Management, Greater China Studies		Politics and Public Administration, Government & Law
RPG programmes	International Affairs	Politics and Governance, International Relations	Housing and Urban Management, Public Policy and Management	Public Policy and Management, International Relations & Development	Public Policy and Public Administration	Public Administration, International & Public Affairs

**2.5 Share resources to increase efficiency and create synergies in teaching, research, and administration that will benefit SGPS students.** According to Mr. Raymond Ng Ngai Man, President of the Alumni Association of the Government and Public Administration Department of CUHK, “We take the stance that putting political science and related programmes together are academically sound due to synergetic effect among these programmes. The synergetic effect can be achieved in the concentration of resources and in building a critical mass of faculty members to achieve the economies of scale in both research and education works. *From the student’s perspective, we think that the new establishment will provide better teaching and learning environment and even better career development due to the more resourceful and variety of programmes, both for undergraduates and postgraduates.* The students, as well as the university and the society can be benefited from the establishment of the new school in terms of its academic development, research capacity, talent development and professional contributions through its political science and related programmes.” Mr. Ng had studied our proposal and wrote on behalf of the CUHK-GPAD Alumni Association. As reported in our proposal, in anticipation of the establishment of the new school, the

four academic units had already started to share courses, cross-list faculty members, co-supervise postgraduate schools, co-organize co-curricular and experiential activities (e.g., field trips, internship, exchange), and co-organize conferences. Feedback from students and colleagues who had participated in these collaborations were very positive.

**2.6 Create greater societal impact.** According to Prof. Peter TY Cheung, former Professor of Politics and Public Administration at HKU and Professor at the Department of Social Sciences and Policy Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong, *“there will be excellent opportunities for your new school to better address issues and challenges confronting our community, our nation and our changing world, especially considering the advent of Big Data, AI, IT revolution, and global disruptions and transformations.”* Like Prof. Tang and Mr. Ng, Prof. Cheung is a CUHK-GPA Department alumnus and had studied our proposal carefully.

### **3. Naming of the New School**

**3.1 English name.** There is consensus among the stakeholders (except for a cluster of undergraduate students) that the new school should be named the School of Governance and Policy Science in English for the reasons articulated in Paragraph 2.2. The cluster of undergraduate students (mostly GPAD students) who disagreed with this name wanted to retain the term “Government” in the name of the new school, because they were misinformed by one GPAD faculty member that Government is a broader concept than Governance, which is factually incorrect. These students also preferred not to use the term “Science” in the new school’s name, because not all political studies use scientific method. This is a weak argument, because including science in the name of the school does not proscribe creation or dissemination of any form of academic knowledge in governance and public studies.

**3.2 Chinese translation of the school’s name.** An issue that requires further deliberation is the Chinese translation of the new school’s name. Many GPAD alumni and some GPA Department Faculty felt strongly that the Chinese name should start with the Chinese character 政 so that the short name of SGPS (政政學院) can signal an expansion of the 政政學系 into 政政學院.

The Faculty Board respected this view and proposed the Chinese name of 政務與政策科學學院 based on the recommendations of several GPAD alumni who are esteemed academics in Hong Kong



and the U.S. According to 《漢典》, 政務 “泛指國家的管理工作” and 政務 is often used in this sense (e.g., 梁啟超: “凡百政務皆然, 而財政亦猶是也。”). In short, 政務 is an adequate translation of governance. Therefore, in the new school proposal, we adopted the name 政務與政策科學學院。

Some GPAD staff and students suggested to name the school as 政治與政策科學學院 in Chinese, because many political science and public policy schools in Chinese have 政治 in their name. Sun Yat-sen once said 政是眾人, 治是管理, 所以政治就是管理眾人之事. From Sun's perspective, governance can also be translated into 政治. Although for laypeople, 政治 is more strongly associated with politics than governance. A third alternative is 政府與政策科學學院。However, 政府 is more strongly associated with government than governance.

Based on these considerations, the Faculty of Social Science prefers the Chinese name 政務與政策科學學院, but will not object to the name of 政治與政策科學學院 if the University Council prefers this name.

## Response to Student Groups

Allegations of the GPAD Merger Concern Group (the Group) and/or the GPA Student Society (the Society)	Facts	Comments
The proposed restructuring is a merger of the GPA Department.	The proposed restructuring is an <i>administrative reform</i> . Two undergraduate programmes and one postgraduate programme currently under the administration of the Faculty of Social Science and one undergraduate programme and three postgraduate programmes currently under the administration of the GPA Department will be administered by a new umbrella academic unit, the School of GPS.	A similar administrative arrangement was made in 2017 when the Master of Social Science in Public Policy (MPUP) was relocated from the Faculty of Social Science to the GPA Department. The relocation enables MPUP to benefit from the GPA Department's intellectual resources in public policy education and provides financial resources to the GPA Department to manage its financial crisis.
Only 15 current students were consulted through the Task Force online survey.	<p>The Task Force reported on <b>August 29, 2022</b> that extensive consultation with current students, staff and alumni were carried out from May 6 to June 9, 2022. The consultation with students included not only on the online survey, but also a survey carried out by the DSPS Student Society and consultation forums with current students in DSPS, GLSD, GPAD and MGPE.</p> <p>Extensive consultation with the students took place <b>after</b> the release of the Task Force Report. Extensive consultation with staff were carried out during departmental and programme meetings. Views from all GLSD students and first-year DSPS students on course sharing were collected to enable the Preparatory Committee to coordinate course sharing among the participating academic units.</p> <p>Two townhall meetings with staff and students were organized in November 2023 to update students and staff on the progress in the new School approval process and to ensure that no new issues that merit consideration by the University Senate had emerged and not addressed before the University Senate Meeting.</p>	The Group and/or the Society were either unaware of the extensive consultation that had taken place or had chosen to ignore this information. Making a serious public allegation against the Task Force and the Preparatory Committee without first verifying the veridically of their information is an irresponsible behavior.

<p>The students were not provided with detailed information about the restructuring and the course arrangements in their programmes after restructuring.</p>	<p>The Preparatory Committee had released the Task Force Report to the President and External Vice-President of the Society shortly after the September 6, 2023 meeting with them. The Society had uploaded the report to their Instagram.</p> <p>The Preparatory Committee told the Society representatives during the September 2023 meeting and the participants at the November 2023 townhall meeting that the restructuring proposal was based entirely on the Task Force recommendations. Therefore, all information related to the restructuring proposal can be found in the Task Force Report. The Preparatory Committee does not withhold any information from the stakeholders, including the current students.</p> <p>The Preparatory Committee also told the Society representatives during the September 2023 meeting and the student participants at the November 2023 townhall meeting that the restructuring was an administrative reform. GPAD and other programmes under the new School would maintain their autonomy. There would not be any changes to the curricula or study schemes except those initiated by the individual programmes themselves. After the new School is established, it will have the autonomy to make changes to the curricula or study schemes just like other Departments/Schools do. Therefore, the Preparatory Committee does not have any information about or the authority to initiate changes in the course arrangements in individual programmes after restructuring.</p> <p>In its November 21, 2023 Instagram post, the Group also spread the false information to the students and the public:</p> <p>“新學院成立後...同學亦要報讀三個課程嘅部份科目先可以讀完 faculty package 並從新學院畢業”</p>	<p>Despite that the Preparatory Committee has repeatedly explained to the students the nature and objectives of the restructuring, the Group and the Society continued to propagate the false belief that the Task Force had already proposed changes to the study schemes of the individual programmes, and asked for detailed information about course arrangements in their programmes after restructuring.</p> <p>Regrettably, the non-receptiveness of the Group and the Society to the factual information provided by the Preparatory Committee has caused erosion of trust of the current students in the Faculty and undermined the efficacy of staff-student communication.</p> <p>It is unclear whether the Group or the Society have difficulties in understanding the text in the Report, or they distorted the information purposely to influence other students in order to advance the Group’s and the Society’s own agenda.</p> <p>The misinformation propagated by the Group could stem from their poor comprehension ability, because in their November 23, 2023 post, they believed that their classmates “唔知校方文件喻乜鬼”. Ironically, they posted a 9-page “政政合併專責小組報告懶人包” on their Instagram, summarizing for the readers the “gist” of the restructuring proposal. (For the record, 政政合併專責小組 does exist. The name of the Task Force for Interdisciplinary Programme Review.)</p>
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	<p>“喺新學院之下，政政、數政同全研會聯合招生”</p> <p>“新學院落成更會直接改變三個學系/課程嘅科目結構”</p> <p>Contrary to the misinformation quoted above, it is clearly stated in the Task Force Report that</p> <p>“If a new School were to be established, it is recommended that the original three programme teams (DSPS, GLSD and GPAD) should be kept intact, at least in the short term, to achieve a smooth transition, while possible collaboration across the programmes should be explored. Major structural changes in the future will be discussed among members in the new School.” Furthermore, “The Task Force suggests that some existing practices should not be changed, at least at the short term, to ensure continuity and stability. In particular, the current JUPAS codes and names for the three academic programmes (GPAD, GLSD and DSPS) in the JUPAS exercise will remain unchanged. The existing admission quotas for the programmes will continue to serve as major references for planning purposes.”</p>	
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<p>The Preparatory Committee provided students with dated information at the November 23, 2023 Townhall meeting.</p>	<p>One purpose of the Townhall meeting was to update students on the background and progress in the proposed establishment of the new School. Some student participants were unfamiliar with the background and progress of the proposal. Therefore, Prof. Clement So summarized the gist of the Task Force Report at the beginning of the meeting. This was followed by the Dean’s summary of the presentation he gave at the AAPC on October 3, 2023. One AAPC presentation slide shows the courses that were shared or planned to be shared among the three undergraduate programmes <b>at the time of the AAPC meeting</b>. The Group took the presented information out of context and accused the Preparatory Committee of providing students with dated information and requested the Preparatory Committee to provide the latest information on the shared courses.</p>	<p>The communicative intention of the slide depicting the shared courses of the three programmes was to illustrate the potential synergy among the three programmes. Sharing of courses was initiated by the individual programmes, not by the Preparatory Committee.</p> <p>The response of the Group might reflect its lack of ability to follow a presentation or their intention to use an imagined fault of the Preparatory Committee to delay the establishment of the new School.</p> <p>The Task Force Report had been presented to the Faculty Board, the AAPC, the Senate APC, the Senate, and the alumni of the GPA Department. It is evident from their responses that they understood the report. Likewise, the Dean had presented the same information at the AAPC and the Senate APC meetings, and the audiences could follow his presentation. It was therefore incomprehensible why the proposal and the presentation were incomprehensible to the Group only.</p>
<p>The Preparatory Committee disregards students’ views.</p> <p>The Group also accused the Preparatory Committee for not meeting with the students to review the data that motivated the restructuring proposal and the projected beneficial effects of restructuring for the students and the GPA Department.</p>	<p>Contrary to this allegation, the Preparatory Committee had dutifully collected students’ views and made sure that all their views were considered before presenting the proposal to the Senate.</p> <p>Immediately after the November 23, 2023 Townhall meeting with the students, the Preparatory Committee met to identify any new concerns or issues raised by the students during the Townhall meeting that had not been previously identified and considered in the Task Force Report. The conclusion was “nil.” In the language of qualitative research, content saturation had already happened and further consultation would not yield new contents.</p>	<p>It seems that the Group had conflated consultation with joint decision making. The Task Force and the Preparatory Committee were responsible for collecting pertinent data and views from <b>multiple stakeholders</b> for the decision makers to consider. The decision makers are the Faculty Board, the AAPC, the Senate APC, the Senate, and the Council. The decision makers should be fully informed of the views expressed by all stakeholders when they deliberate, and the Task Force and the Preparatory Committee had carried their duties conscientiously.</p> <p>Unfortunately, many of the concerns raised by the students were based on misinformation, as pointed out above.</p>

	<p>Toward the end of the November 23, 2023 Townhall meeting, some students requested another meeting with the Dean to review the data that motivated the restructuring proposal and the projected beneficial effects of restructuring for the students and the GPA Department. The Dean agreed to the request and asked the interested students to set up an appointment with the Dean. The students did not contact the Dean's Office after the meeting. Knowing that he would be out of town from November 30 to December 5, 2023, he proactively invited representatives from the 3 undergraduate programmes, 3 taught postgraduate programmes and 1 research postgraduate programme to have a data review meeting with him in the morning of November 29, 2023. Only the President of the GPA Student Society attended the meeting. Because sensitive data were reviewed on the need-to-know basis, the President of the GPA Student Society signed a non-disclosure agreement before the meeting. After an hour-long review, the President of the GPA Student Society said he understood the proposal and did not object to it.</p> <p>Interestingly, in the afternoon, the GPAD Merger Concern Group requested an open forum to review the data on December 4, 2023. The Dean had to decline the invitation because of his non-availability.</p> <p>Immediately after his return from a duty trip, the Dean invited the Student Senator and the Student Representatives for another data review meeting prior to the Senate meeting. Like the President of the GPA Student Society, the Student Senator and the Student Representatives said they understood the proposal and did not object to it.</p>	
<p>The University disregarded the survey of students and staff carried out by the Society and the Group.</p>	<p>The survey report was not in the Senate agenda paper. Mr. Kwan did not have the authority to ask the Senate to include the survey report in the Senate agenda. The Student Senator</p>	<p>The Faculty of Social Science did learn something from the survey results, although the survey findings at their face value. First, the Faculty realized the importance of having <i>direct communication</i> with the</p>

<p>Between December 1 and December 4, 2023, the Group posted an online survey on their Instagram. According to the post, the Group had invited students and staff to complete the survey.</p> <p>On December 6, 2023, Mr. Kwan Ching Fung sent an email to the University Senators, attaching the results of the survey and requested the Senate to halt the endorsement of the restructuring proposal.</p> <p>Mr. Kwan's e-mail and the survey report were not included in the agenda of the December 6, 2023 Senate meeting. The Senate members, including the Student Senator, did not mention the survey during the Senate Meeting.</p>	<p>did not ask the survey report to be considered at the Senate either.</p> <p>The Faculty of Social Science did study the report carefully and found the following faults in the report.</p> <p>It was unclear how the survey participants were recruited. The survey was advertised on the Group's Instagram. It was unclear how staff and students who did not use Instagram or did not follow the Group's Instagram learned about and responded to the survey. According to the survey report, the Society and the Group invited staff and students from relevant units to complete the online survey. It is unclear whether they invited all staff and students to complete the survey or just a selected group. For example, the Dean of Social Science, who was also the Interim Director of MGPE and Co-Director of DSPS, did not receive the invitation. If the samples were not representative, the validity of the survey results is questionable.</p> <p>Sampling bias also presented a major problem when interpreting the results. The Group and the Society had already propagated their own position (again with misinformation) in their call for participation. In their Instagram call for participation on December 1, 2023, they explicitly wrote, "The Social Science Faculty is planning to merge GLSD, DSPS and GPAD into a new school with little information given." "The task force behind the merger has only managed to receive 66 questionnaire replies in a month. This is not genuine consultation." "We believe such a great change in our programmes should not be done without ample explanation and consultation."</p> <p>Not surprisingly, the participants who responded to the call were those who were influenced by the misinformation and were sympathetic to the position of the Group. The results showed that 95.7% of the respondents considered</p>	<p>students regarding the benefits of the restructuring to the students, particularly with those who would join the new School.</p> <p>We also hope that the Group and the Society now recognized the value of good scientific practices, and realized their weaknesses in conducting scientific research to provide evidence-based policy recommendations. The new School will provide more courses for them to polish up their research skills.</p> <p>Finally, the obvious weaknesses of the Group and the Society in planning the study and interpreting their results are embarrassing. We hope that their research (in)competence does not represent the average level of research competence of our GPA students. The level of research competence as reflected in this survey attests to the urgent need of polishing up our GPA students' science training, which the restructuring will help to address.</p>
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	<p>consultation to be insufficient, 94.6% of the respondents felt that the restructuring was hasty, and 79.3% of the respondents did not understand the proposal. There were no data from the survey whether the participants had read the Task Force Report. Given the faulty sampling procedures, these results cannot be taken seriously.</p> <p>Although the Group received only 1 response from staff and 1 response from postgraduate students, they claimed that “<b>a large fraction of students and teachers</b> regard the plan to bring the project to the Senate on 6/12 (today) as too hasty. Also, <b>most of the students and teachers</b> believe there is insufficient consultation and details determined regarding the actual operation of the new school.” Making such spurious claims about the teachers’ views based on a sample of one is certainly outside the bounds of acceptable statistical inferences.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the survey did have some interesting results. First, when asked whether they thought the courses currently offered by their department or programme were sufficient, 64.2% said they were insufficient. When asked whether they thought the current quota for exchange student programs/internship programs offered by their department was sufficient, 59.8% thought the quota were insufficient. The participants were also asked after the new School is established and students could enrol in some shared courses, whether they would be interested in enrolling in the courses offered by the other two programmes. In response to this question, 40% of the participants expressed interests in taking those courses. In short, even among those who were misled to be sympathetic to the Group’s stance, they would benefit directly from the restructuring.</p>	
<p>The Senate did not vote on and therefore did not pass the proposal.</p>	<p>The Senate did endorse the proposal. According to Senate Standing Order 9.1, “If a proposal has wide consensus of the members present at the meeting, the Chairman shall declare</p>	<p>The proposal was the last item at the same Senate meeting. Other items that required Senate approval were also approved following the same Standing</p>



	<p>the proposal approved.” At the Senate meeting, only one Student Senator asked a number of clarification questions, which were addressed during the discussion. There were no dissenting views from Senate members. The chair at the end asked if the Senate endorsed the proposal, and the members said “yes.” Chair then asked if there were any naysayers and there were no naysayers. The Student Senator did not object to the proposal either. Therefore, the proposal has been taken to be approved.</p>	<p>Order. The Senate had treated the new School proposal unexceptionally.</p>
<p>The Group filed a complaint with the Office of Student Affairs against the Faculty of Social Science staff for being hostile to the students during the November townhall meeting.</p>	<p>The Preparatory Committee invited students from all involved programmes to the townhall meeting, including students from GPA, DSPS, GLSD, MPUP, MGPE, GPGC, MPhil/PhD.</p> <p>A representative from the Society wrote to Prof. Clement So and requested (1) to have the GPA Student Society co-host the townhall meeting, and (2) have the meetings (video-)recorded and released to participants who were not able to attend the meeting. These requests were rejected because it would be inappropriate for the student society of one programme to co-host a townhall meeting intended for students from all relevant programmes. Besides, the Preparatory Committee did not have the consent from all participants to have the meetings recorded. To ensure that all participants would feel safe to express themselves freely during the townhall meeting, we had to ensure that their views would be kept anonymous. Following standard procedures of university and faculty meetings, we would have our secretariat write down the issues discussed at the town hall meeting, prepared minutes without personal attributions to views expressed at the meeting, and circulated the drafted minutes to all participants for confirmation. The confirmed minutes would then be published.</p> <p>The Society representative wrote to accept these arrangements. Later, he requested live streaming of the</p>	<p>Some students’ behaviors at the townhall meeting were unruly and disrespectful and the complaint they raised were unfounded, defamatory and libellous.</p>

proceedings so that students and graduates who could not participate in person could participate online. This request was also rejected because of the following reasons. First, there were already close to 50 registrants for the townhall meeting and the scheduled townhall meeting would last for 90 minutes (leaving only 2 minutes for every registered participant to express their view). Second, allowing outside parties with unverified identities to participate online would be unfair to the registered participants. Third, to respect the rights to privacy of the registered participants, without their consent, we could not ethically allow the students to broadcast the meeting online. We explained the rationale to the Society representative and again he accepted the arrangements.

Given the large number of registered participants and the unknown number of walk-in participants at the townhall meeting, the Faculty Office made an appropriate manpower arrangement to ensure that there would be sufficient admin support for the event. The same manpower arrangement was made for both the student townhall and the staff townhall, which took place just before the commencement of the student townhall.

At the beginning of the townhall meeting, Prof. Clement So announced the house rules of the townhall to all participants. Nevertheless, some student participants did not follow the house rules and recorded/broadcast the meeting without permission. Our admin staff spotted these unruly behaviors, signalled to the Chair the presence of such offences. The Chair openly reminded all participants to respect the house rules. Our admin staff needed to vigilantly maintain order at the meeting. However, some students started to send hostile messages to our admin staff, who had exercised restraints during the meeting.

The Faculty of Social Science were hostile to the Group and threatened to take disciplinary actions against it.

On December 15, 2023, Mr. Kwan Ching Fung wrote to 7 faculty members of the Faculty of Social Science (Clement So, Anthony Fung, Carlos Lo, Ivy Wong, Wilson Wong, Vivian Zhan, and Chi-Yue Chiu), addressing them as members of the Task Force/Preparatory Committee of the New Social Science School. In this email, Mr. Kwan on behalf of the Group requested the Preparatory Committee to (1) make public the complete plan for setting up the new school that was submitted to the Senate on 6th Dec; and (2) clarify which parts of the bill passed by the committee is still subject to change according to suggestions from students and teachers.

The Dean of Social Science noted that the Group had asked for privileged information. Senate documents are confidential and should not be released to an outside party with an unclear identity for unknown purpose. Therefore, the Dean of Social Science wrote back and asked for information about the group and the intended use of the requested information. Because he requested personal data from the Group, following the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, he needed to disclose the use of collected personal information. The Dean of Social Science had also received complaints against the defamatory and libellous nature of the Group's past remarks. Therefore, the Dean, again following the compliance requirements of Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance for personal data collection, also reminded the Group that if the Group's behaviours would cause disputes (including legal disputes), the collected personal information might be provided to the contestants.

The Dean's reply message was:

關靖豐先生：

Mr. Kwan did not do his homework. The Task Force had already been dissolved. Some of the 7 professors on his distribution list were not members of the Preparatory Committee, and some members of the Preparatory Committee were not included on the list. The Task Force/Preparatory Committee of the New Social Science School does not exist.

There are many concern groups in the University, and whether they are registered or not does not bother the Faculty. However, Mr. Kwan was asking on behalf of his group access to privileged information. When the Faculty received a request from a group to access privileged information, the Dean has the responsibility to find out what this group is and how it will use the information.

Mr. Kwan had made similar requests to the Registrar and her reply to him was: "All items put to the Senate are discussed and considered according to the Senate's meeting procedures, and information pertaining to the Senate meetings is confidential and cannot be released to any outside parties."

Because the Dean requested personal information from the Group, reciprocally, the Dean also told him how the collected data would be used, as required by the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. The Dean did not say he would prosecute the Group or its members.

就閣下於 2023 年 12 月 15 日及 20 日向香港中文大學社會科學院 7 位教授的來信，香港中文大學社會科學院院務室正在處理中。現需要閣下在 2023 年 12 月 22 日中午前向院務室作以下澄清及補充陳述：

你在郵件中提到的「GPAD merger concern group」是否已在香港中文大學成功註冊的團體？

是或否

「GPAD merger concern group」是否已得到社團註冊主任按《社團條例》批准註冊或豁免註冊的團體？

是或否

誰是「GPAD merger concern group」的幹事及成員？  
( 必須呈交名單 )

「GPAD merger concern group」的宗旨為何？  
( 必須作具體陳述 )

「GPAD merger concern group」為何索取郵件中提及的信息？你們將如何使用這些信息？  
( 必須作具體陳述 )

社會科學院將使用以上要求你提供的信息，按香港相關法例及香港中文大學的校規和管理法規研判你的索求是

否合法和合理。如果「GPAD merger concern group」的行為如果引起訴訟，你提供的信息或會用於訟方在追責（包括法律責任）時使用。

Mr. Kwan's reply was:

“若諮詢階段具任何實質意義，則公開計劃內容本來就屬院方責任，無關關注組是否具校內或校外註冊社團的法律地位，關注組亦毋須提交幹事及成員名單”

The Dean of Social Science acknowledged Mr. Kwan's refusal to make the disclosure and wrote back: “Your response is well noted. Until you can provide the information requested by the Faculty, the ‘GPAD merger concern group’ will be treated as an amorphous entity and the Faculty will relate to it as such.”

Mr. Kwan, in response, entirely distorted the communication in an IG post of the Group:

“關注組要求專責小組公開計劃內容，反被要求申報是否註冊社團同提交成員名單，並話資料可用嚟追究法律責任”

### Final Comments:

The Group (with Mr. Kwan Ching Fung as its speaker) is an amorphous entity. The Society is not a registered student body of the University.

The Society and the Group's public behaviors have exposed their incompetence in understanding the New School Proposal and the communication from the Faculty, and in social science research. Nonetheless, the Society and the Group, being inapt and unaware, have irresponsibly propagated their distorted readings of the proposal, causing erosion of students' trust in the GPA Department, the Faculty of Social Science and the University.

Some public remarks the Group made on the Chair of the GPA Department, the Chair of the Preparatory Committee, the Dean of Social Science and the admin staff of the Faculty of Social Science are defamatory and possibly libellous. Many requests they made violated the standing orders of University meetings and the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. The Group's lack of respect for University regulations, the law and the rights of other groups is deplorable.

The Group, with Mr. Kwan as its speaker, had self-righteously pursued the agenda of student-staff co-governance of the Faculty and the University. They did so at the expense of the wellbeing of the Departments and Programmes, staff and students. Student engagement is desirable only when the students are capable of self-government: they are competent, have the collective good in mind, are willing to study an issue from multiple perspectives, respect the facts and evidence, respect others, abide by the University's regulations and the law, and have integrity. The Group's behaviors show none of these qualities.

On the contrary, Mr. Kwan's behaviors might have violated the honour code and the code of conduct of CUHK students. According to the Code of Honour of CUHK students, a student is expected to uphold and maintain the highest standard of personal integrity and absolute academic honesty, to embrace the University's core values and culture, to respect the rights of others, and to abide by the Code of Conduct. Mr. Kwan's behaviours might have violated the following expectations in the Code of Conduct:

- be law-abiding citizens, and observe and abide by the rules, policies and procedures of CUHK
- treat others fairly and respectfully
- communicate and interact fairly and in good faith with others, with consideration and courtesy and with due respect for differing personal viewpoints
- act honestly and ethically in all dealings with members of the University and maintain cooperative relationships with them
- positively represent CUHK and its student body at all times