

# Academic leaders unite for 4-year tertiary curriculum

By Yonden Lhatoo

**H**EADS of local third-level institutions hope to persuade the Special Administrative Region government of the need for a four-year university curriculum.

The heads of the territory's eight government-funded tertiary institutions addressed the public for the first time together yesterday to push for extending university classes by a year and reducing secondary education from seven to six years.

In a briefing at the Baptist University, they also called on the government to increase investment in primary and secondary education to deal with student problems that could not be corrected at university level.

Chinese University vice-chancellor Arthur Li Kwok-cheung said the merits of extending the university curriculum from three years to four were "unquestionable". Hong Kong Uni-

versity want to increase investment in education," Prof Woo said.

"People say that if we go from three to four years for the eight tertiary institutions, you need 33 per

cent of gross domestic product — \$39.8 billion this 1996-97 fiscal year.

"We don't want to put the blame on anyone, but it seems the entire system of education in Hong Kong has gone wrong," Lingnan College's president, Executive Councillor Edward Chen Kwan-yiu, said.

"The government wants the higher-education sector to produce double the number of graduates, but what is really needed is extra resources and a review of the entire system."

Prof Chen said problems faced by students at university level were due to the government's refusal to subsidise at pre-school level, causing students to join university with weak school backgrounds.

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versity and Science and Technology president Woo Chia-wei said several people in the Preparatory Committee (PC) had already put the issue at the top of their agendas for the new government to consider.

"There are already a number of people from the education sector in the PC who agree with this and

cent more support from the government, but you also have to bear in mind the fact that you will be taking away the seventh year for hundreds of secondary institutions."

The academics also deplored the fact that the government's total expenditure on education amounted to only 2.8 per