

Action on abuses

By STELLA LEE

TERTIARY institutions are to discuss how to halt academic abuses, following an inquiry set up to investigate allegations at the Hong Kong Polytechnic.

Pro-director of City Polytechnic, Professor Benjamin Tsou Kay-in, said: "The problem must be discussed in depth."

He said he would liaise with senior management of other tertiary institutions on how to deal with the problem.

City Polytechnic, he said, had taken a more "pro-active" role in controlling research malpractice by investigating not only cases

Academics debate claims

formally raised but also those that management heard about informally.

Professor Tsou said there had been some cases of plagiarism and of staff unfairly taking credit for research over the past year or two, and some lecturers and students being punished. One of the staff involved had been asked to leave.

However, he said: "No system is perfect. We are considering working out a better monitoring system."

Vice-chancellor of the Chinese University, Professor Charles Kao Kuen, said:

"Professional integrity is as important as excellence in research. The alleged malpractice, if it exists, must be stopped."

He said the university had established channels for grievances through which staff could lodge complaints which would be settled according to established procedure.

Calls for an inquiry into suspicions of abuse of power are brewing in a second department at Hong Kong Polytechnic. An investigation into allegations of research malpractice is al-

ready underway at one department.

A group of lecturers will write to the institute's highest body, the council, concerning allegations about their department head.

The letter will be circulated around the department to collect signatures.

One of the complaining lecturers said the head had sent an E-mail message to staff last June, saying "strictly speaking only the head is currently qualified as the chief supervisor. Others may serve as co-supervisors" of research projects.

The lecturer said: "There are other people in the department who have the experience and qualifications to act as supervisor. It is clear that the head wants to have his name appear on every research paper."

A list of the department head's publications would be submitted to the council and it would be asked to see whether he had taken credit for other people's works to which he had made no or limited contribution.

Deputy chairman of the council, Joseph Chow Ming-kuen, said it would be up to either the council or the management of the institution to follow up any complaints addressed to them.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST
9 APR 1994