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Closer call on paper chase

Apart from the eight subsidized universities, self-funded tertiary programs will also enter the considerations of many a secondary school graduate applying for further studies.

In recent years, private institutions have been upgrading their facilities, and their standards are rivaling those of their subsidized counterparts.

For example, Shue Yan University has been adding new buildings over the years and a new one has just been completed.

Meanwhile, Chu Hai College of Higher Education has invested close to HK\$1 billion building a new campus on Castle Peak Road.

And *Hang Seng Management College*'s dormitories rank among the best and may even be better than those of some public universities.

A colleague recently visited the *HSMC* campus, and was deeply impressed by the teaching block with its energy-saving design as well as student residences that have a nice living environment and comprehensive facilities. These include a swimming pool and clubhouse-style amenities, and the students certainly have their pick of venues for leisure activities.

Its president, Simon Ho Shun-man, is justly proud of the school's development, which can be said to be aggressive among private tertiary institutions. He has significantly raised *HSMC*'s academic standards, including revising the curriculum of its journalism and communication degree program to take account of new media.

HSMC plans to complete its transformation to a university in two or three years, and Ho is positioning the institution as a management school, which has a wider scope than just business.

As the number of students taking the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination is set to drop, those with results that meet the basic requirements should basically get a subsidized university place.

As such, self-funded institutions must enhance competitiveness. A proactive development approach such as that employed by the *HSMC* is clearly the best strategy.

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