

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 76th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 21 November 2024 at 3:00 pm at Room 5021, Academic Building (mixed-mode).

Present : Prof Stanley Lau (Chair), Prof Allen Huang, Prof Chi Ying Tsui
Prof Kam Wing Siu, Prof Ivan Ip, Prof Kevin Tam,
Prof Pedro Sander, Prof Zhongming Lu, Mr Ho Wai Joseph Ng,
Ms Shu Yiu Tsoi, Mr Ka Shing Chong, Ms Wing Ka Cho,
Ms Yicheng Zhao, Prof King Chow (Member and Secretary)

Resources Person : Mr Hugo Kan, Mr Sam Cheung (SHRLO)
Ms Shama Razza, Mr Eric Xie (RM group of UG Hall IX)
Ms Ka Po Cheng, Ms Sze Tung Lam, Mr Shing Chi Chiu
(Sports Association, HKUSTSU)
Mr Hynton Tang
(University Philharmonic Orchestra, HKUSTSU)

In Attendance : Ms Karina Shum

Introductions and welcome of new members

1. The Chair welcomed the new members to the meeting.
2. Prof King Chow shared that the purpose of the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) was to serve as a channel for information sharing and communication between various units and students, but not for policy-making.

Report on Student Housing and Discussion of Potential Improvements

3. Members were presented with an overview of the hall admission statistics by Mr Hugo Kan. Mr Hugo Kan shared that the figures were very similar to last year. Prof Stanley Lau inquired about the mechanism for allocating top-up offers. Mr Hugo Kan explained that the main round of housing offers would usually be released in summer, and students would decline the offers for various reasons. The remaining housing offers would then be arranged for the students on the waitlist. Prof King Chow supplemented that the top-up process for UG students was improved by giving a short acceptance period to each top-up offer recipient and completing the whole top-up

process within three weeks, thus increasing the acceptance rate to fully utilize the bed spaces. The occupancy rate of the PG bedspaces was intentionally kept below 100% to allocate housing offers to students who encountered unforeseen emergencies.

4. Prof Ivan Ip inquired whether there was a pre-set male to female ratio in allocating bedspaces. Prof King Chow responded that the allocation of housing offers was solely based on the applications received. Prof Pedro Sander asked about the reason for having more male students on the waitlist. Prof King Chow explained that female students usually preferred to stay home, resulting in a greater number of male students on the waitlist, and that the male to female ratio was also consistent with the ratio of student population on campus shown in UGC data.
5. Prof Chi Ying Tsui asked about the number of bedspaces reserved for exchange-in students. Prof King Chow added that housing was also guaranteed for exchange-in students and that there were around 450 exchange-in students per term.
6. Prof King Chow shared that the acceptance rate of Hall V offers was relatively low due to the deteriorating condition of the rooms in Hall V. Therefore, Hall V would be blocked out for renovation in the coming year. Prof Stanley Lau asked if students could choose which hall they would like to stay in. Mr Hugo Kan answered that students could indicate up to three choices with priority in their applications.
7. Prof Stanley Lau also asked if students were required to pay the housing fee if they were assigned one year of housing but were going to be on exchange. Mr Hugo Kan replied that the SHRLO would request the students to provide the exchange documents and adjust the residential period accordingly.
8. Prof Allen Huang inquired about the utilization rate of the rooms. Prof King Chow emphasized that, due to privacy issues, the SHRLO would not monitor the occupancy of the rooms.
9. Prof Chi Ying Tsui asked whether hall points were given to students mainly based on the travelling time to campus. Prof King Chow and Mr Hugo Kan replied that students would receive hall points based on travelling time to campus, leadership and contributions to campus life, outstanding achievements, and not having received a hall offer in previous year(s). CGA was no longer an allocation criterion.
10. Prof Allen Huang inquired whether there was any change in the current priority housing principle, given that the number of non-local students admitted would increase in the coming years. He also queried which group of students receiving guaranteed housing would be affected the most by the increasing number of guaranteed spots for non-local students. Prof King Chow shared that it was to be discussed whether non-local students would continue to be guaranteed housing for two years or if the housing guarantee would be lowered to one year. The ratio of

allocating free bedspaces to local and non-local students was relatively stable, therefore, reducing the number of hall places for random lottery would affect both groups of students equally. Prof King Chow added that opportunities for identifying off-campus housing were being explored, such as communicating with different property developers on existing off campus properties and conversion of hotels with low occupancy rate, but it was found that the charges for all these off-campus housing options were significantly higher than the charges for staying in on-campus housing, which students would not prefer over any of these off-campus options.

11. Prof Allen Huang shared that the University planned to increase the number of exchange-out students, which means that more exchange-in students would be coming and guaranteed housing. Prof King Chow agreed this new initiative would further worsen the situation that the University needed to cope with.
12. Prof Ivan Ip inquired about the status of i-Village residence project. Mr Sam Cheung replied that the i-Village would at least be partially ready in the Fall of 2025. It was expected that the i-Village could cover the hall places of the hall under renovation.
13. Prof Ivan Ip also inquired about the smoking policy of the halls. Mr Sam Cheung answered that students who broke the smoking policy for the first time would be fined HK\$500. If students failed to observe the smoking rule again, termination of hall residency would be imposed.
14. Prof Kevin Tam queried about the flexibility in adjusting the demand for on-campus housing to address the housing issue. Prof King Chow responded that the overall priority housing principle needed to be reviewed to lessen the pressure from the tight housing supply.
15. Prof Stanley Lau asked whether the SHRLO received any false declarations in the address proof. Mr Sam Cheung replied that there were one or two students submitting false documents. These cases would be brought to the hall committee and student disciplinary committee for deliberation.
16. Mr Sam Cheung added that the SHRLO would take the average of the shortest route and the cheapest route from the HKeMobility of the Transportation Department to calculate the travelling time to campus for giving hall points to students.

(Mr Hugo Kan and Mr Sam Cheung were excused from the meeting. Ms Shama Razza and Mr Eric Xie joined.)

Report on the Plans and Activities of Different Student Societies/Groups

17. Members were presented with the plans and activities of Hall IX by Ms Shama Razza and Mr Eric Xie. Prof Stanley Lau asked about the formation of cluster. Ms Shama Razza replied that two or three blocks were combined to form one cluster. One cluster coordinator would be assigned to look after each cluster. There were 45 students on one floor forming six clusters. Prof Ivan Ip asked if the cluster coordinators were volunteers. Ms Shama Razza responded that the cluster coordinators were Hall IX residents, and interested Hall IX residents would be interviewed and appointed as cluster coordinators.
18. Prof King Chow asked if there was any difficulty in organizing the LITE program due to the inactive participation of the students. Ms Shama Razza responded that the LITE program was currently open for cluster coordinators to join. After subsequent terms, the LITE program was planned to scale up and be open to Hall IX residents; the existing and new cluster coordinators would be required to attend as trainers. The LITE program was expected to expand to a maximum of 100 participating students. Ms Shama Razza also shared that the challenge of hosting LITE program was that participants were unable to commit to all six sessions of the program, so participants were allowed to take four or five sessions.
19. Prof Stanley Lau questioned whether the LITE program was unique to Hall IX. Ms Shama Razza confirmed that this LITE program was conducted only in Hall IX. Grace from the Career Center delivered the program to the first batch of participants, who were the hall tutors. The hall tutors were then trained and hosted the program for the second and third batches of participants independently. Prof Stanley LAU also asked if the LITE program would be extended to the other halls. Prof King Chow supplemented that whether the LITE program could be extended to the other halls depended on the number of hall tutors available.
20. Ms Shama Razza suggested that the hall tutors of Hall IX who received training could help train the hall tutors of the other halls. The hall tutors of the other halls would then continue to train the new tutors of their halls. Prof King Chow agreed with the approach suggested by Ms Shama Razza, but he also mentioned that whether the tutors were willing to take up the training role and whether they could deliver good training were another issue. Prof Chi Ying Tsui suggested making the training compulsory for all tutors and sending them to participate in DTIA training hosted by outside professionals. Prof King Chow responded that the DTIA training was slightly different from the LITE program designed by Grace, which was tailored for the halls. Ms Shama Razza further suggested issuing certificates for trained tutors from Hall IX to attract more Hall IX tutors to participate in the training.

21. Prof King Chow shared that if the duration of the student activity lasted for more than three months, students did not want to participate. Ms Shama Razza agreed with this and expressed that the LITE program was thus completed within three weeks by having two sessions per week. Ms Shama Razza also shared that positive feedback was received from the cluster coordinators who joined the training.

(Ms Shama Razza and Mr Eric Xie were excused from the meeting. Ms Ka Po Cheng, Ms Sze Tung Lam, Mr Shing Chi Chiu joined.)

22. Members were presented with the objectives, upcoming plans, and activities of the Sports Association by Ms Ka Po Cheng, Ms Sze Tung Lam, Mr Shing Chi Chiu. Prof Chi Ying Tsui thought that the sports atmosphere was not very visible on campus. He suggested fully utilizing the open area in the atrium for sports events and considering organizing a Sports Week to promote sports to the University members. Ms Sze Tung Lam agreed and replied that the Sports Association tried to increase the community's sports awareness last year by live streaming in the atrium for the intramural basketball competition and setting up counters for various sports teams during orientation. Prof King Chow added that competitions and workshops in different sports, such as Martial Arts, Fencing, Rowing and 3-to-3 Basketball, were also organized in the atrium, for the community to experience the sports vibe.

23. Prof King Chow suggested that the Sports Association invite more spectators to the competitions to show support for the athletes. He also suggested putting up a screen and chairs in the atrium during the finals of the competitions to attract more community members to watch together. In addition, the Sports Association could also consider inviting the cheering team to attend the competitions to foster peer support and build community spirit.

24. Prof Pedro Sander shared that there was a tennis event organized by the tennis team a few years ago for faculty, staff and students to play tennis together. He suggested organizing similar events in different sports to bring the community together to play sports.

(Ms Ka Po Cheng, Ms Sze Tung Lam, Mr Shing Chi Chiu were excused from the meeting. Mr Hynton Tang joined.)

25. Members were presented with the year plan and new initiatives of the University Philharmonic Orchestra by Mr Hynton Tang. Prof Ivan Ip inquired about the venue for hosting the annual concert in mid-April. Mr Hynton Tang shared that the venue was to be confirmed. It was planned to host it at Hong Kong City Hall or HKCC. Prof King Chow and Prof Ivan Ip were concerned about whether these two venues were still available for reservation. Mr Hynton mentioned that the venues were only open for reservation half a year before the event. If these two venues were fully booked,

Tsuen Wan Town Hall or Xiqu Centre would be considered. Prof Ivan Ip did not recommend Xiqu Centre, as the acoustics of the venue were suitable for Chinese opera but not for Orchestra.

26. Prof King Chow asked the UPO about the amount of time usually spent on rehearsal before the actual performance. Mr Hynton Tang replied that there was only one dress rehearsal, but players were encouraged to join the regular rehearsals and practice more by themselves before the actual performance.
27. Prof Stanley Lau inquired about the rental cost of the venue and the scale of the annual concert. Mr Hynton Tang shared that the fundraising goal for the annual concert was HK\$100K. If the fundraising goal could not be met, the UPO would consider hosting the concert at another venue depending on the budget they raised.
28. Mr Hynton Tang raised a concern that they were required to pay before the event, but the UPO always lacked sufficient cash flow to pay ahead of the event and reimburse later. Prof King Chow noted the hurdle created by the reimbursement process and suggested that Mr Hynton Tang contact Rita from the Student Support and Activities team to explore the possibility of setting up a project account under DSTO for better fund management and easier transfer of funds. Prof King Chow also suggested that the UPO consider building some reserved funding for future use. [Post meeting note: SSA team is helping to explore possible project account set up and the revision of the reimbursement procedures.]
29. Prof King Chow shared that the UPO could register as a society with the Hong Kong Police, which would provide the society with a chop and allow it to set up a bank account. Mr Hynton Tang responded that he had initiated setting up a charity account for the UPO, but the application process took more than a year to complete.
30. Prof Kam Wing Siu wondered about the reason for not choosing Shaw Auditorium as the venue after considering the financial constraints of booking outside venues. Mr Hynton Tang shared that the purpose of hosting the concert at an outside venue was to provide more variety of experiences to the audience and reach out to a broader group of audience.
31. Prof King Chow suggested that the UPO make a projection of the required funding for running all the events for the entire year and set it as a target for fundraising. He also suggested establishing different levels of patrons and considering Council and Court members for sponsorship. Mr Hynton Tang updated that the fundraising plan would be ready by the winter concert.
32. Prof Ivan Ip questioned whether there was an opportunity for the Orchestra to play the University Anthem live. Prof King Chow responded that it could be possible

depending on the occasions, such as National Day, HKSAR Establishment Day and the Congregation.

33. Prof King Chow asked whether the UPO would collaborate with the University Choir again this year. Mr Hynton Tang replied that it depended on the program of the concert and that they were still planning which society to collaborate with. Prof King Chow expressed that feedback regarding the outdated performing style of the University Choir was received for last year's event. A livelier performance could be considered if the UPO confirmed collaboration with the University Choir again.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.