

## **Committee on Student Affairs**

Minutes of the 77<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 11 March 2025 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, Mr Ho Wai Joseph Ng,
		Ms Shu Yiu Tsoi, Mr Ka Shing Chong,
		Prof Pakwo Leung (Member and Secretary)
Apologies	:	Prof Zhongming Lu, Ms Wing Ka Cho, Ms Yicheng Zhao
Resources Person	:	Mrs Ruby Lam, Head of Career Center
		Dr Cindy Lam, Head of Student Support & Activities
		Ms Su Ngai, Student Wellness Manager from School of Science
		Miss Evelyn Lau, Student Wellness Manager from School of Business and Management
In Attendance	:	Ms Karina Shum

### **Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

1. The minutes of the 76<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs were confirmed and there were no matters arising.

### **Welcome of New Member**

2. The Chair welcomed the new Dean of Students, Prof Pakwo Leung, and expressed gratitude to Prof King Chow for his contributions to the Committee on Student Affairs over the past years.

### **Report on Planning and Activities of the Career Center and Discussion of Potential Improvements**

3. Members were presented with an overview of the Career Center's (CC) work scope by Mrs Ruby Lam. She shared that the primary responsibility of the CC was to connect the students

with job opportunities and prepare them for the workplace. Mrs Ruby Lam reported that the number of job postings had decreased due to a slowdown in the job market compared to 2021. She also reported that the CC organized 1,000+ consultation sessions and 200+ career development programs each year for students, such as Lumina Sparks and makeover workshops.

4. Members were also introduced to a new initiative, which was engaging employers for semester-long Co-op placements. A campus-wide Co-op program was rolled out for all undergraduate students across disciplines in Spring 2025. The CC was currently working with the Common Core Office to obtain approval for the eligibility of 3 elective credits to be petitioned for the common core. Mrs Ruby Lam mentioned that some Engineering firms, such as Towngas and CLP, offered participating students the opportunity to enhance their Co-op placements with a research component, which could potentially be converted to FYP if approved by the department.
5. Mrs Ruby Lam reported that the CC successfully placed 5 year-long inbound exchange students from EPFL and the University of Warwick in start-up companies at Science Park during the summer 2024. Career building courses were offered to them to maintain their student statuses over the summer. The participating students spent two semesters on exchange at HKUST, living on-campus while also gaining work experience in Hong Kong.
6. Prof Pakwo Leung inquired whether the internship program opportunity could be extended to semester-long inbound exchange students. Mrs Ruby Lam responded that the program was currently in the testing stage and had not yet been kick-started for these students. The CC was assisting interested inbound exchange students in connecting with companies and was working with the Office of Global Learning on the application process for training visas.
7. Mrs Ruby Lam updated members that the CC planned to explore opportunities in the Greater Bay Area, Shanghai, Singapore and Seoul for one- to two-week career treks in January 2026, with subsidies provided to participants. Prof Ivan Ip inquired about the selection process for students participating in the career treks. Mrs Ruby Lam replied that the students would be interviewed and given the option to be selected as part of a group or individually.
8. Mrs Ruby Lam highlighted that the full-time employment dropped slightly according to the Graduate Employment Survey 2024, as more students opted to pursue further studies or became uncertain about their career paths. She added that the dissipation of the high-paying jobs in Finance Industry had impacted HKUST more significantly than other institutions.
9. Mrs Ruby Lam anticipated that the job market would not improve in 2025 and that the CC would explore more job opportunities in the APAC regions for students. Prof. Stanley Lau inquired about when the Graduate Employment Survey 2024 was conducted. Mrs Ruby Lam responded that graduates of December 2023 and June 2024 would be interviewed, with a cut-

off date in December 2024. Prof Ivan Ip asked if there were any school-wide employment data available. Mrs Ruby Lam confirmed that statistics from different schools and departments would be included in the Graduate Employment Survey.

10. Prof Pedro Sander inquired about the possibility of students earning 6 academic credits for participating in Co-op placements. Mrs Ruby Lam replied that the Co-op placements could not fully replace the FYP, earning 6 credits would only be possible if both the company and the department agreed to replace the FYP with the Co-op placement.
11. Prof Kevin Tam questioned which type of companies would be interested in hiring students from the School of Humanities and Social Science through the Co-op program. Mrs Ruby Lam responded that companies such as Trip.com and Casetify were open to students from all disciplines. Some companies required strong language skills, which created opportunities for students from the School of Humanities and Social Science.
12. Prof Stanely Lau asked whether the job opportunities from the Co-program would be communicated directly to all students or through faculty. Mrs Ruby Lam confirmed that all undergraduate and postgraduate students would receive emails from the CC regarding the application information for all Co-op placements.
13. Prof Chi Ying Tsui inquired whether the department could nominate companies to the CC for the Co-op program. Mrs Ruby Lam replied that the department was very welcome to make any nominations of the companies to the CC.
14. Prof Kevin Tam asked about the quality assurance mechanisms of the Co-op program. Mrs Ruby Lam responded that the participating students were required to write reports and give presentations to earn 3 credits in the next term. She supplemented that in order to prevent students from withdrawing, the CC would receive the attendance records from the employers and assist students in applying for study leaves for the Co-op program. If students quitted the Co-op program and cancelled the study leaves without valid reasons, they would need to explain to their departments.

#### **Report on Planning and Activities of the Student Support and Activities and Discussion of Potential Improvements**

15. Members were presented with an overview of the Student Support and Activities (SSA) team's role in the New Student Orientation (NSO). Dr Cindy Lam explained that the SSA team coordinated with various units to update the NSO website and organize school-based or student-led orientation activities.

16. Dr Cindy Lam reported that another major responsibility of the SSA team was to provide comprehensive support to student organizations, including funding and publicity, exco training, amenities and facilities booking, and offering advisory services. Prof Ivan Ip inquired whether the exco training was available for SU-affiliated or department-associated groups. Dr Cindy Lam responded that exco training was compulsory only for the SU, SU-affiliated societies and student groups affiliated with the DSTO. Dr Cindy Lam added that department-associated groups organizing on-campus O'camp and living in HKUST hostels were required to attend the pre-O'camp instead of exco training.
17. Dr Cindy Lam updated members on the total number of the student organizations on campus and provided details about the student leadership development program specifically designed for exco members of the student organizations.
18. Dr Cindy Lam reported on the launch of a new mentorship scheme that paired former and current exco members, aiming to enhance their service to the university community. She also reported that a flag raising student team was newly recruited to foster a sense of national identity among students.
19. Prof Stanley Lau asked about the difference between SU-affiliated societies and department-associated groups. Dr Cindy Lam explained that SU-affiliated societies were required to adhere to the constitution established by the SU, while department-associated groups did not have standard guidelines to follow. They were required to identify a relevant sponsor department and faculty advisor for advisory support and present a sustainable plan before their establishment. Dr Cindy Lam added that all student organizations, including both SU-affiliated societies and department-associated groups, were welcome to participate in the Orientation Week, but only SU-affiliated societies could take part in the Promotion Period as mandated by the SU's constitution.

**Report on Planning and Activities from the Student Wellness Manager of the School of Science (SSCI)**

20. Ms Su NGAI shared that the wellness support provided by the School of Science encompassed various aspects, including academic advising, career development, exchange programs and student well-being.
21. Ms Su NGAI reported that the wellness team would offer the HMAW course and organize various wellness activities to facilitate interactions between students and advisors from the school. The team would also offer one-on-one personalized academic support to the students, which helped them identify students in need and provided early intervention.

22. Ms Su NGAI shared that 7 new departmental wellness officers were recruited for 5 departments this year to enhance support for students. There were also collaborations with other units, such as Counseling & Wellness Center, teaching staff and student wellness managers from other schools, to collectively improve students' well-being.
23. Prof Chi Ying Tsui inquired about any trends in student wellness that colleagues should be aware of. Ms Su NGAI shared that COVID-19 negatively impacted students' social skills, leading to increased introversion and reluctance to engage in conversations. She shared that it was important to create a relaxing environment for these students to express themselves.
24. Prof Stanley Lau asked whether the student wellness team would meet with every student who applied for a late drop. Ms Su NGAI replied that her team usually met with first-year students applying for a late drop, while other students needed to consult with faculty members regarding the late drop.
25. Mr Joseph Ng expressed concern about splitting the 3 credits for the HMAW course between the Fall and Spring terms. Ms Su NGAI mentioned that this concern might not be relevant for SSCI students, but she would raise the issue at the next meeting with the Common Core Office to explore potential adjustment to the overloading policy.

#### **Report on Planning and Activities from the Student Wellness Manager of the School of Business & Management (SBM)**

26. Members were presented with the statistics on Business students seeking help from the Counseling & Wellness Center, the activities organized by the wellness team, and future plans for enhancing wellness support in the school by Miss Evelyn Lau. Miss Evelyn Lau highlighted that there was an increase in the number of undergraduate SBM students seeking assistance due to stress and anxiety issues.
27. Miss Evelyn Lau shared that 7 new wellness staff members were hired and assigned to different departments to provide tailored support for students from various programs, improve communication between the wellness team and faculty members, and foster closer connections between wellness staff and students. Prof Ivan Ip inquired about the difference in job duties between assistant student wellness managers and student wellness officers. Miss Evelyn Lau replied that their responsibilities were similar, with assignments to specific departments based on their backgrounds.
28. Miss Evelyn Lau reported that all SBM freshmen were required to attend the HMAW course to help them adapt to university life, develop relationships with other new students and wellness staff, and promote self-reflection by sharing their achievements and struggles. Prof Pakwo Leung inquired whether peer mentors would be involved in organizing the HMAW course. Miss Evelyn Lau responded that the peer mentors would be recruited to help plan

some HMAW events to connect with participating students.

29. Miss Evelyn Lau also reported that various wellness events, such as annual SBM Wellcation Week, Therapy Dog Mingling Sessions and Relationships Workshop, were organized for SBM students to raise awareness of student well-being.
30. Miss Evelyn Lau shared that the wellness team planned to collaborate more with academic departments and non-academic staff, hold more regular meetings and experience sharing sessions within the SBM community and organize more wellness events and training to better support students.
31. Prof Chi Ying Tsui inquired about the methods used to measure the effectiveness of the HMAW course. Prof Pakwo Leung replied that students were required to complete student feedback questionnaires to evaluate the course, and wellness colleagues could also collect feedback through on-going interactions with students.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.