

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 78th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 12 November 2025 at 3:00 pm at Room 5021, Academic Building (mixed-mode).

Present	:	Prof Stanley Lau (Chair), Prof Tat Koon Koh, Prof Chi Ying Tsui, Prof. Kam Wing Siu, Prof Ivan Ip, Prof Kevin Tam, Prof. Pedro Sander, Prof. Alex He, Ms Cheuk Hang Yu, Ms Qiyao Ma, Ms Hiu Tung Tsoi, Mr Yash Mangesh Relekar, Prof Pak Wo Leung (Member and Secretary)
Apologies	:	Mr Jiawei Hu
Resources Person	:	Ms Euphemia Chow, Head of Office of Global Learning Ms Helen Wong, Head of Co-curricular Programs Ms Angel Yiu, Student Wellness Manager from School of Engineering
		Ms Vanessa Chan, Student Wellness Manager from School of Humanities and Social Science and Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies
In Attendance	:	Ms Karina Shum

Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

1. The minutes of the 77th 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 members of the Committee on Students Affairs.

Report on Exchange and Study Abroad Program

3. Ms Euphemia Chow presented a report on study abroad and exchange opportunities for UG students. She noted that this Fall 2025, we welcomed the largest number of inbound exchange students and sent approximately 50% of the undergraduate cohort to study abroad for the AY2024-25.

4. Ms Euphemia Chow also mentioned that, in addition to the regular term inbound exchanges, the OGL team collaborated with various offices to enhance summer course offerings for attracting international students to join the HKUST Summer school. The HKUST UG Research Program was also available for inbound exchange students, contributing to an additional 230 inbound exchange students for AY2024-25.
5. Furthermore, Ms Euphemia Chow reported that we offered study abroad programs during the winter and summer terms, in addition to the regular term outbound exchanges. The OGL team aimed to explore more study abroad opportunities to maintain our goal of providing study abroad exposure to 50% of the undergraduate cohort, especially with the expected increase in student population. To encourage Year 1 students to consider studying abroad, the OGL team organized a briefing session during orientation week. Prof Tat Koon Koh inquired whether students could participate in exchange again in Year 3 if they had already gone on exchange in Year 1 winter term. Euphemia clarified that the guideline of participating in exchange only once was set by the School of Business and Management, students were encouraged to join as many study abroad opportunities as possible.
6. Ms Euphemia Chow also highlighted the OGL team's management of the Spark Global Leadership Initiative, which began 4 years ago. This program recruited around 40 students from diverse backgrounds, including local, non-local and inbound exchange students for AY2024-25, to collaboratively organize cultural activities for all UG students with the support of the OGL team.
7. Prof Pak Wo Leung asked whether students were entitled to the study abroad subsidy only once. Ms Euphemia Chow confirmed that all UG students received one quota of a \$10,000 subsidy for participating in university-approved study abroad programs. Local students on HKSAR government grants might receive additional funding.
8. Prof Kevin Tam sought clarification on whether Schools also offered exchange opportunities to students. Ms Euphemia Chow explained that student selection for regular term exchanges was managed by the individual Schools, while the OGL team centralized summer and winter study abroad programs. Prof Kevin Tam also inquired whether the OGL team would consistently gather student feedback on exchanges. Ms. Euphemia Chow responded that the University regularly conducted surveys for both inbound and outbound exchange students. The results were coordinated by the Office of Institutional Data and Research (OIDR) and reported to the UGC, with schools also receiving the survey outcomes.
9. Prof Stanley Lau asked about the minimum study load requirement for outbound exchange students. Ms Euphemia Chow answered that students were generally encouraged to maintain the same study load as they would at HKUST. Prof Kam Wing Siu added that outbound exchange students were motivated to take the same credit to graduate on time.
(Ms Euphemia Chow was excused from the meeting. Ms Helen Wong joined.)

Report on Community Engagement and other Co-curricular Programs

10. Ms Helen Wong presented a report on the work of the Co-curricular Programs (CP) team over the past two years. The programs focused on three pillars: self-discovery & community building, civic engagement and leadership & teamwork. The primary goal of the self-discovery programs was to foster connections between students and advisors, enabling students to seek help when needed. Ms Helen Wong introduced a new self-discovery program called CREATE, an expressive arts project launched this year. Initial feedback had been positive, with students reporting increased happiness and relaxation after participating. CREATE built on the School of Science's successful use of expressive arts in community-building sessions for Year 1 students and had been expanded to include students from other schools. Ms Helen Wong also introduced HKUST Soar, a new outdoor adventure program designed to enhance students' wellness and leadership skills by utilizing the outdoor spaces around HKUST. Students could participate as either Soar Guides or Soar Explorers.
11. Ms Helen Wong reported that the CP team also provided numerous community services opportunities through HKUST Connect and organized wellness and personal enrichment workshops under the "Self-Directed Experience" component of HMAW1905: Behavioral Foundations of University Education: Habits, Mindsets, and Wellness. Additionally, the CP team focused on developing an advisor community to enhance colleagues' capacity to support students and share best practices through various sharing sessions.
12. Prof Ivan Ip inquired about the local and non-local student participation in CP programs. Ms Helen Wong assured that the CP team regularly reviewed participant demographics to ensure balanced representation in each program.
13. Prof Tat Koon Koh suggested that the CP team coordinated with the respective Schools to avoid overlapping activities and asked if the team could take on the organization of GBA activities. Prof Pak Wo Leung responded that each office had distinct role; School advising team could organize tailored activities for their students, while the central office focused on cross-disciplinary events for campus integration. He emphasized that the University adopted a decentralized approach, with all offices collaborating to serve the community.
14. Prof Chi Ying Tsui asked if Schools/Departments could collaborate with the CP team to organize wellness and engagement activities, given the team's experience. Ms Helen Wong confirmed that the CP team was open to co-organizing activities with School/Department to share best practices and develop colleagues as advisors for better student support. Prof Tat Koon Koh inquired about the main student complaints regarding HMAW1905 courses. Ms Hiu Tung Tsoi noted that students often struggled to understand which activities count toward the HMAW1905 course. Ms Helen Wong explained that the HMAW1905 structure was complex with different components, leading to information overload for students. However, the course had been streamlined and improved based on student feedback.

15. Prof. Tat Koon Koh raised the possibility of lifting the participation requirement for HMAW1905, as some students felt stressed if they did not attend after signing up. Prof Pak Wo Leung emphasized the need for a holistic approach to curriculum design, rather than focusing solely on individual feedback. He assured that the HMAW1905 course was continuously reviewed and refined based on collected feedback. Prof Alex He asked about the interest of TPG and RPG students in wellness activities. Ms Helen Wong noted that while some programs were open to PG students, participation varied. A few RPG students engaged in community-building activities and community services, whereas TPG students tended to prefer career-related events organized by the Career Center.

(Ms Helen Wong was excused from the meeting. Ms Angel Yiu joined.)

Report on Planning and Activities from the Student Wellness Manager of the School of Engineering

16. Ms Angel Yiu introduced the structure of the student wellness team and outlined the planned wellness activities. The team consisted of 6 members, each assigned to a specific department to support both UG and PG students. They would organize weekly events, such as Wellness Wednesday and Cheering Week, open to all members of the SENG community. This year, the format of activities had shifted from traditional sharing sessions and workshops to more relaxed options, including wall games and yoga classes. A wellness check-in form was created for SENG students to fill out if they needed support or someone to talk to. Since September 2025, approximately 43 students from various departments had completed the wellness check-in form.

17. Prof Tat Koon Koh inquired about the response to the HMAW1905 activities organized by SENG and whether these activities took place on campus or off-campus. Ms Angel Yiu explained that a wide variety of activities were offered, with many indoor events held off-campus, such as war games, which were appealing to students. Prof Stanley Lau asked if students were required to pay for these activities. Ms Angel Yiu clarified that only deposits were collected to discourage no-shows.

18. Prof Pak Wo Leung inquired about the division of labor within the student wellness team and whether Year 1 students with declared majors should contact the wellness representative for their department. Ms Angel Yiu responded that she served as the initial contact for Year 1 students and assigned cases to her colleagues based on their expertise and the nature of the case, rather than strictly by department. The same practice applied to non-Year 1 students.

(Ms Angel Yiu was excused from the meeting. Ms Vanessa Chan joined.)

Report on Planning and Activities from the Student Wellness Manager of the School of Humanities and Social Science and Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies

19. Ms. Vanessa Chan presented the structure of the student wellness team and outlined the activities organized by the team. She noted that students encountered various challenges during their university studies, prompting the decision to inform them about the student wellness team and its activities upon their arrival at HKUST. Ms Vanessa Chan emphasized that the student wellness team served as the frontline colleagues for identifying critical issues and directing students to appropriate resources, rather than providing formal mental health assessments or therapy.
20. Ms Vanessa Chan highlighted the importance of early identification and intervention but stressed that prevention was paramount. This responsibility lied with all staff who interacted with students, including faculty, program staff and the student wellness team. Therefore, fostering a supportive environment among all staff level was a key focus for senior management, ensuring that students could easily seek help when needed.
21. Prof Stanley Lau inquired about the adequacy of manpower to support the wellness needs of the two Schools. Ms Vanessa Chan responded that she would closely monitor the situation and would request manpower adjustments from senior management if necessary.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.