

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 57th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 2 Dec 2015 at 2:30pm at Room 5015 (Lifts 13).

Present : Prof Karl Tsim (Chairman), Prof CY Tsui, Prof Billy So, Prof Lam-Lung Yeung, Prof Shing-yu Leung, Prof Yaping Gong, Miss Gloria Chiu, Mr Wong Chun Hin, Miss Jasmine Wong, Mrs Pandora Yuen (Member and Secretary)

Absent with apologies: Prof Kar-Yan Tam, Prof Henry Lam

In Attendance : Ms Grace Ling, Ms Helen Wong (SAO), Ms Daisy Kwan (SAO)

Welcome

1. The Chairman welcomed new faculty and student members.

Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

2. Minutes of the 56th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) was confirmed unanimously.
3. Matters arising were covered under the current agenda.

Report on Sponsored Student Projects and Groups

4. Members received report on the progress of the Sponsored Student Projects and Groups (CSA/57/1) from Ms Grace Ling highlighting student's feedback and the panel's recommendations:
 - a. Students expressed difficulty in differentiating between the sponsored student projects and sponsored student groups. They also lacked knowledge and the know-how in organizing activities independently.
 - b. The panel suggested combining projects and groups to one track, with all new applications commencing as a project. They could progress into a sponsored group after a year with sustained interest and activities. SAO would continue to provide support and facilitation.
 - Meanwhile, the 3-year rule for groups would continue. It was clarified that the counting of years would be on academic year basis, with end date being 31 August . The implication of the one track system was a longer time span (1+3 years) for the sponsored groups.
 - The aim of the change was to provide a clearer structure for student-led activities and more support and guidance during the process.
 - c. It was also reported that the Office of the Dean of Students (DSTO) had agreed to be home department for the Mainland Students and Scholars Society (MSSS) and the International Students Association (ISA). These groups would become department-associated groups.
5. Prof Yeung supported the recommendations and thought that it would mean better sustainability for the scheme.
6. Miss Gloria Chiu noted that MSSS and ISA currently receive funding from the Global Student Programs Office (GSPO) and enquired how they would manage financially with the change. Mrs Pandora Yuen clarified that GSPO is under the DSTO family, as such, both groups would continue to receive the same level of financial support.
7. The Chairman sought further information on a cancelled application mentioned in the paper. Ms Ling noted that the group withdrew their application because it was put in a few days before the

event. Student organizers later realized they could not actually execute the project within the proposed timeframe.

8. Miss Gloria Chiu shared that she found the Scheme confusing: Students interested in organizing activities could do so as affiliated societies under the Students' Union (SU affiliated societies). Having sponsored groups seemed to be a duplicate and department-associated groups also caused confusion regarding booking rights and priority booking.
9. The Chairman and Mrs Pandora Yuen shared the background of the Scheme to the new members to facilitate the discussion: In previous CSA meetings, the agreed position towards student activities was to encourage free choice and diversity, allowing students to test out their ideas. The Scheme was set up as a taster program for students interested in organizing activities but unsure if they could handle the logistics and gather enough members to sustain the group as a student society. A recent example was the Art Club, which successfully applied as an SU affiliated society after trying out two projects as a sponsored group.
10. Regarding booking rights, Ms Ling clarified that department-associated groups were treated the same as other sponsored groups and projects or recipients of Student Enrichment Activities Fund and President 1-HKUST Student Life Awards. Since these department-associated groups may also support department's activities, where venue was booked by departments, there might be a misunderstanding that they had priorities.
11. There was extended discussion regarding department-associated groups and their existence due to the following points raised:
 - a. Mr Wong Chun Hin asked for the meaning for being a department-associated groups.
 - b. Miss Jasmine Wong noted there were a lot of SU affiliated department societies that were related to departments, e.g. the Civil Engineering Department Society, and found the "new" category called department-associated groups a duplication. She was of the view that ISA and MSSS were doing fine as sponsored groups and doubted the need for them to covert to department-associated groups.
 - c. Miss Gloria Chiu shared that some students found the Scheme limiting and not being able to cater to needs of societies such as Hong Kong Air Cadet group, which could not be affiliated with SU due to regulation of its mother organization (Hong Kong Air Cadet Corp). She asked if this group would become a department-associated group and whether departments had capacities to take up all the different groups.
12. Regarding department-associated groups, Ms Ling noted it was not a new category. Department-associated groups had existed for a long time. Many of them were related to professional bodies and could not be SU affiliated due to double memberships. For example, The Center for Language Education became home department for Toastmaster after understanding they could not get affiliated with SU due to limitation from their mother organization (Hong Kong Toastmasters Club) and provided support and a legitimate status for them.
13. The case for Hong Kong Air Cadet was more complicated. It involved internal limitation of the mother organization. Nonetheless, the University researched and explored possible ways for the group to continue at HKUST. A proposal was made to Hong Kong Air Cadet Corp to allow the student group be SU affiliated using a different name. The Corp's internal communication lasted for a year, during which the student group was inactive, and responded to the University around three months ago agreeing the student group to be SU affiliated under a different name. As such, each case is unique and require tailored help and facilitation.
14. The Chairman also clarified that the Scheme was set up in discussion with SU two years ago whereby support to sponsored groups would end after a 3-year period. Respective groups would need to find a legitimate form of existence within the University. This could be applying for SU affiliation, continuing organizing sponsored projects without a group identity, or any other legitimate forms acceptable to CSA.

15. Prof CY Tsui enquired and the Chairman confirmed that CSA could not force any student groups to take particular form of existence, e.g. forcing them to remain as sponsored group, should they choose to become a department-associated group. Neither could CSA intervene with the group's arrangement with respective University department as this would be a department's internal matters, out of the jurisdiction of CSA.
16. Members had no further concerns, Prof. Billy So proposed to pass the panel's suggestion and endorse the report noting that MSSS and ISA were becoming department-associated groups. Prof CY Tsui supported and the report was endorsed without objection.

Student Member Representative on the Panel on Sponsored Groups and Projects

17. Members were invited to appoint a new student member representative to serve on the Panel. Student members were to discuss and inform the Committee accordingly.
[Post-meeting note: Student members informed CSA that Miss Jasmine Wong would be the student member to serve on the Panel.]

Report on Student Leaders Program

18. Members received report on the progress of Student Leaders Program (CSA/57/2) from Ms Grace Ling.
19. Prof Yaping Gong shared that taking management courses could be helpful to students leaders. The Chairman agreed and enquired about the number of student leaders. Ms Ling reported that there were currently 96 active student societies, hence, around 1,500 executive committee members in estimate.
20. Prof Billy So enquired the ratio of students holding offices in different executive committees. Miss Gloria Chiu, who was the PIC of SU Provisional ExCo, shared that it was not the normal practice for students to hold office in more than one executive committee in any given year. Unfortunately, SU did not have the data on hand.
21. Prof CY Tsui also asked if there would be demographic data of executive committee members, e.g. ratio of local and non-locals students, gender, etc. Gloria noted that the ratio of local/ non-local students would vary according to nature of student society, e.g. for the ratio of non-local student would be higher for Art Club and International Cuisine Society.
22. The Chairman and Members found it helpful to have a better picture of the demographics of the executive committee members for further understanding of the level of participation of different students. Gloria shared that they had the raw data on record but lack resources to process them for aggregates. For interest of CSA, the Chairman asked SAO to work with SU for the aggregates and report back in the next meeting. [SAO and SU]
23. There being no further questions to the report on the Student Leaders Program, Miss Wong proposed to accept the report. Prof Shing-yu Leung supported. The report was endorsed with no objection.

(Ms Ling was excused from the meeting and Ms Helen Wong joined at 3:40pm.)

Report on REDbird Awards Program

24. Members received report on the progress of REDbird Awards Program (CSA/57/3) from Ms Helen Wong, giving background and progress of the Program.
25. The Chairman enquired if the ratio of award recipients was increasing. Ms Wong reported that the ratio of silver and gold recipients were similar throughout the past years indicating similar level of committed students. Chairman also noted that participation of students from SSCI and SHSS continued to remain low compared with other Schools. Helen acknowledged that this had

been a continual challenge. The REDbird program team had been contentiously recruiting students from SSCI and SENG and working closely with co-curricular program staff in both Schools to outreach to their students, e.g., distributing leaflets to students inside SCI HOME, and emphasizing to students how the program synced with School's first year program.

26. Ms Wong supplemented that, to encourage students with financial constraints, subsidies equivalent to part-time tutoring were made available to free them from the pressure of part-time jobs and keep them engaged on campus. It was noted that the Program previously received support from a Foundation that sponsored students for overseas service trips. Yet, Students rarely applied for the subsidy as it was not the type of financial resource that they need.
27. Both Prof Billy So and Prof CY Tsui agreed regarding the competing opportunities for students: those eager to participate had many choices and those hesitant to join had their own unique stories. After much exchange, it was suggested that extending the on campus internship program to campus commercial outlets may further help students with financial constraints.
28. The Chairman enquired if the program was now financially viable. Ms Wong replied that the Program was now self-sustaining using funding from various sources and leveraging on other grants available, e.g., the Woofoo Whole Person Development Grant which provides up to \$100/hr for students with financial need to spend time in personal development than working on part-time jobs.
29. Miss Jasmine Wong shared some feedback she heard that the Program required a lot of time and commitment. Helen agreed and commented that it was a standard worth holding onto as it was an authentic learning experience similar to that of the work place, where last minute notices and no shows would have consequences. Also, a deep and reflective learning experience required time investment. Helen supplemented that the entire year training schedule was made available to students at the application stage. Students were repeatedly reminded of the level of commitment required of them at the selection interview. It was noted that students eager to succeed had no problem arranging their schedules accordingly.
30. The stringent requirement was acknowledged. Prof Billy So noted that only leaders could get the best out of the Program. There being no other questions, Prof CY Tsui proposed to accept the report and Prof Billy So seconded. The report was endorsed unanimously.

Report on HKUST Connect

31. Members received report on the progress of HKUST Connect (CSA/57/4) from Ms Helen Wong.
32. Prof Billy So enquired if there were any collaborations with faculty in terms of experiential learning in view of the tri-modal education framework. Prof CY Tsui also enquired if there was synergy between HKUST Connect and other credit-based service learning courses by different Schools.
33. Ms Wong shared that HKUST Connect had worked closely with faculty with interest in embedding service learning, a form of experiential learning, into courses. With effect from Oct 2015, HKUST Connect had taken up a dual role: Aside of being a service learning platform for students under SAO, it was also the Experiential Learning Team under the Center for Education Technology (CEI). Since then, the Team had been actively evaluating project possibilities and matching needs of community partners with expertise of our faculty from different Schools. The hope was to engage more faculty and further promote the pedagogy into different classes, whilst attempting to contribute to solving social problems.
34. Prof So thought positively towards HKUST Connect's work in connecting faculty with the community and hoped to see more outreaching to faculty and know-hows for service learning or other forms of experiential learning. Ms Wong shared that CEI were planning on outreach strategies at the moment.

35. There being no further questions, Miss Gloria Chiu proposed to accept the report. Mr Wong Chun Hin seconded. The report was endorsed with no objection.

(Helen was excused from the meeting at 4:17 pm.)

Report on Student Enrichment Activities Fund

36. Members received report on the progress of the Student Enrichment Activities (SEA) Fund (CSA/57/5) from Mrs Pandora Yuen.

37. Members discussed the details of various projects, particularly service learning trips and funding structure. Mrs Yuen clarified most of the projects received subsidies instead of full funding. Miss Jasmine Wong also shared her positive experience with the Cambodia service learning trip.

38. Prof CY Tsui enquired if activities by the Debating Team, e.g. representing the University to competitions, were being supported by SEA Fund. Mrs Yuen confirmed positive. For other activities where student groups represented the University, there were currently multiple funding sources which could be SEA Fund, funding from Schools or Departments, pending nature of activity.

(Prof Shing-yu Leung excused himself at 4:28pm)

39. The Chairman enquired if there were any projects for student's mental health and wellbeing and suggested SU to encourage student groups to arrange activities to address the issue. Mrs Yuen reported that SAO Counseling Team had a peer counselor program providing students with mental health training and forming a peer support network that outreach to fellow students. Students could also apply to SEA Fund on peer support initiatives. There was also a funding scheme to support student-led activities on students with special educational needs (SEN), including mental health promotion.

40. Miss Gloria Chiu, who was also a member of the selection panel of SEA Fund, shared that applications to the Fund had been on the rise and the University might want to consider separate funding for activities where students represent the University for external/ overseas competitions. Members agreed a separate funding should be considered. It would mean better recognition to student representatives and SEA Fund could then be effectively used to support student-led projects.

41. Miss Jasmine Wong noted a decline in local students applying for the Fund and suggested strengthening promotion to local students. Members discussed and noted there could be a variety of reasons for the decline and agreed that promotion should be strengthened and should be directed to all students.

42. Prof Yaping Gong proposed to accept the report, Miss Wong seconded, the report was endorsed without objection.

Any Other Business

43. The Chairman shared about upcoming events in celebration to the University 25th Anniversary. There would be a Gala Dinner and tables had been reserved for faculty, staff and students. The Chairman invited and encouraged SU to consider arranging some student-led activities and join in the celebration. Financial support would be available.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.