

## **Committee on Student Affairs**

Minutes of the 68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 23 November 2020 at 4:30pm online via Zoom.

- Present : Prof Arthur Lau (Chairman), Prof Ho Bun Chan, Prof Allen Huang, Prof Ronald Lau, Prof Jin Wang, Prof DY Yeung, Ms Vanessa Ying Ho Liu, Ms Ritika Upadhyay, Prof King Chow (Member and Secretary)
- Apologies Prof Carine Yiu, Mr Guangsheng Liu, Mr Chun Ming Tsang
- Resource Person : DSTO: Ms Euphemia Chow, Ms Grace Ling, Dr Frank Lam  
CMO: Ms Jessica Li; SU: Mr Ka Chun Mak, Ms Rachel Lo
- In Attendance : Ms Shirley Wu

### **Welcome**

1. The Chairman welcomed new members – Prof Allen Huang, Prof Carine Yiu, Ms Ritika Upadhyay and Mr Guangsheng Liu.

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

2. Minutes of the 67<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) were confirmed and there were no matters arising. Prof King Chow and the Chairman encouraged student members to read meeting minutes, communicate with peers and facilitate student affairs.

### **Report on Exchange and Study Abroad Program**

3. Members received a report from Ms Euphemia Chow on Exchange and Study Abroad Program. It was reported that student exchange and study abroad program was suspended for 2020 Spring, 2020 Fall and 2021 Spring Terms in response to COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions. Since programs have been suspended for three consecutive terms, a total of 1,200 students were affected. Preparations for 2021 Summer Term both inbound and outbound are proceeding as normal but the programs might be suspended closer to the time depending on pandemic circumstances. The University will make the decision in late January or February so that students can make alternative plans.
4. Ms Euphemia Chow reported that Office of Global Learning began providing virtual studies opportunities for HKUST students since this summer. In Summer Term 91 students studied abroad virtually by taking credit-bearing courses online offered by our partner universities. Starting from this Fall Term, it is partnered with Rice University, Fudan University as well as APRU alliance to offer virtual study abroad opportunities. A total of

51 students are taking credit-bearing courses offered by our partner universities and student feedbacks are quite good.

5. Prof Ho Bun Chan inquired if any student can take these online courses. Ms Euphemia Chow explained that the procedure of virtual exchange was much simpler than the normal exchange. There is a selected course list for each partner. As long as the partner has course quota and the student can meet course pre-requisite (if any), it will be accepted.
6. Prof King Chow supplemented that it could be called partial exchange. Students no longer stay the entire term in another institution but take courses in two different institutions at the same time without physically travelling. With this model students can go for this kind of virtual exchange not only in year 2 or 3 but also in year 1 or 4 and they can do it at different institutions in multiple times. The problem to be addressed is how to make the course quota balanced reciprocally when large scale of students will participate. One option to be explored is to offer co-listing course.
7. The Chairman further inquired if there will be a mechanism to select students in terms of quota issues. Prof King Chow shared that we didn't have a concrete mechanism at this point but would think about it in long run when the number starts growing.
8. Ms Ritika Upadhyay inquired whether the grading of these courses would be given the pass/fail option. Ms Euphemia Chow explained that it would be pass/fail grading after credits were transferred back to HKUST. Ms Chow also shared that around half of the students enrolled in virtual exchange courses valued add-on learning experience more than transferring credits.
9. Prof Ronald Lau inquired whether overload credits were considered when students enrolled in the virtual exchange courses. Ms Euphemia Chow explained that UG coordinators were asked to endorse the applications when students applied for taking virtual exchange courses. Prof Lau further inquired if this virtual study abroad program would be kept in parallel when normal exchange program was resumed normal. Prof King Chow expressed the intention to keep it parallel because it overall expanded the possibilities for interactions between institutions and provided additional opportunities to students.
10. The Chairman encouraged student members to spread out the message to their peers regarding taking virtual exchange courses. The Chairman also suggested Office of Global Learning to contact with UG coordinators for further promotion.

*(Ms Euphemia Chow was excused from the meeting. Ms Grace Ling, Dr Frank Lam, Ms Jessica Li, Mr Ka Chun Mak and Ms Rachel Lo joined.)*

### **Student Election Campaign (Pro-P)**

11. The Chairman and Prof King Chow shared some background information about Student Election Campaign (Pro-P). Pro-P is a promotion period for student societies to change their cabinets and then go for the election. It is usually organized by the Students' Union

(SU), as the central coordinator with student societies from late January to February. From students' side Pro-P is an important annual event but from other stakeholders' side noise, safety and disciplinary issues are also concerned. For the Pro-P in coming spring, the situation is still uncertain whether it can be conducted in person or not.

12. Ms Grace Ling shared that chanting had been kept as part of traditional activity in Pro-P. But there was a serious incident in 2016 that some students got hurt in body conflict among house associations. An investigation was conducted afterwards and it was recommended that there should not be any chanting in the evening and the chanting should be held at the Piazza instead of crowded Atrium area. With these recommendations the chanting run smoothly in the past two years.
13. Ms Rachel Lo conveyed that SU considered interests of different stakeholders in the community but they were not able to standardize Pro-P proposal this year because it might be held online. It's better to standardize it maybe the year after.
14. The Chairman inquired whether the upcoming Pro-P would be held online. Ms Rachel Lo shared that they were planning mixed-mode now but would see how the COVID-19 situation goes on. The initial plan was to use an indoor area like common room or art hall to set up booths/counters with maximum capacity and crowd control measures. There are a total of around 70 student societies and it's around 20 societies per week if the whole 3-week period is divided into three.
15. Ms Grace Ling inquired about other arrangements such as chanting, flags and lucky draws. Ms Rachel Lo shared that they were planning to have the chanting maybe in Sport Hall, Seafront or an open area. The Chairman further inquired about big decorations. Ms Lo shared that similar as an exhibition big decorations could be displayed in Atrium. Ms Jessica Li supplemented that it should be fine as long as no gatherings in Atrium under the government's guideline.
16. The Chairman conveyed that we tried to support as far as we can and requested a more detailed Pro-P proposal with mixed-mode or even online mode so that colleagues could discuss more with SU to facilitate the event.
17. Prof King Chow assured that we were supportive to Pro-P in general but reminded there were disagreements about some details from past experience such as the chanting time and venue. With a detailed proposal different offices can work with SU to make sure the event run smoothly with safety measures and not intervening other members in the community.  
*(Prof King Chow was excused from the meeting.)*
18. The Chairman invited members to give more comments/suggestions to SU. Prof Ronald Lau reminded SU to set up some criteria to change mixed-mode to online mode in alignment with the government's restrictions. Prof Jin Wang suggested that it would be useful to think about setting a quota similar like mixed-mode teaching. Prof DY Yeung also suggested SU to think about the contingency plan and include the conditions under that

mixed-mode would be switched to online mode. Ms Jessica Li suggested SU to be more flexible in planning and think of different ways to go ahead. Ms Grace Ling expressed the concerns about the space for big decoration preparations and reminded that students should be very self-disciplined for preparations during night time.

19. Ms Rachel Lo expressed that SU would set a deadline of early January to make a decision on mixed-mode or online mode depending on the university's policy at that time. Ms Lo also indicated that it's important to keep big decorations even booth/counters were moved online. Ms Grace Ling reminded that student amenities might be closed if pandemic situation got worse. In that case the common rooms for preparing big decorations might not be available. Ms Ling also pointed out that as per CSA's previous recommendations it was desirable to simplify the penalty for repeated violations.
20. The Chairman thanked members for raising concerns to help SU have better expectations and preparations. The Chairman urged SU to submit a detailed proposal at earliest convenience and indicated that CSA would discuss further when SU's detailed proposal was received.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.