

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 75th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 27 March 2024 at 2:15 pm at Room 5021, Academic Building (mixed-mode).

Present : Prof Jensen Li (Chair), Prof Chi Ying Tsui, Dr Benjamin Leung,
Prof Ivan Ip, Prof James Wong, Prof Pedro Sander, Prof
Zhongming Lu, Ms Pui Ka Mui, Mr Yiu Kai Nester Chik, Ms
Xinyan Zhu, Prof King Chow (Member and Secretary)

Apologies : Prof Allen Huang, Mr Po Yin Tsang

Resource Person : Prof Jimmy Fung, Associate Provost (Teaching & Learning)

In Attendance : Ms Katherine Wong

Introductions and welcome of new members

1. New members were welcomed to the meeting.
2. This meeting was scheduled outside of the regular meeting schedule to address the urgent matter of the document “Regulations for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity”.

Revision of the University Regulations for Academic Integrity

3. Members were presented with two documents by Prof Jimmy Fung on the revision of the University Regulations for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. It was noted that this document has remained unchanged for over 20 years, resulting in outdated content with some specific issues not addressed with clarity. The current revision provides an opportunity to clarify and define the application of penalties for academic integrity violations or misconduct across different academic units. This revision is necessary, especially considering the recommendation for a review by the UGC Quality Assurance Committee. The updated regulations are divided into two separate documents: “Regulation for Student Conduct” and “Regulation for Student Academic Integrity”.

4. The purpose of this update was to enhance clarity by explicitly defining misconduct and outlining the conditions under which appeals can be made. The existing regulations display a degree of ambiguity, particularly in terms of the inconsistent application of penalties to students for academic dishonesty or misconduct across academic units. To address this concern, the revised documents will provide greater clarity by creating a clearly defined process illustrated in a flowchart. The flowchart outlines the appropriate steps for referring cases to different committees and jurisdiction, reporting all cases to the registry, and ensuring that the registry maintains records. By implementing these measures, consistency can be established across units in the university, ensuring all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the updated regulations, consistent procedures and fair penalty across the campus.
6. Prof King Chow supplemented that a previous case involving the revocation of a degree highlighted the need for clarification on the handling of disciplinary cases, especially in the division of labor. The DSTO's dual role of supporting and penalizing students has posed complexity for handling specific cases. With the update, the registry would take on the role of exercising the judgement of disciplinary cases, while DSTO plays the role of a supporting unit.
6. Prof Chi Ying Tsui inquired about whether students can appeal on the penalty and if there are different levels of penalties. Prof Jimmy Fung clarified that students would only be allowed to appeal on the ground of procedural irregularity and new evidence unavailable in the initial investigation is presented, not the penalty itself. The revised document will include specific information regarding the various levels of penalties.
6. Prof Pedro Sander asked whether the choice of penalty for each type of offense is determined on a case-by-case basis. Prof King Chow mentioned that in the past, there was no requirement to document everything and each department or school would handle their own cases without sharing information. Prof Jimmy Fung added that the update will introduce uniformity in the issuance of penalties by clearly defining the roles of committees and providing general guidelines to department heads and deans.
7. Mr Nester Chik expressed a concern regarding whether students can appeal with new evidence. Prof King Chow explained that most appeals typically pertain to procedural matters rather than evidence. Prof Jimmy Fung added that maintaining a record will ensure consistency in similar cases, which is also a requirement by the UGC.
8. Prof Zhongming Lu inquired about who has the authority to report misconduct cases and whether there is a standardized format for submitting supporting documents. Prof Jimmy Fung confirmed that any member of the university can report misconduct, and there is a designated form available for submitting supporting evidence. Prof King Chow added that cases will be investigated only when the initiator provides sufficient evidence and documentation.

9. Prof Ivan Ip inquired about the applicability of the regulations to PG students and whether it would be considered misconduct if a TA fails to fulfill their commitments. Prof Jimmy Fung clarified that the regulations do apply to TAs, but the failure of a TA to fulfill their job commitments would not be classified as student misconduct.
10. Prof Ivan Ip asked whether the updated regulations include aspects related to generative AI. Prof Fung explained that generative AI is already addressed to some extent in the Academic Integrity Policy, so it is included in the updated regulations.
11. The Chair highlighted an issue with the flow chart in the appeal procedure, where it states that the student may be required to meet with Provost and the President. Prof Jimmy Fung confirms that the wording should be “may,” indicating that it is not necessary for the President or Provost to meet with the student in every case. Prof King Chow added that in some instances, a senior staff member may be delegated to handle such cases.
12. Prof Jimmy Fung requested that members forward any additional questions to him within one week’s time before the documents are finalized and presented to the Senate.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.