

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 45th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 12 January 2011 at 9:30 am at Room 5015

- Present : Prof Karl Tsim (Chairman), Prof Kar-Yan Tam,
Prof Roger Cheng, Prof King Chow, Prof Kristiaan Helsen,
Mr Johnny Ho, Mr Sun Hung, Miss Irene Chau,
Dr Grace Au (Member and Secretary)
- On Sabbatical Leave : Prof Charles Chan
- Absent with apologies: Prof Tai-Kai Ng, Prof Chi-Ming Chan, Mr Jack Ho
- In Attendance : Mrs Pandora Yuen (SAO), Ms Codana Chan (SAO)

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Purpose of meeting

1. CSA at its 44th meeting looked at the findings of the chanting survey and discussed a proposal from SU on the arrangements for the coming election campaign in February. It was agreed that SU would revise the proposal with reference to comments of the Committee. The purpose of this meeting was to consider a revised proposal from SU, and to note and discuss comments from others on the chanting issue.

Comments on the Chanting Issue

2. Members noted that a professor had asked for the statistical data and comments collected from the survey be disseminated to the campus for inclusive discussion on the issue. Members also noted that another professor had the following suggestions:
 - Decisions regarding the promotion period should be based on the survey results.
 - Holding the promotion at locations frequented by students, such as the dorms, the seafront or unused field.
 - Public services as a means of promotion instead of chanting.
 - Holding a promotion period for 24 hours from Sunday (noon) to Monday (noon) at a central location like the Atrium. This period could allow students to express their dedication by showing up on a Sunday. Members of the campus who wish to avoid the chanting could come in late on Monday.

Revised SU Proposal

3. Mr Sun Hung presented the revised SU Proposal. Chanting time during lunch was further reduced by 5 minutes, from 12:50 pm to 1:50 pm. SU would hold a review session in March to review the promotion period and

the chanting situation. SU would collect opinion and feedback from student societies to see if there were any better ways of promotion. An open forum would be held in April to discuss the improvement plans. The revised proposal also included the active role to be played by SU in monitoring and cooperating with the Security. SU would impose penalties on those who violated the rules. Penalties included suspension of promotion for five consecutive days upon one verbal and two written warnings. If violation took place on the last day, future applications for venues, equipment and subsidies would be affected.

4. Mr Sun Hung then presented a revised floor plan to members. SU proposed a total of 22 areas (each around 3m x 3m) in the Atrium for chanting. It was estimated that around 200 students would gather at the chanting area, together with 50 counters set up in the Atrium. Mr Sun Hung said that only 10 – 15 student societies were active in chanting and the noise level could be kept at an acceptable level.
5. Prof King Chow suggested moving the chanting areas further away from the escalators/staircase so that the impact of chanting could be reduced. He also said that a shorter period of chanting such as one week would always be more acceptable to the community than an extended period of three weeks. If an extended period was preferred, then the venue had to be compromised.
6. Prof Kristiaan Helsen expressed his views that chanting had caused inconvenience to many members of the campus community and the SU revised proposal had not addressed the concerns nor resolved the problems caused by chanting.
7. Prof Roger Cheng found the revised proposal not acceptable. He said that the 6 chanting areas in the escalator landing would cause problems because it was the major passageway from and to the Concourse with a lot of human traffic.
8. Mr Sun Hung shared their observation regarding the use of escalators and staircase during the chanting period last year. He said not too many people used them. Prof KY Tam, however, said that it was because people wanted to avoid the chanting areas. Prof Tam suggested that the survey results should be made known to students so that they could better understand the views and feelings of others.
9. The Chairman asked SU to consider the hall areas, soccer pitch, etc as alternatives to Atrium for chanting. Mr Johnny Ho replied that the said venues were distant from the Academic Building where students usually gathered around. He reiterated that the objective was to promote team spirit of students through chanting. The Chairman then asked SU to consider moving the chanting areas further away from the escalators and staircase. Spreading out the chanting areas might help to lower the noise level. According to HSEO, the noise level limit should be set at an

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average of 94dB for a one-hour event. HSEO suggested to take the noise measurement at 3 locations – outside ARR, in the Atrium near to the LG1 staircase and outside the Library.

10. After discussion, it was agreed that: Mr Sun Hung
- a) SU to organize a meeting for student societies to meet with CSA members for communication purposes. CSA members would share with students directly the concerns, views and advice.
 - b) SU to revise the floor plan with input from this meeting.
 - c) SU to propose methods to keep the chanting noise within the limit of 94dB.

Proposal from Prof Kristiaan Helsen

11. Prof Kristiaan Helsen tabled for consideration a proposal with two motions.
- Motion 1: To share the results of the ‘chanting’ survey with the rest of the university community
- Motion 2: A moratorium on chanting in the Atrium starting from this academic year
12. Motion 1 was seconded by Prof Roger Cheng for discussion. The Committee noted that SU, the owner of the survey data, had not yet announced any results. It was SU’s intention to release a survey report after the UAC meeting but in view of the request, Mr Johnny Ho agreed to make it open earlier. He further agreed to announce the statistical summary, responses from each of the 4 groups (faculty, staff, students who had served in societies and those who had not) and all comments to open questions before the end of this week. Motion 1 was carried.
13. Motion 2 was seconded by Prof King Chow for discussion.
14. Mr Johnny Ho and Mr Sun Hung reiterated that SU did not want to move the chanting areas to other venues because the Atrium had the most of student traffic and the intention was to reach out to their fellow students.
15. Prof King Chow said that chanting, if organized like cheering groups in good order, would be more acceptable to the campus community. SU should be cautious in striking a balance between the views of student societies and those of other students whom they no less represented.
16. Prof Kristiaan Helsen emphasized that we should respect the survey results and pointed out that a higher percentage of the respondents did not support chanting.

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17. Miss Irene Chau commented that health concern should be given priority in consideration.
18. Dr Grace Au reminded SU that any proposals on chanting had to be approved by UAC. She urged SU to have at least two contingency plans for:
 - a) if the chanting areas near the escalators and staircase to the Academic Concourse were not approved; or
 - b) if chanting was not allowed in the Atrium.
19. The Chairman advised SU to ask student societies to consider the views of CSA in order that chanting could be continued on campus in an orderly manner which would be accepted by the campus community.
20. After discussion, the Motion was put to the vote. With one for and eight against, Motion 2 was not carried.

(There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.)