

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 71st Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 28 April 2022 at 3pm online via Zoom.

Present : Prof Arthur Lau (Chair), Prof Yaping Gong, Dr Benjamin Leung,
Prof Jinqing Huang, Prof Pedro Sander, Prof Pengyu Zhu,
Miss Wing Sze Lui, Mr Kai Chun Clinton Li, Mr De Juan Teh, Ms Etsuko
Ishii, Prof King Chow (Member and Secretary)

Apologies : Prof Carine Yiu, Prof Allen Huang

Resource Persons : DSTO: Ms Rufina Wong, Mr Ricky Yeung, Prof Frank Lam
Prof Tim Woo, Ms Melissa Megan

In Attendance : Ms Rita Yau

Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed new members – Prof Yaping Gong, Prof Jinqing Huang, Prof Pedro Sander, Mr De Juan Teh and Ms Etsuko Ishii.
2. Prof King Chow remarked that the Committee on Student Affairs is a platform for students and faculty to learn more about the diversity of policies related to students. Members are welcome to provide feedback.

Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

3. Minutes of the 70th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs were confirmed and there was no matter arising.

Overview of Common Core Program

4. Members received an overview of new Common Core Program framework which will be adopted for the new intake in September 2022 from Prof Tim Woo (Academic Director of Undergraduate Core Education). The Chair emphasized that the existing students would not be affected by the change but they were invited to get more information and share with new students. The objectives of the new Common Core framework are to prepare students with more skillsets and to develop their personal attributes. Students are allowed to apply competencies in practical application, through the strengthening of Broadening courses and hands-on experience. The Behavioral Foundations will help students adapt to university life while the Cognitive Foundations will help student to develop their critical thinking ability for tackling problems and

analyzing issues.

5. Miss Wing Sze Lui inquired that if UROP is the only Undergraduate Experiential Opportunities Programs offered right now and whether the UPOP would be offered in Summer same as the required internship for CIVIL students. Prof Woo shared that more courses would be developed under UTOP, UPOP and UCOP to enhance the experiential opportunities. Pre-internship training would be offered under UPOP anytime in the first or second year.
6. Mr Clinton Li expressed that Year 1 students may have difficulty in enrolling for the CTDL courses. Prof Woo shared that the quotas of the foundations course would be adjusted according to the demand. Prof King Chow suggested Year 1 to have priority in enrolling CTDL course. Prof Woo supplemented that he was working with ARO for the implementation of possible solutions to address the problem.
7. Mr Clinton Li asked if the Committee considered that building relationship and creating an UG community through a formal course environment (HMW) might not be favorable to students. Prof Woo shared that once the relationship is built after the first meeting, a connection would be built. The well-being environment would be further enhanced by adopting Pass/Fail grades.
8. Mr Clinton Li shared his experience that it was not easy to bond with students in an informal way, and it would be much harder when using the formal way. Prof Woo agreed that the new framework might not be perfect but could be a platform for enhancing the current program in a better way. The Chair appreciated members' sharing the experience from student side. It could be a co-effort between the faculty and students in running the HMW courses.
9. Dr Benjamin Leung wondered if the courses under UxOP would adopt Pass/Fail grades since it is hard to measure the experience. Prof Woo shared that the grading system of UxOP was still under discussion. Prof King Chow supplemented that the direction to reduce the emphasis on grade was shared by School Deans. Prof Pedro Sander shared his experience in Europe that students were doing well with the Pass/Fail grades with the possibilities for awards/ rewarding in between.
10. The Chair concluded that the new framework emphasized the competencies and building of attributes for lifelong perspective rather than grades. It would be much appreciated if the members could share the core philosophy with students. The Chair also wondered if forums would be arranged for the key stakeholders. Prof Woo shared that he planned to organize a forum with the current cohort in June. The Chair also suggested organizing an overview for new students after the registration.

(Prof Tim Woo, Ms Rufina Wong and Mr Ricky Yeung were excused from the meeting. Prof Frank Lam joined.)

Brief summary on new UG Hall Allocation Policy

11. Prof Frank Lam briefly introduced the new UG Hall Allocation Policy (to be finalized) effective from 2023-24. The Task Force started reviewing the current policy in March 2021, as the current policy had been used for 3-4 years and an additional 1551 bed spaces would be available for UG

from Fall 2023. The new policy aimed at streamlining the process and providing hall spaces to students in need. The proposed policy will offer a full year to all Year 1 students and separate the pools for local and non-local/ NHB students. The proposed Hall Point System will calculate the leadership and contribution of current academic year (30%) and coming academic year (70%) as well as the outstanding achievement at City level or above representing HKUST/ HKSAR/ home countries in the previous year.

12. Mr Clinton Li commented that the use of HKeMobility to calculate hall point may not be realistic as it recommends the fastest route by traveling on expensive transportation at inconvenient time. Prof Lam explained that the Task Force tried to minimize the discrepancy by calculating the average of fastest way and cheapest way in HKeMobility and comparing with Google map.
13. Mr Clinton Li also commented that students have negative feelings about the cancellation of hall spaces for student groups and how would SHRLO promote the new policy. Prof Lam shared that the Task Force has collected feedback through survey of about 1000 students, task group meetings with local and non-local students, as well as inviting all students to join the online consultations. It is expected that the new policy could strike a balance between home distance, engagement, leadership and outstanding performance.
14. Prof Yaping Gong inquired about the rationale behind the lottery arrangement. Prof Lam explained that the lottery arrangement (about 10-12%) would offer a chance for non-local students, particularly those in Year 3 & 4, who were not leaders and did not engage in any activities but focused on study to get hall spaces.
15. Prof Yaping Gong further asked if the 5500 hall spaces included the new halls under construction. Prof Lam clarified that the 10 halls provided 4500 bed spaces, and an additional 1551 bed spaces would be available when the 3 new halls are ready in Fall 2023. It is estimated that 1 hall with about 500 bed spaces (10%) needs to undergo renovation, therefore about 5500 bed spaces would be available at that time.
16. The Chair confirmed with Prof Lam that the vacancies of hall tutors would be increased since there are more UG Halls. The Chair invited the PG representatives to share with their classmates who have passion to work with UGs to consider for the tutor positions.
17. The Chair echoed Mr Clinton Li's suggestion on promoting the new policy. In addition to engaging students in the survey and consultations, the dissemination of the information and the transparent communication with students are also important, as it would help to narrow the gap in the expectation between UGs and Hall Management and avoid potential conflicts. Prof Lam shared that FAQs, inquiries raised in the public consultations and calculation of hall points are available in the website.
18. Dr Benjamin Leung asked if a study-focused local student with poor living conditions has a chance to get a hall space since the lottery is not available for local students. Prof Lam explained that it is difficult to evaluate the hardship in living condition, these cases would be reviewed by the Hall Selection Committee consisting of both faculty and student representatives.

19. Prof King Chow clarified that the original intention of government funding for building halls was to offer convenience to those who travelled a long way to the University. Since the University wanted to encourage diversity and campus activities, some weight was put on students' participation while travel distance was still the primary principle and carried a large portion of weight.
20. Prof King Chow supplemented that the colleagues with no personal interest in housing and no involvement in hall allocation were invited to the consultation process and formation of the committee, in order to take an objective view on how to cater a broad spectrum of students with needs. He encouraged members to take the position of outsider's view to look at the fairness when the new policy rolled out.
(Prof Frank Lam was excused from the meeting. Ms Melissa Megan joined.)

Update from Community for Enhancing Intercultural Learning Experience

21. Ms Melissa Megan shared the Community for Enhancing Intercultural Learning Experience Project with the members. The mission of the project was to contribute to existing structure in order to foster inclusiveness and enhance students' intercultural learning experiences. She also shared some feedback from participants in the open dialogue and LGBTQ+ event.
22. The Chair inquired how many students were outreached. Ms Megan clarified that it was a community of staff and some events involved students. The community of practice was funded by CEI which brought together faculty and staff to promote intercultural experience. A film festival, one of the biggest events that might attract more students and staff, was eventually postponed.
23. Miss Wing Sze Lui suggested to help international students to integrate into the community by offering Cantonese classes, local culture and local slang activities, as her international friends have difficulties in joining certain organizations and language seemed to be the biggest barrier. Ms Megan agreed that language is the biggest barrier. Students teaching students Cantonese as well as culture would be a nice idea.
24. Dr Benjamin Leung asked if there would be any flagship program to get more involvement and to achieve the change of mindset. Ms Megan shared that the film festival and a half day event were postponed due to pandemic, which are expected to involve about 100 students. She would review the membership and the representation across the university in different schools, and explore how to filter into different areas of the university.
25. Mr Clinton Li asked if there was any program to help local and non-local students to connect and get to know each other. Ms Megan clarified that the concept of intercultural competence is not only about the difference between local and non-local but the ability to interact across any kind of difference. Ms Megan expressed that there is always competition of space to promote the interaction among different kind of students. For example, the co-creation project "Yam Cha Tang" needs a place for people to come together, listen and interact with each other. A project

organizer suggested having a mobile “Yam Cha Tang” and Ms Megan believed that the concept of the project is more important than space. Prof King Chow updated that there was a discussion of converting Art Hall to “Yam Cha Tang” and bringing up another vendor in addition to Starbucks to serve in that area.

26. Mr De Juan Teh shared his experience of joining the Peer Mentor Program which helped PG to get connected with UG and go beyond academic. Ms Megan was quite surprised that the PG were feeling lack of belonging and wanted more interaction with UG and agreed that it would be positive from both perspectives.
27. The Chair suggested Ms Megan to consider using the halls as a platform to engage different residents, as well as the HMW of the New Common Core Program to outreach to more students. Ms Megan is interested to the HMW course and she has worked with DSTO to offer a workshop related to the strength in diversity.
28. Dr Benjamin Leung was looking forward to the opportunity for the collaboration with halls which could provide a physical location for international students to hangout and for a group of student to get involved and drive the agenda which would be much supported by the peers.
29. Prof King Chow asked for the proportion of different types of staff participating in past events. Ms Megan roughly estimated that there were more non-academic staff participating. Prof King Chow invited the faculty members to promote the Community among the faculty.
30. Prof King Chow suggested to clarify with PGs that they are free to take UG courses anytime while only 2 courses would be counted for fulfilling the graduation requirements.
31. Prof King Chow updated on the activities related to LBGTQ+. The university is working with Gay Games Hong Kong. Lectures have been held with over 100 students participating, there would be more lectures of the series and the mini-games would be held in winter. The open event, Gay Games, would be held in HKUST and other institutions in April 2023. The Rainbow Bird Group would be involved and they are in contact with Rainbow Groups in other institutions.
32. Ms Melissa Megan asked if gender neutral toilets should be brought up in the meeting. Prof King Chow suggested to take note of the issue, as the university is working on the gender neutral issues and starting with eliminating gender specific pronouns in documents.
33. The Chair hoped the committee meeting would serve as a platform for members to be aware of the happenings around campus and share with colleagues and peers.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10pm.