

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 47th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 3 May 2011
at 2:30 pm at Room 5015

- Present : Prof Karl Tsim (Chairman), Prof Kar-Yan Tam, Prof Roger Cheng, Prof King Chow, Prof Kristiaan Helsen, Mr. Sun Hung, Miss Irene Chau, Mr Johnny Ho, Mr Jack Ho, Dr Grace Au (Member and Secretary)
- By Invitation : Mr Tsang Ka Long (President, SU), Miss Kelsey Zhu (Internal Vice-President, SU)
- On Sabbatical Leave : Prof Charles Chan
- Absent with apologies: Prof Tai-Kai Ng, Prof Chi-Ming Chan
- In Attendance : Mrs Pandora Yuen (SAO), Ms Codana Chan (SAO), Mr Donny Siu (SAO)

Action

Welcome

1. The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mr Tsang Ka Long and Miss Kelsey Zhu who attended the meeting by invitation.

Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

2. Minutes of the 46th Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs were confirmed.

Student Societies Election Campaign in Feb 2011

3. Members heard a report on the election campaign and the chanting activities conducted by student societies in Feb 2011 (Paper CSA/47/1).
4. Members noted that during the campaign period, students were very cooperative in keeping the chanting time. However, some were found violating the rules quite frequently, notably chanting outside the designated areas and exceeding the noise limit. Sound level measurement showed that the noise level could only be kept below 90 dB for 1/3 of the time. There were complaints from 14 campus members, some of them had sent in repeated complaints. In addition, a total of 31 reports had been received from security guards on serious violations of rules. A faculty member had claimed compensation by putting up a big characters poster and sending e-mail to SU and departments concerned. Apart from verbal warnings by SU and SAO on the spot, written warnings were issued to those who had violated the rules. A total of 6 societies had been given penalties, in that they were banned from using facilities for 1 -3 months.
5. SU conducted a survey in Apr 2011 after the election campaign. A total of 962 students and 231 faculty/staff responded. Members went through the

preliminary findings. On the question “Do you support chanting to be part of student election activities in future”, it was noted that some 51% indicated strongly support/support. However, some members pointed out that the views of those 39% who indicated strongly not support/not support had still to be addressed.

6. Mr Sun Hung acknowledged the difficulties that SU had in enforcing the rules. He pointed out that while penalties and warnings to student societies had helped to improve the situation to certain extent, it was impossible for SU to keep all cabinets within the rules at all times. He said that since chanting was restricted to less than 2 hours, the concentration had resulted in high noise level because all societies wanted to fully use the time. He suggested to lengthen the chanting duration and that the chanting areas were to be further discussed.

(Members were shown a 2-minute video and pictures on violation of rules taken during the election campaign.)

7. Dr Grace Au was concerned about the control of the number of students in the chanting areas, and that certain societies were found having the same chanting areas most of the time. Mr. Sun Hung pointed out that students tended to favor the chanting areas facing LG1 escalators. He said the five chanting areas were allocated by SU according to society categories. Societies could compromise among themselves. Regarding the location of the chanting areas, Dr Au shared the observation that viewers in fact would follow where the chanting went. This was quite contrary to the thinking that the location should be visible and close to human traffic.
8. In discussing why the arrangements this year had not been working effectively, it was noted that SU had difficulties in monitoring the number of students in the chanting areas on the spot without cooperation from all the cabinets. Moreover, some of the chanters were not cabinet members and SU had no way to monitor their behavior. Regarding the noise, Mr Sun Hung said this was the first time that SU was to monitor the noise level and they had no previous experience. He added that in setting the noise limit, consideration had not been given to the background noise.
9. Miss Irene Chau commented that most students were neutral, though some complained about the noise especially during lunch hours.
10. In response to working out a proposal for next year’s election campaign, Mr Sun Hung expressed that we should listen more to different views, and conduct open forum on various options.
11. Prof King Chow pointed out that there was in fact ineffectiveness of this year’s arrangements. He suggested SU to identify the issues and propose ways and means to address them.

Action

12. Dr Grace Au urged SU and students to look forward and that there were always new ways and options instead of following past practice. She believed that in preparing the new proposal, SU would take care of the feelings of others and balance the interests of all parties.
13. The Chairman and members reiterated that it was important that SU should consider all scenarios and propose alternatives to chanting. New ways of promotion should be included in the new proposal. The Chairman asked SU to submit a new proposal to this Committee for consideration well before the next campaign.
14. Miss Kelsey Zhu said that SU needed to conduct survey and forum to gather opinions on new ways of promotion. She would work with SAO on a timetable for submitting the proposal to this Committee for consideration. SU/
SAO
15. The Chairman thanked the student representatives and in particular Mr Sun Hung and Mr Johnny Ho for their hard work in handling the chanting issue and their selfless efforts to implement the chanting arrangements, aiming at balancing various interests without undermining those of the students. He further commended their contributions to the work of this Committee.

Use of Sports Facilities

16. In facilitating effective use of sports facilities, measures including no-show penalty, eligibility and priority in the use of sports facilities, group bookings and proposed charges had been discussed by this Committee in previous meetings. Members received a report on the follow-up actions taken and the effectiveness of the no-show penalty, as well as further recommendations for consideration (Paper CSA/47/2).
17. Members noted that the Clearwater Bay School had been informed that charges would be levied on use of on-campus sports facilities for their PE classes starting from Sep 2011. The charges would be in line with the charges for use of sports facilities by outside groups.
18. Members further noted, in addition to the guidelines for advance booking of sports facilities as endorsed by this Committee earlier, a schedule of charges on use of sports facilities by university groups had been proposed to make the guidelines more effective and to promote more responsible use.
19. Members noted that no-show penalty was implemented in Feb 2011. In reviewing the statistics on no-show cases, members showed concern about the lack of frequent checking of no-show cases for some outlying sports facilities. It was explained that this was due to manpower constraints. SAO would try to enhance such checking and monitor the utilization. A further report would be submitted to this Committee in the next meeting. SAO
20. Miss Irene Chau asked why the fee charging system was for sports facilities only but not other venues such as student amenities or classrooms. It was

noted that because of heavy demand for sports facilities, it was necessary to introduce measures to restrict usage and to encourage responsible use. On the other hand, there was not yet a problem for other venues at the moment.

21. Regarding whether the proposed charges would impose any financial difficulties on the students, it was clarified that the charges were proposed for student and non-student groups only and there was no charge for individual use. It was further pointed out that the 2-tier charge system had taken into consideration the ability to pay and that the lower charge for student groups was meant to protect their interest. Student groups might also apply for subsidies for organizing events and the booking charges might be covered partially or fully by the subsidies if successful. Prof King Chow asked how much income was estimated from the charges. It was noted that as the charge system was new there was no past pattern for reference. Furthermore, the focus was not on collecting charges but on prudent and responsible use of the venues. As such, the income generated would not be very significant.
22. After discussion, the Committee endorsed the charge system and the new approval guidelines for advance bookings by groups for implementation with effect from Sep 2011. The Committee advised that ample prior notification should be given to the students and other user groups affected. The Committee further suggested that the income collected should be used for improving the sports facilities. SAO
23. Members noted that the Phase III Lawn Area would be reduced due to the extension of the Laboratory Building. During the construction period, some sports practice in the Lawn Area would need to be suspended. The erection of a safety screen to protect the building and access road was deemed necessary. Members supported that a Minor Work Request be submitted to FMO in summer 2012 for erection of a safety screen. SAO
24. In view of the general increase in demand for sports facilities, members endorsed the recommendation in restricting bookings of the popular sports facilities, namely the sports hall and soccer pitch, for any sports event to a maximum of three days a year. Members further endorsed the recommendation that request from new sports clubs/teams for practice in the 2 popular venues would be limited to low period only.

Backup venues for O Camp Activities

25. Miss Kelsey Zhu expressed the need to have backup venues for O Camp activities scheduled in outdoor facilities in view of uncertain weather conditions. Members noted that it was a matter of resource constraint. With limited supply and heavy demand from different user groups, back up venues might result in facilities being left idle, thus affecting the privilege of use by other groups. It was further noted that bookings by O Camps already had overriding priority over others. Members therefore advised SU and student societies to review their need for backup venues and that they

should explore other contingency plans to prepare for bad weather, such as back up activities in other more easily available venues, instead of holding up the venues which are in high demand. After discussion, SU was requested to work with SAO on arrangements which would not significantly affect others.

SU/SAO

Student Enrichment Activities Fund

26. Members heard a report from Mrs Pandora Yuen on the administration of the Fund and noted that 19 applications had been received for the First Round in Fall and 11 applications for the Second Round in Spring. In assessing the applications, the Selection Panel selected 16 projects in the First Round and 8 projects in the Second Round for various amounts of subsidies. In the Second Round exercise, the Selection Panel, based on past pattern and experience, reviewed the funding guidelines and agreed to adopt a new set of guidelines. The new guidelines were used in assessing the applications in the Second Round and would be used in the future.
27. Prof Roger Cheng observed that the amount awarded in the Second Round seemed to be on the low side. The Chairman also showed concern about the proper use of the funds. Members were assured that the assessment process had been fair and prudent, and very often the SEA Fund Panel members would try to be less generous than they had wished, for reasons of responsible use of public money. It was further explained that the lower amount in the Second Round was mainly because of the actual need of the projects.

REDBird Award Program

28. Members received a report on the REDbird Award Program by Dr Grace Au and noted that a Panel had been set up to assess the ePortfolios from the REDbird Award applicants. Interviews for the Gold/Silver Award applicants had been held while that for Bronze was scheduled for the next few days. Members noted that the success rate was about 50%.

Counter Areas in the Academic Concourse

29. Mr. Sun Hung pointed out that due to the renovation of LG5 canteen, promotion counters there had to be closed. As a result, students had to look for other space for promotion and some crowded over the Coffee Shop and the nearby areas. There had been complaints over this situation as it was affecting the normal Coffee Shop users. SU was advised to work with SAO to improve the situation.

SU/SAO

(There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm)