

Committee on Student Affairs

Minutes of the 53rd Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs held on 24 Apr 2013 at 1:15pm at Room 3574 (Lifts 27-28).

- Present : Prof Karl Tsim (Chairman), Prof Agnes Ku, Prof Christopher Leung, Prof Lam-Lung Yeung, Prof Stanley Lau, Prof Kevin Tam, Miss Irene Chau, Mrs Pandora Yuen (Member and Secretary)
- By Invitation : Mr Sam Shek, President, HKUSTSU (Incoming)
Mr Garlic Hsuen, Council Chairperson, HKUSTSU Council (Outgoing)
Mr Kenneth Chan, Council Secretary, HKUSTSU (Incoming)
- Absent with apologies: Prof Kar-Yan Tam, Prof Kristiaan Helsen, Mr Ferris Chung, Mr Jethro Wong, Miss Louise Pang
- In Attendance : Miss Theresa Leung (SAO), Mr Donny Siu (SAO), Ms Grace Ling (SAO), Ms Daisy Kwan (SAO)

Action

Welcome

1. The Chairman welcomed new members – Prof Agnes Ku, Prof Christopher Leung, Prof Lam-Lung Yeung, and SU representatives in attendance by invitation – Mr Sam Shek, Mr Garlic Hsuen and Mr Kenneth Chan.

Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

2. Minutes of the 52nd Meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs were confirmed.

Report and Suggestions from Task Force on Use of Campus Public Space

Background

3. Members heard a report from Mr Donny Siu on the Task Force's meeting on 7 Feb 2013 that outlined key concerns of stakeholders, common understanding and follow-up actions (CSA/53/1). It was also reported that administrative offices had started reviewing booking procedures and regulations for further fine-tuning. Another meeting would be held upon receiving CSA's comments.
4. The Chairman invited Mr Siu to provide further background to new committee members. Mr Siu shared that, due to inappropriate use of limited campus space by different users, some campus users (departments and students alike) reported irresponsible/ ineffective use of some spaces and illegitimate occupation of other spaces and facilities.

Scope of Discussion

5. Mr Siu reported that the Task Force had defined the types of spaces/facilities to be covered as "communal facilities used by students". It referred to FMO managed spaces and facilities in the common/ communal area, such as the Atrium and the academic concourses, ARRO managed lecture theatres and classrooms, CSO managed catering areas and facilities, and SAO managed student amenities. The discussion, however, excluded sports facilities.

Shortening Waiting Time for Booking Confirmation

6. Upon the enquiry by Mr Kenneth Chan, Mr Siu explained that ARRO, SAO and FMO had been working to shorten the time needed for confirming a venue for

students. Some are also reviewing their operation and manpower for other changes. Ms Ling supplemented that SAO Amenities Service Counter had also extended advance booking of SAO managed meeting rooms from 1 month to 2 months.

Review of Waiting Time and Booking Procedure

7. Mr Chan asked if there had been changes to the 2-months advance booking system for large venues, e.g. LTA, which was a concern to students as the notification period was too short for planning of key activities that involve inviting VIPs such as the President. Mr Siu updated all that ARRO was currently reviewing the process and the issue would be further discussed in the upcoming Task Force meeting.
8. Mr Garlic Hsuen expressed the need to streamline the booking procedure of ARRO and FMO facilities and to review the endorsement procedure by SAO. For example, in the past student committee members could get endorsement from SAO at LG5 counter immediately and then book classrooms from ARRO. Now, students need to complete a form to Student Life Center, wait for 1-2 days before they could go to ARRO for booking.
9. The Chairman enquired if electronic booking were available. Ms Ling explained that, electronic booking was available for booking of sports facilities for individual use. However, for event bookings, respective departments would need to discuss with event organizers on the best use of limited resources, particularly when it involve major venues in demand.
10. Mr Chan expressed that, while Ms Ling's point for evaluation was understandable, students were frustrated for the time wasted due to not knowing the availability of venues. For example, they would only be informed that certain venue was not available one or two days after the form was submitted to ARRO. If student had known the venue was not available, they could have submitted forms for another available venue and avoid wasting their time.
11. Mr Ling shared that ARRO understood their concerns but needed to balance the student needs with the priorities set for academic use. It would also be difficult to put the information online as requests changed very often and the system could not be keep up to date. Nonetheless, ARRO had agreed to work with students on venues needed for their key events such as inaugurations.
12. The Chairman shared that venue booking had also been difficult for teaching staff, who had to change teaching/ seminar schedule with no rooms available.

Exploring More Usable Space

13. Mr Siu relayed comments from users that the three designated bookable zones at the Atrium were often used by departments for exhibitions. These exhibitions normally would not fully utilize the Atrium, causing wastage. The proposed solutions were:
 - a. FMO would apportion more and smaller bookable areas for more effective use of space.
 - b. The Task Force to explore with the Library for opening up their exclusive exhibition areas for department's official exhibition to alleviate tight demand at the Atrium.
14. Ms Ling supplemented that SAO had also been working with FMO for revamping the G/F area currently used by the book store, sports hall and art hall. The feasibility to include an exhibition area would be explored.

Accountability System to Encourage User Responsibility

15. The Chairman invited comments from SU student representatives on user responsibility and the idea of a quota system.
16. Mr Siu explained that they system was proposed at the Task Force meetings, that societies would be given a quota, resource limit for use within a period.

Hygiene Issues and Respect to Other Users

17. Prof Lam-Lung Yeung commented on the need for students to be responsible for hygiene and cleaning up after events such as pub night and removing the decorations such as those in the Seafront Cafeteria. It would be good to have a certain point system to encourage students to act responsibly.
18. Prof Kevin Tam enquired about the current sanction system. Mr Siu explained situation varied with different departments: ARRO had no penalty rules at the moment, FMO had some regulation but seldom exercised them due to manpower limitation, and SAO had some regulation and had put it in use.
19. Prof Yeung shared that the emphasis was not penalizing students but educating them to act responsibly. Ms Ling expressed that this would be related to better event planning, having students designated for cleaning up instead of all being exhausted after the event.
20. Prof Christopher Leung also agreed that students should act responsibly and with courtesy towards facilities they had reserved by restoring venues back to its original state. It demonstrated respect to other users and would be a good work skill for future career.
21. The Chairman recommended Mr Shek to take a closer look into the document CSA/53/1 as he would need to talk to student groups about the guidelines being established. Mr Shek suggested including some penalties after the reminders as student would need to know their responsibilities and respective consequences.

Measures to Encourage Responsible and Effective Use of Facilities

22. Mr Hsuen raised that some departments / offices had not been utilizing venues effectively, e.g. sometimes the Atrium was booked for an entire week for a 1-day exhibition, or bookings was not cancelled even if no longer needed. It might be necessary for the Task Force to review the no show issue.
23. Prof Leung shared that departments/offices might not have done so intentionally. It might just call for a reminder to colleagues on courtesy with booking and prompt cancellation of unused facilities.
24. Ms Ling also shared that the booking of SAO venues would require organizers (departments/offices/ students) to submit an activity plan to check if the duration and type of reservation were justifiable. Preparing the activity plan would also help organizers self-evaluate their needs and visualize their plan in a clearer perspective.
25. The Chairman commented that consequences of irresponsible and ineffective use should be the same for all parties. Mr Siu ensured that the only difference would be a higher booking priority for university events.
26. Prof Agnes Ku enquired if SAO would check on no shows. Ms Ling confirmed SAO would arrange for front line attendants to help check on usage but it would be difficult for FMO as they only have one clerical staff responsible for booking.

27. Prof Ku also suggested putting in place hangers/ railings on the top of the walls to facilitate hanging of large banners or decorative veils to avoid damage to walls. Prof Yeung shared this would be useful for the pillars in hall common rooms.

Committee Supported the Task Force's Proposal

28. The Chairman enquired with SU representatives on their views. Mr Chan expressed that SU agreed with the proposal in principle but look forward to further details from the Task Force. Prof Leung suggested for CSA to agree with the Task Force's recommendation in principle. Prof Tam seconded the motion. Members unanimously agreed with the Task Force's proposal. The Task Force was to further work on details of proper implementation and report back to CSA duly.

Review of Student Election Campaign 2013

An Overview of Past Discussions

29. The Chairman invited Mrs Pandora Yuen to provide an overview to new members about the history of the Student Election Campaign and on CSA's past discussions and suggestions to SU towards their monitoring of the Campaign.
30. The history of the Student Election Campaign, which students referred as "Pro P – Promotional Period", dated back to more than 10 years ago where new student cabinets greeted other students good morning. It was fairly mild and issue free, without need of regulation. With time, the noise and blockage issues increased as new cabinets strived to overdo the performance of their past cabinets. It started to get out of control over the past few years. Complaints were received from students, faculty and staff because it started to disturb normal university activities. CSA had been asked to discuss with SU on regulations for the Campaign.
31. Issues being discussed in CSA mainly involved safety and security issues and reducing disturbances to other normal university activities, including:
- Noise issues from chanting - As students grew to chant any time and everywhere, disturbing normal classes and other learning activities, regulation was imposed to limit chanting to non-class hours during lunch. It ended up being even noisier and more vigorous as students concentrated at one place during the same hour to chant.
 - Blockage of passageway at the Atrium – Situation intensified as there were more student societies demanding more counter spaces, competing with chanting areas and normal lunch hour traffic. Locations of counters were being discussed each year.
 - Recently, the use of big decoration items ("big dec") and their growing in size had demonstrated increasing student creativity while adding to risk to safety in relation to their structure and creating problems with storage and security. Although plans were made each year, the situation turned out unsatisfactory to other campus users and complaints had not ceased.
32. In Dec 2012, CSA heard SU's proposal for the Election Campaign scheduled for Feb 2013. In spite of SU's annual post-campaign evaluation survey 2012 continued to show that 50% of campus users support the Pro P and 50% was against it, CSA were supportive to SU's proposal in principle and requested SU and SAO to work on the details.
33. After the Election Campaign, there were plenty of comments and some criticism from students on some issues/ arrangement that they found unsatisfactory. The issues were published in student publications and the Big Character PosterWall. Some students would be organizing an open forum on 29 Apr and Pro P arrangement would be one of the proposed discussion items. Issues of discussion

involved some measures being imposed to moderate the situation, including:

- a. Use of barricades – It was not planned but deemed necessary as students were over excited and there was overcrowding and blockage to the escalators from the Atrium to LG1. In avoidance of campus users falling down the stairs and escalators, a meeting was held between SU and SAO to discuss rectifying measures, and the use of barricade was implemented with no objection from SU.
- b. Use of megaphone and horn – The tools were used to signal the ending of the chanting period amidst the high noise level but was taken by students as a symbol to disperse them.
- c. Photo taking and video recording – This was agreed by SU in assisting SU to take follow up actions.

SAO's Observations

34. Members heard a report from Miss Theresa Leung on the Campaign (CSA/53/2):
 - a. SAO worked with SU, providing on the spot advising and follow up meetings.
 - b. Some student societies started their promotion a day earlier than scheduled. The issue took a day to settle by SU, SAO and FMO.
 - c. A patrol team of 4 students was assigned by SU but they only showed up for 8 days. In their absence, SAO staff helped direct traffic with the help of 2 security staff to ensure clear passageways and campus users' safety.
 - d. The actual passageway was narrower than planned as students refused to move counters back to the original planned location. Line-up stands were initially used but were not effective and finally barricades had to be used.
 - e. A total of 7 complaints were received. The lowered number of complaints could be due to the lack of constructive results from past complaints. The relocation of the chanting area away from the concourse might have helped.
 - f. Sound level during lunch was 84 - 93.3 dB outside ARRO and the level outside the library was constantly over the 90dB limit. Sound level at the evening was at 88.3 - 91.5 dB.
 - g. There were plenty of violations but no warnings were issued by SU.
 - h. With many oversize big dec that could not be placed inside the counter area as planned, an area was arranged with FMO for their placement. There were also issues with storage and large amount of waste after the Campaign.
 - i. Also, as Chinese New Year was in the middle of the Campaign, students needed to move their big dec to their counters or the special areas for storage.
 - j. Chanting overtime during lunch session worsened over the duration towards the last few days. On 26 Feb, it went beyond the set time till 2:30pm.

Concerns Raised by Students and Resolutions

35. The Chairman invited Mr Hsuen to share concerns raised by students. Mr Hsuen expressed the key concern was the presence of many SAO staff at the Atrium creating an impression of SAO over-monitoring and intervening with student activities. Miss Leung shared that 4 staff were assigned to be on duty each day (2 for video recording and 2 for other duties) and Miss Leung was also around. Other new junior colleagues were present voluntarily to learn more about student activities. In times of blockage, they helped regulate traffic voluntarily.
36. Mr Chan shared that, the presence of SAO staff, regardless if they were there on duty or not created an impression to students that SAO was monitoring their activities and students were not comfortable about this.
37. Prof Leung suggested having SU conduct the video recording instead of SAO. Miss Leung shared that SU requested help from SAO due to lack of manpower.

38. The Chairman proposed focusing on ways that address student's concerns because issues would likely repeat in the coming year.
39. Mr Kenneth Chan shared that students were only expecting a team of 4 SU students and hence felt uncomfortable with the staff's presence. As such, next year, if it was felt that more people would be needed to regulate activities, SAO should ask SU to find more students to help instead of having their own staff to help.
40. The Chairman shared that the Committee had always wanted SU to take charge of regulating activities during the Campaign, instead of SAO, but SU had not been able to deliver as promised. The key concern would be to avoid blockage of passageway, bodily contacts and yelling to the security guards. CSA would need SU's promise that they would assume full responsibility of self-monitoring of SU affiliated societies.
41. Miss Leung was sorry about the wrong impression created with the presence of fellow SAO staff. Yet, when other campus users expressed concern towards the situation, they called SAO. Mrs Yuen added that, work need to be done to ensure safety of all campus users even when the SU patrol team was absent. Someone would need to act on the issues on site and regulate the situation. If SU could promise full responsibility in monitoring, SAO preferred to leave it to SU.
42. Prof Leung commented that any fellow campus users would like a passageway to get through to LG1. Campaign organizers would need to ensure a path for others to walk on. Students should also show respect to the security guard who were there to ensure the safety of everyone. SU would need to understand and explain this to others when making this promise.
43. Mr Shek promised that SU would take the leading role in self-monitoring of SU affiliated societies. Meanwhile, SAO would review the need for onsite support by university staff.
44. CSA looked forward to receiving SU's proposal next year for further discussion and deliberation.

Duration of the Promotion Period and Difficulties Faced by SU

45. Ms Ling asked of the possibility to align promotional period with polling to avoid illegitimate use of space outside the promotional period and more effective use of the promotional period. If the promotion period and the polling could be on the same week, it might help with the arrangement. Mr Chan shared that different societies had different arrangement and SU could not intervene with their arrangement.
46. Prof Tam enquired about the difficulties SU encountered as the discussion had been ongoing for years and the issues had not been resolved. Mr Chan explained that SU had briefed the student groups in advance but they did not act as promised and it was difficult for SU to penalize all societies involved as there were many. Student groups might have been under the influence of peer pressure and believe that louder chanting and bigger decoration meant they were better than others. It would be difficult to stop them. While some warnings were issued, no penalties were imposed.
47. The Chairman encouraged Mr Shek to conduct next year's event properly to ensure clear passageways and monitoring. The Chairman also reminded SU to speak with the Business Students' Union in advance with the completion of the business building. Mr Shek expressed he had discussed the issues with his Executive Committee and they would have a new plan that could ensure safety and security.

SU Proposal on Change to Stephen Cheong Kam-chuen Medal (SCKC Medal)

48. The Chairman invited Mrs Yuen to provide background to this item. The SCKC Medal was established by the University Standing Committee in memory of the Honorable Stephen Cheong Kam-chuen, founding Council Member and distinguished public servant. At the time of establishment, the decision was to award the Medal to SU President for his/her contribution to the student body. In occasions where there was no SU President, recommendation would be sought from the student body.
49. SU Council was proposing for alternative arrangement for the Medal to be granted to a student agreed by the SU Council. SU Council was seeking comment on the proposal, which would be put forth to the University Standing Committee later and.
50. Members heard a report from Mr Hsuen (CSA/53/3) who explained that the proposed nomination mechanism would be applicable in two occasions:
 - a. Vacancy of SU President due to resignation or removal by students due to no-confidence motion.
 - b. SU Council did not agree to awarding the Medal to the SU President.
51. The Chairman advised SU Council to include the time frame and respective parameters of the election exercise, e.g. nomination period, voting period and how could nominee seek support, into the document to increase clarity.
52. Prof Ku enquired if an ex-SU President or the current SU President, whom SU Council thought should not get the Award, could be nominated. It was confirmed that this would be possible since nomination would be open to all.
53. The Chairman advised SU Council to consider not allowing the same person to get the Medal twice but Mr Chan explained that, as the same person could be nominated as SU President for more than once, the protocol should not rule out the same person getting the Medal twice.
54. Ms Ling enquired the rationale for any full time UG or PG students to be nominated without requiring them to hold any student leader position. Mr Chan explained it would be hard to define what sort of position would count towards having contribution to the student body and SU Council preferred to let students decide for themselves based on the belief that this Medal belong to all students.
55. The Chairman advised SU Council to reconsider the nomination criteria which might be too easy and could attract many nominees creating problem with the actual voting. Mr Hsuen and Mr Chan explained that SU did not want to set the entry point too high since the annual general meeting could only be convened with a quorum of 100, they believed the process was fair. Prof Ku and Members shared the Chairman's concern towards potential operational difficulty that warranted further thoughts by the SU Council.
56. Mrs Yuen enquired if it would create the impression that SU Council was over powerful in overriding SU President for the Award without any condition and explanation governing the reason behind this decision. Mr Hsuen and Mr Chan explained that given the constitutional right of the SU Council to supervise SU Executive Committee and as the Council had over 30 members, they believed the decision would be a justifiable one.
57. Ms Ling enquire if SU Council would consider nominating the top five nominees instead of one nominee. Mr Hsuen explained it was just to follow the practice of having one nominee. Mr Chan added that the Council believed that the best method would be to let all students nominate a candidate instead of having a small group

decide and there were no better methods than one that involve all students.

Report on Integration of Local and Non-local Students via Student Activities

58. Members heard a presentation from Ms Ling on the results of a survey on Integration of Non-local Students in Student Clubs and Societies of HKUST (CSA/53/4). It was prepared by the Global Students Office based on face-to-face interviews with 50 of the 111 SU affiliated societies and provided insights to possible barriers to integration and student's suggestions for enhancement.

(Prof Yeung, Prof Tam and Prof Leung excused themselves from the meeting due to teaching/other engagements.)

59. The Chairman recommended SAO to send this report to School Deans as it might be useful reference in planning activities for local and non-local integration. SAO

Report on the Student Enrichment Activities Fund

60. Members heard a report from Mrs Pandora Yuen on the progress of the Student Enrichment Activities Fund (CSA/53/5). The Provost supported the Fund with an aim to encourage the organization of students activities and to promote community building. Response to the Fund continued to be positive with 46 projects being supported in 2012-13. As the Fund had been well-used to benefit students, funding was increased to \$300K this year to facilitate more student activities.

(Prof Ku, Ms Ling and Miss Leung excused themselves from the meeting due to teaching/ other engagements.)

61. The Chairman enquired if there had been increase in participation from SENG and SSCI students who were reported to be less involved in earlier days of the Fund. Ms Daisy Kwan reported that there had been more involvement of SENG and SSCI students as activities were mostly organized by mixed student groups with students of different study backgrounds.

(There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:29 pm.)