

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the University Steering Committee on Environment (USCE)
held on **Saturday, January 29, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. in 1/F Conf. Rm., Estate & Maintenance Building.**

Present : Professor Lam Kin Che (Chairman)
 Professor Chu Lee Man
 Dr. Lai Pong Wai, representing Director of CEPRM
 Mr. Louis Heung, representing the Bursar
 Mr. Michael Ma, representing Director of Campus Development Office
 Mr. Benny Tam, Director of Estates Management Office
 Ms. Connie Chan, representing Director of Student Affairs Office
 Mr. S.K. Lam, Safety Manager
 Ms. Sarah Keung Yin Sum, Student Representative
 Mr. Kwok Wing Fai, Student Representative
 Ms. Amanda Chan (by invitation)

Apologies: Professor Lim Wan-fung Bernard
 Professor Ho Wing-shing John

In Attendance: Mr. Jack Yung (Secretary)

1. Minutes

Subject to the amendments proposed by CDO to change the representative's name from Homan Chong to Holman Chong and other minor amendments in Item (6), the minutes of the 13th meeting held on November 3, 2004 were confirmed.

2. Matters Arising

Environmental Report 2004

The Secretary reported the he had collected the data from different departments and was drafting the report. He expected that the draft would be completed by the end of February when it will be sent to the committee for comment.

It was agreed that the report would be posted on the web and only limited hardcopies would be printed for distribution to concerned parties.

3. Meeting with the College Environmental Committees

The Chairman reported that he had a lunch meeting with the Chairpersons and the Secretaries of the College Environmental Committees on 24th January 2005 to collect their views on USCE and explore opportunities for collaboration. He summarized the views of the Chairperson and the Secretary and made the following suggestions:

- ◆ The four colleges can easily reach out to thousands of students engage them in environmental activities through college assemblies or hostel functions. The USCE does not need to duplicate efforts currently undertaken by the college committees;
- ◆ it would be more efficient to communicate with thousands of students if USCE is allowed to deliver a message, even if as short as 5 minutes, in College assemblies; and
- ◆ the Chairperson of the College Environmental Committee should be invited as the member of USCE to foster collaboration and good networking between USCE and college committee.

(For details, please see Agenda 2 of Meeting Notes for Members.)

Mr. Louis Heung agreed to invite the Chairpersons of the College Environmental Committees but he was concerned that it would be difficult to schedule meetings because of the increased membership. On the other hand, Prof. Chu Lee Man and Mr. Benny Tam opined that 100% attendance of the Chairperson is not a must. The Chairman concluded that he would bring the matter of membership to the University Administration for further deliberation.

The Chairman reported that he would have a meeting with the key committee members of the green student organizations of CUHK (Green World and Green Post) in the afternoon of 29 Jan 2005.

4. Strategy / Focus of the Work of USCE

The Chairman opined that mapping the strategy of USCE is pivotal in laying a good foundation for future works. He suggested that the strategy of the works of USCE should be re-oriented as follows:

- ◆ focus on the environmental policy formulation and framework for decision making;
- ◆ promote campus-wide environmental education and campaign;
- ◆ plan proactively on the large development projects on campus to pre-empt potential environmental impacts;
- ◆ differentiate the works between USCE and frontline offices such as USEO; and
- ◆ stop environmental damaging activities as and when necessary.

Mr. Michael Ma opined that USCE should focus not only on environmental issues on campus but also external factors such as air pollution and infrastructure projects in the vicinity of CUHK. The Chairman referred members to the terms of reference of USCE which does not include issues arisen from outside project but suggested he is always delighted to offer advices on specific environmental issues as long as such advice does

not conflict with his other capacity as Chairman of the Advisory Council on the Environment of the Hong Kong SAR. Mr. Louis Heung responded that if there is any large environmental impact caused by external factors, the USCE should give advice to AAC which is responsible for any external communication. Mr. Benny Tam added that EMO will contact EPD for assistance if there is any operational problem but added that some environmental problems such as transboundary atmospheric pollution from Mainland China cannot be solved even by HKSAR Government and may not contribute much to the environmental issues on campus.

Mr. Benny Tam concurred with the Chairman that since USCE only meets once every three months, it would not be possible for USCE to act promptly on issues which arise from time to time. He agreed that the day-to-date handling of environmental matters should be relegated to related departments such as USEO and/or EMO which can take all necessary actions to safeguard the campus environment. Regarding the stoppage of environmental damaging activities, the Chairman noted that it is one of the duties of USCE and he enquired Mr. S. K. Lam, Safety Manager, how University Safety Committee (USC) and USEO handles the stoppage of unsafe activities. Mr. Lam explained that the USC authorizes USEO to stop all unsafe activities in all workplaces such as laboratories and construction / renovation sites and the affected person can appeal to the Chairman of USC. The Chairman proposed that USCE can follow the same practice as USC, that is USCE can authorize USEO to stop any environmental damaging activities on campus. Mr. Louis Heung proposed, and Mr. S.K. Lam concurred, to amend the Terms of Reference C3 & C4 to authorize USEO to investigate complaints and to stop environmental damaging activities. Mr. Michael Ma asked whether USEO has a set of procedures and adequate resources, including well-trained staff, to enforce stoppage. The Chairman stressed that the stoppage of environmental damaging activities is stipulated in USCE's terms of reference and is the last resort only to be used only when there are significant and irreversible impacts. He further added that there is a significant pool of knowledge and professional experience on campus. The committee agreed that the Secretary will, in conjunction with CDO and EMO, summarize in the form of a paper, the experience and current practice of environmental measures related to construction and tree felling/compensation activities on campus, for deliberation in the next USCE meeting.

The Chairman summarized the discussion and members agreed that the foci of the works of different departments and units should be as follows:

- ◆ USEO will focus on inspection of environmental black-spots, investigation of environmental complaints and publication of environmental report;
- ◆ College Environmental Committee may focus on environmental awareness activities for students;
- ◆ EMO may focus on greening and conservation programmes of water and energy; and
- ◆ The Task Force on Canteen Hygiene will continue with on their periodic inspection work and report its progress to USCE annually
- ◆ USCE will focus on policies / practices / strategic issues related to the campus environment and recommend any significant changes in these areas to AAC and the University administration.

The Committee also agreed to recommend, at the appropriate time, to AAC revision of

the membership and terms of reference of USCE to accommodate resolutions made above.

The Chairman suggested, and member concurred, a list of possible topics for discussion in USCE in future. He also requested CDO to provide information of the Campus Master Layout and Landscape Plan to the members in future meetings. (For details, please see Agenda 3 of Meeting Notes for Members.)

5. Rescheduling of the Environmental Protection Week

The Chairman shared his vision that USCE, at this moment, should focus on formulation of environmental strategies so as to lay a streamlined operational framework and a solid foundation for the future. He suggested to postpone the Environmental Protection Week from March to September 2005 such that a comprehensive working environmental plan can be mapped out. He added that Environmental Protection Weeks or similar activities were already held in each college; the Environmental Protection Week organized by USCE needed not duplicate with College efforts and they could tie in special campaigns, events or projects/initiatives (e.g. solar energy use) of the University. All committee members accepted this approach. Mr. Benny Tam also observed that the number of participants had been declining over the last few years and he recommended some inter-college competitions be held to arouse and motivate students. The Chairman requested Mr. S. K. Lam to defer the budget of Environmental Protection Week 2004 to autumn.

Ms. Sarah Keung reminded the theme of university environmental activities may stress on society rather than campus-wide because she thought that the University has the responsibility to lead the communities to consider more about our environment.

6. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in mid April 2005. The tentative topics include:

- Environmental measures for construction activities on campus
- Tree felling and compensation programs
- Environment Week in 2005 autumn

7. Any Other Business

The Chairman reminded EMO to pay attention to invasion of Red Fire Ant when purchasing and planting.

Mr. Benny Tam reported that the renovation of administration building would be scheduled to after-office hours and holidays to avoid undue disturbance to office operation and EMO was applying a more time-flexible noise permit from EPD for the works.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.