

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 15th Meeting of the University Steering Committee on Environment (USCE) held on **Friday, April 15, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. in 2/F Conf. Rm. 233, Wong Foo Yuan Building.**

Present : Professor Lam Kin Che (Chairman)
 Professor Chu Lee Man, Teacher Representative
 Professor Chau Kwai Cheong, Director of CEPRM
 Professor Ho Wing-shing John, College Representative
 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

Apologies: Professor Lim Wan-fung Bernard, Teacher Representative

In Attendance: Mr. Jack Yung (Secretary)

1. Minutes

The draft minutes of the 14th meeting held on January 29, 2005 were confirmed.

2. Matters Arising

(a) Environmental Report 2004

The Secretary reported the he had sent the draft to the ex-Chairman, Prof. K. M. Chan for review and writing the Foreword. He would also send the draft to the Chairman and committee members for comment and give them 2 weeks for feedback. In early May, he would hire someone to translate the draft into Chinese. Afterwards, he would edit the Chinese version and English version with photos and figures. Then the report would be posted on the web and would be printed a limited number of hardcopies. The Chairman suggested that it is appropriated to release the Environmental Report 2004 not later than June 2005.

(b) Communication with Students

The Chairman informed that he had a meeting with the student representatives of environmental bodies on campus on 29th Jan during which students suggested :

- frequent interaction and meetings between USCE and student bodies;
- creation of a website and complaint hotline; and
- engaging of student bodies in running environmental activities.

In response to these suggestions, the Chairman asked the Secretary to contact the student bodies and arrange regular meetings with them on behalf of USCE every term.

For the creation of the Environmental Web and Environmental Hotline, the Secretary explained that these had been established for a few years. But Ms. Sarah Keung said many students do not know the existence of web and hotline. Mr. Kwok Wing Fai suggested that the hotline should be posted nearby the construction site so the students can complain the pollution without spending a long time to search for the phone number. The Chairman and the Secretary agreed with these suggestions and they will promote the Environmental Web and Environmental Hotline by university bulletin and web banner after the meeting.

Mr. Benny Tam stated EMO in the past years had provided assistance to many activities, such as 退宿回收, organized by the Green World. He pointed out that these activities can be implemented in a much effective way with student involvement. The green student body acts the organizer of programme; the Secretary co-ordinates the programme and promotes it by mass email; and department / office like EMO provides facilities, storage area and transportation for the student body. But Ms. Sarah Keung expressed 退宿回收 is currently conducted by the student body - Green World every year and she urged that the colleges should be aware of the importance of 退宿回收 and it is time for the colleges to conduct 退宿回收 by their own.

(c) College Assembly

The Chairman reported that he was invited to attend the assembly of United College on 25th Feb and the assembly of Chung Chi College on 8th April. During the assemblies, he gave a short presentation, just few minutes, on the work of USCE.

3. Environmental Protection Week

In the last meeting, it was decided that the Environmental Protection Week should be held with the collaboration with colleges in September 2005 to capture the attention of new students and to increase the awareness of staff and students. The Chairman suggested that the discussion could focus on:

- ideas / initiatives which will engage the participation of 4 colleges;
- projects / major developments that may be launched at about the same time;
- timing of the activities; and
- membership of Task Group to further consider the matter.

Noting the Chairman's considerations, members expressed their ideas on the Environmental Protection week 2005:

- Prof. John Ho observed that the attendance of previous activities was low. He suggested the activities can be merged to the weekly assembly, then the number of participation will be much improved.
- Mr. Michael Ma suggested the electricity consumption of college / student quarters could be compared and prize will be presented to the college / student quarter with lowest consumption in a year.
- Mr. Kwok Wing Fai said the annual electricity consumption competition is a long programme and it can only be participated by residential students. But the 外賣自備飯盒比賽, which has been organised by Chung Chi College, is a short term programme which can encourage the participation of all students including non-residential students.
- Mr. Benny Tam explained that it would be unfair to simply compare the electricity consumption of halls as each of them has different history and number of beds, for examples, the new building with more modern facilities such as lifts using higher electricity; and the hall even with higher bed number also using similar quantity of overhead electricity as lower bed number. Therefore, he stressed the competition should focus on the rate of reduction in electricity consumption. Moreover, the college / hall should be rewarded with certain percentage of saving as incentive.
- Mr. Louis Heung proposed that the USCE should organize an Environmental Protection Week with at least 4 prizes in different aspects. As a result, each college has a chance to win a prize.

Taking into the views of members, the Chairman concluded several prizes will be awarded for the college with environmental performance as follows:

- 最優美環境獎
- 提高環保意識獎
- 節約能源獎
- 最佳回收獎
- 環保成就/貢獻獎

Besides, an overall prize will be awarded to the winning college for motivation. The Chairman will invite Vice-chancellor to donate a VC Environmental Cup. A Task Group is formed to formulate the guidelines and the time frame of the competitions. The membership of the task group includes the Chairman, the Secretary, Mr. Louis Heung, Prof. John Ho and two Students Representatives.

The Chairman also enquired whether there would be environmental initiatives / major development will be launched in October or November. Mr. Benny Tam reported there would not be any special item at that time but a Solar Garden will be completed in July.

4. Environmental Measures for Construction & Tree Felling Activities on Campus

The Chairman explained USCE is the environmental policy maker of CUHK with just 3 – 4 meetings per year and he found it is difficult for USCE to take day to day frontline duties such as monitoring of construction activities and issuing of environmental stoppage orders. Therefore, he decided to define the responsibilities and authorities clearly, the details of which are contained in an information paper on Environmental Measures of Construction / Renovation Activities on Campus forwarded to all members before the meeting. This paper summarizes the current environment measures taken by CDO, EMO and USEO at CUHK and proposes a well defined responsibilities and set of procedures to safeguard the environment related to on campus construction and renovation activities.

Benny Tam explained CDO and EMO had discussed the Environmental Guidelines with USEO and requested the contractors to strictly comply with the environmental laws and the guidelines during works. Besides, EMO always arranges the renovation at offices and academic buildings to less affecting time and applies for noise permits from EPD if work is done in restricted hours. Mr. Michael Ma agreed environment protection is important during construction and he claimed that CDO had implemented the “Pay for Environmental Scheme” and requested the contractors to submit Environmental Management Plan before commencement of works.

The Chairman briefed the information paper clause by clause with the members. Several clauses have been discussed and amended as follows:

D.3

The Chairman suggested the Notice should be sent to the Environmental Officer of USEO instead of the Secretary of USCE before commencement of construction /

renovation works.

Then members discussed when the Notice should be sent before works. Mr. Michael explained that the Memo is currently sent to the related parties 14 days before commencement of works and accordingly he suggested the Notice should be issued by the proponent to the Environmental Officer 14 days before commencement of works. Mr. S.K. Lam agreed with this arrangement but he pointed out that this time frame would not apply to some emergency works

Mr. Kwok Wing Fai suggested that information of construction project be posted on a dedicated website to inform students and members of the University. He added that students knew nothing about the development around the Railway Station Roundabout Work. He also suggested that a message together with a link should be sent to the community of CUHK by mass email. Mr. Benny Tam said the response to mass email is relatively low nowadays as there are many mass emails released everyday. For the Railway Station Roundabout Work, Mr. Michael Ma explained the relevant information has been posted on the CDO webpage. Besides, both Mr. Benny Tam and Mr. Michael expressed their disappointment that the open forum was attended by a very small number of attendants. The Chairman suggested such information could also be posted to the University Newsletter to reach a wider number of the university community.

D.4

The Chairman suggested the Environmental Officer will prepare a quarterly summary report instead of monthly summary report to him about the overall work progress on campus.

D.5 & D.7

The Chairman briefed that the Environmental Officer will comment the Environmental Management Plan and conduct surveillance inspection. Mr. Michael Ma expressed concern whether the USEO has sufficient and competent manpower to implement these duties. Mr. S. K. Lam explained that the most qualified Environmental Officer was recruited at that time with relevant degree in Environmental Science or related fields, related trainings and post-qualification experience. The Chairman requested Mr. S. K. Lam to review the work load of the Environmental Officer and provide additional support if necessary.

D.8

Mr. Michael Ma enquired about the meaning of “non-compliance” in this information paper which may entail in the issuance of a stoppage order. The Chairman reiterated that the provision is in line with the terms of reference of the committee and non-compliance should include violating Hong Kong Environmental Legislation, Environmental Guidelines and the environmental items in contract. The Chairman also highlighted that such a stoppage order would only be evoked only if the contractor fails to observe the abatement notice issued by USEO.

Mr. Michael Ma questioned whether the Chairman in consultation with USEO, rather than the whole USCE, could issue a stoppage order if the contractor fails to rectify any non-compliance. Besides, Mr. Ma submitted that under the current building contract conditions, only the Project Architect and Project Engineer can issue stop order to the contractors. Prof. Chau Kwai Cheong and Mr. Louis Heung expressed that it is

difficult and impractical for USCE to call all committee members to discuss the stoppage with short notices.

The Chairman enquired Mr. S. K. Lam how the USEO handles the stoppage of unsafe activities. Mr. Lam explained that the USCE authorizes USEO can immediately stop the “Dangerous Occurrence” which is well defined by the Labour Department. The work can only be resumed after the related parties taking all improvement measures. He believed the same spirit can be applied to environmental stoppage can and he opined that this would not be abused as USEO must consult and seek the approval of the Chairman of USCE before issuance of the stoppage order.

Mr. Michael Ma cited Mong Man Wai Slope Work as example: if a party keeps on complaining on dust emission even no evidence proves the dust is emitted by the site, will the USEO or USCE Chairman issues stop work order. Mr. S. K. Lam said the USEO will investigate the cases and stop work by professional judgment but not by the complainant. The Chairman added he would considered all facts before him and his 10 years experience of serving as a member in the Air Pollution and Noise Control Appeal Boards of the HKSAR Government could help in making the judgement.

To decide whether the Chairman, upon the advice of USEO, can issue stop order on behalf of USCE, the Chairman put the matter to a vote. The result was as follows:

For	6
Against	1
Abstain	3

* Chairman did not vote.

* Prof. Chu Lee Man could not vote as he had left earlier.

The majority agreed to authorize the Chairman to issue stop order and he amended the Cl.D8. as follows:

“If the contractor cannot rectify any non-compliance within the stipulated time frame, the Chairman, upon the recommendation of USEO and having regard to all facts and information before him, can issue a stop order to the contractor through the relevant university office/unit which manages the project.”

Prof. Chau Kwai Cheong enquired who will take the duties of Chairman if he is on leave. Mr. Michael Ma commented the appeal procedure for AAC to review/revert the stop order is not practicable as AAC meets not so frequently. The Chairman asserted that the issuance of stoppage order is written into the terms of reference of USEC and he would leave the matter of appeal to the wisdom of AAC.

The Chairman noted that time did not allow the meeting to discuss the next paper on tree felling and compensation measures on campus and he proposed to postpone the agenda item to the next meeting. Notwithstanding, Mr. Benny Tam tabled a Green Policy prepared by EMO for members’ reference. The Chairman asked the Secretary to merge a new information paper on Tree Felling Activities on Campus with EMO Green Policy for further discussion in the next meeting.

5. Any Other Business

There is no AOB.

6. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in early June 2005.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.