

UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the University Steering Committee on Environment (USCE) held on Monday, September 18, 2000 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 126, Institute of Chinese Studies

Present : Professor Chan King-ming (Chairman), appointed by the Vice-Chancellor
Professor Ho Wing-shing John, representing the 4 Colleges
Professor Lim Wan-fung Bernard, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
Professor Wong Po-keung, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
Mr. Louis Heung, representing the Bursar
Mr. Wong Kui-hung Jeremiah, representing the Director of Student Affairs
Ms. Amy Yui, Director of Administrative Services
Mr. Vincent Chen, Director, Campus Development Office
Mr. Benny Tam, Director, Estates Management Office
Mr. Jonathan H. Amies, Safety Manager
Miss Chan Kit-man, student representative
Mr. Leung Chi-man, student representative

In Attendance: Mr. Jack Yung, Environmental Officer
Mr. Tam Hoi-pong, Green World (Observer)
Miss Frances Chau, CU Student Press (Observer)
Mr. S.S. Tam (Secretary), nominated by the Chairman

1. Welcome

The Chairman WELCOMED all members to the first meeting. Members INTRODUCED themselves to one another.

2. Composition and Terms of Reference

USCE NOTED the composition and terms of reference of the Committee (paper circulated). The Chairman STATED that the Committee had been formed after the Centre for Environmental Studies' (CES') Environmental Audit and Review Report prepared by Professor Lam Kin-che had been adopted by the University. The Committee also NOTED that the newly appointed Environmental Officer, in the University Safety and Environment Office (USEO) would be assigned to attend to the environmental aspects of the University supervised by the Safety Manager, who had the authority to stop any unsafe or hazardous operation on campus. USCE also AGREED to adopt the Chinese title of the Committee as 大學環境事務督導委員會.

3. Environmental Audit and Review Report

(a) USCE NOTED the above Report (papers circulated). The Chairman REFERRED members to the following areas/items in the Final Report in particular:

- (i) waste reduction, waste management and "Green Office Practices" (paras. 2.5 and 2.6 on page 30);
- (ii) shuttle bus service and smoky emission problems (para. 4 on page 35), with the Transport Unit already doing some good work;
- (iii) indoor air quality (para. 2.5 on page 55), even though such IAQ on campus was already quite satisfactory, except for older buildings;
- (iv) water quality (para. 2.6 on page 62), with potential problems in some areas identified;
- (v) air pollution (paras. 2.8 and 2.9 on page 74), though not too bad on campus yet;

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- (vi) noise pollution (paras. 2.11 and 2.12 on page 75), requiring a closer look, particularly as

University Residences were too close to the Tolo Highway and thus noisy;

- (vii) promotion and publicity (para. 5.1 on page 77), to project a good public image and enhance environmental awareness.
- (b) The Chairman further REFERRED members to the following important issues which were outlined in the Executive Summary of the Report, and USCE NOTED the relevant development thereof:-
 - (i) waste management (page1): currently plastic or glass not yet covered;
 - (ii) Dangerous Goods Stores (page 1) : already in use and operating quite well;
 - (iii) smoky emissions from University shuttle buses (page 2): drivers already turned off engines while waiting for passengers at the terminals if the wait was longer than 5 minutes, resulting in reduced air pollution; the Director of Administrative Services (DAS) also looking into other ways and means for further improvement, taking into account suggestions from members including those on buses using other types of fuel, and trapping of sulphur and related particles and not creating extra pollution;
 - (iv) energy efficiency and conservation (page 2): already a Task Force looking into the issue, but worth considering the possibility of not overcooling, requiring education and design of buildings (air conditioning systems), noting that EMO was considering organising an exhibition on energy conservation in early 2001; and that CDO was also looking into various aspects including provision for maximum efficiency in the design, with expensive equipment and the choice of systems being real concerns to the University;
 - (v) building construction and renovation activities (page 3): CDO attending to such activities; the Environmental Officer also to pay close attention;
 - (vi) indoor air quality, water quality, environmental quality (pages 4 and 5): CDO monitoring, with the University's sewage system well controlled and a closed system; unless there was the unlikely and seldom happened leakage, or sewage would not be directly poured into the Tolo Harbour, except where there was contamination of the Yucca de lac system affecting.
 - (vii) opinion survey and green office practice (page 5): too much paper used; most to be recycled but about 14 tons of paper consumed per month; noting from CDO that electricity consumption of the University already lower than a few UGC-funded Institutions.
- (c) The Chairman COMMENDED that the Environmental Audit and Review Report by CES under the management and supervision of Professor Lam Kin-che had been prepared professionally with a comprehensive coverage of all important areas for improvement, to maintain a green and clean campus.
- (d) The Director, CDO left the meeting for another appointment.

4. Environmental Initiative Programme

- (a) The Chairman EMPHASISED the need to undertake environmental initiative programmes to promote the message more effectively.

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- (b) Orientation Day for 6th Formers

- (i) USCE AGREED that the above function on Saturday, October 7, 2000 should

concentrate on getting the best possible students from the function instead of making this another environmental day which might divert attention from the original main aim.

(ii) USCE nevertheless SAW this function as an opportunity to promote environmental awareness, including:-

- broadcasting environmental messages;
- flying banners with environmental messages;
- making available recycling bins with environmental messages on;
- clearly promoting the diesel oxidation catalysts installed in some University buses;
- impressing upon visitors and students on that day to keep the environment clean and tidy and the good effect of studying and working in an environmentally friendly place;
- exploring whether Units/Colleges would turn off unnecessary lighting and/or air conditioning, particularly in the hostels, to show commitment to energy conservation;
- recycling bins also to be made available to collect paper and materials students obtained on that day but did not want; so that the messages of "return what you don't want", "don't take more than you need", "place materials at where they should belong" etc. be emphasised.

(iii) USCE would like to request the Information and Public Relations Office to assist with the PR work of the above.

(c) Environmental Report/Inter-Institutional Safety Meeting

USCE NOTED that by late October/early November 2000 the University's 1st Environmental Report would be ready and it was also possible that an Inter-Institutional Safety Meeting could be held in the University. USCE DEEMED it worthwhile to take that opportunity to organise environmental awareness programmes on campus, which could include:-

- (i) broadcasting environmental messages;
- (ii) flying banners with environmental messages;
- (iii) organising forums/talks on environmental awareness topics;
- (iv) organising certain contests relating to environmental issues;
- (v) promoting energy conservation, with the savings to enhance hostels' future renovation capability;

(d) Culture Square

USCE REQUESTED the Office of Student Affairs together with students to consider organising some environmental activities at the Culture Square outside the Benjamin Franklin Centre in October/November 2000.

(e) USEO was requested to coordinate the above activities, involving members and students where appropriate.

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(f) DAS ADVISED that the mass dinner 千人宴 to celebrate Colleges' anniversary should be useful occasions to promote good environmental protection practices:- caterers to follow Ordinances relating to environment; to avoid any food/grease entering the drainage system without proper treatment or handling; proper garbage disposal and collection; use of re-usable

utensils more than disposable chopsticks and paper cups, the latter not being environmentally friendly.

- (g) DAS left the meeting for another meeting.

5. General Education

USCE NOTED the importance of education and promotion to the long-term commitment on environmental protection, and AGREED with the Chairman on the need to design some General Education courses on environment for the Colleges and the University. The Chairman would contact the Director of University General Education to explore the possibility of doing that, and of organising talks on the same for the campus community.

6. Sub-Committees

- (a) USCE APPOINTED the following Task Force/Action Team to attend to and take follow-up action on environmental improvement on campus:-

- (i) Task Force to Improve on Environmental Black Spots:-

Convener: Environmental Officer
Members: 2 representatives from EMO
1 to 2 student representatives

- (ii) Canteen Hygiene Action Team

Convener: Canteen Service Officer
Members: 1 representative from USEO knowledgeable in food hygiene and technology
1 representative from EMO
1 to 2 student representatives

- (iii) Air Pollution Action Team

Convener: Professor Jimmy Yu Chai-mei
Members: 1 representative from USEO with instruments for measuring air quality
1 representative from CDO
1 representative from the Transport Unit
1 to 2 student representatives

- (b) As EMO had been handling waste reduction and waste disposal matters, there was no need to appoint a Waste Reduction Sub-committee for the time being.
- (c) USCE AGREED that there was no need to form a Coordinating Committee on education and promotion in the Colleges, which should be encouraged to carry on with their own activities and projects for good variety and enrichment. USCE would be pleased to support and supplement the good work of the Colleges on environmental initiatives.
- (d) USCE NOTED that in January 2001 EMO would have a seminar and meeting with the Environmental Protection Department, and AGREED to consider organising some programmes to complement that.

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7. Work Strategy

- (a) The Chairman ADVISED that environmental initiatives should be sustained on a long-term basis and would involve a lot of hard work and commitment. Policy guidelines clearly defining our current practices on avoiding the contamination of environment were badly

needed.

- (b) USCE AGREED to the need to sustain the promotion of a clean and green campus, waste reduction, and recycling strategy where applicable, to bring in a healthy living environment.
- (c) As to recycling materials, USCE SUPPORTED the use of reusable food containers/utensils in canteens as far as possible, in the place of disposable items, with proper hygienic arrangements to ensure health. Further encouragement to patrons of canteens could include reduced prices for those who brought their own utensils, or a heavy deposit or a heavy charge on the use of disposable utensils.
- (d) EMO would help to conduct an opinion survey on environmental issues with the use of a questionnaire through e-mail at the opportune time.

8. Complaint Investigation

USCE NOTED its authority/duty to receive and investigate complaints on environmental issues and to recommend actions where appropriate, as well as to stop activities on campus that were in contravention with legislation or the expressed strategy and policies of the University on environmental matters. USCE would publicise this and would later review the appropriateness of installing an environmental complaints hot-line after a review of the work of the Sub-committee/Task Force/Action Team.

9. Meeting Schedule

USCE DECIDED that it would normally hold quarterly meetings, and that the next meeting would be held on Monday, November 27, 2000 at 2:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.