

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 20th Meeting of the University Steering Committee on Environment (USCE) held on **Wednesday, 17th May, 2006 at 3:45 p.m. in 2/F Conf. Rm. 233, Wong Foo Yuan Building.**

Present : Professor K.C. Lam (Chairman)
Professor K.C. Chau, Director of CEPRM (3:45 – 4:15pm)
Professor John Ho, College Representative
Mr. Louis Heung, representing the Bursar
Mr. David Lim, Director of Campus Development Office
Mr. Benny Tam, Director of Estates Management Office
Mr. Tom Fong, representing Director of Student Affairs Office (4:10 – 4:45pm)
Mr. S.T. Yip, representing Safety Manager
Mr. H.K. Chao, Student Representative
Mr. W.T. Yu, Student Representative
Mr. Arthur Ma, Campus Development Office
Mr. Jack Yung (Secretary)

Apologies: Professor L.M. Chu, Teacher Representative

Absent : Professor Bernard Lim, Teacher Representative

The Chairman noted that this would be the last meeting of the current term of appointment and he would try to finish all unfinished agenda items to avoid carrying them over to the next term. Before going into the agenda items, he firstly congratulated Mr. Benny Tam that EMO had won the Hong Kong Energy Efficiency Awards for the University. He commended that EMO had not only saved the energy cost but also educated the university community. He hoped EMO would continue with the energy efficiency programme.

1. Minutes

The draft minutes of the 19th meeting held on 28th April, 2006 were confirmed.

2. Matters Arising

- (a) Collection of Recyclable Items on Campus (Item 2(b))

The Secretary reported some colleges had already started the “Hostel Retreat” programme as some mainland students moved the hostels in early May. The “Green World” would start its collection programme in main campus on 23rd May to collect disused computers, electric appliances, CDs, batteries, clothes, etc. Besides, the University Safety & Environment Office also assisted in collecting the used discs and old batteries on campus. To promote the programme, mass email would be sent to all staff and student a week before. For the transportation and facilities, EMO agreed to provide upon request. For the storage, the Secretary would contact the Committee on Space Allocation (COSA) to ask for about 200-300 feet² space for the 2 – 3 weeks storage of collected items if necessary. He also raised that the mass email would remind that only the personal computers or electrical appliances could be collected while the capital belongs to the University were not applicable to this programme.

(b) Follow-up Actions on Sustainability Indicator Study (Item 3)

The Chairman reminded the USEO, which steers the study group, to communicate with the consultant to amend the report with reference to the views expressed in the committee in the last meeting and to share the updated information of the study to all members through emails.

(c) Bio-fuel for University Buses (Item 6 of 18th minutes)

The Secretary reported the USEO has directed the information of bio-fuels to Mr. William Au of Transport Unit. As the bio-fuel is actually using old cooking oil as fuel, the original mechanics of the bus must be modified. Mr. Au requested the technology supplier to provide performance report for reference. However, the supplier could not provide such data as their experience were in the modification of small vehicles. Therefore the discussion was ceased. The feasibility study would not be continued unless the supplier could provide the data to Transport Unit.

3. Evaluation of Environmental Protection Week 2006 (Paper 2005-06/003)

The Chairman reported the Environmental Protection Week was held in February with different activities such as Opening, Exhibition, Energy Co-ordinator Appointment Ceremony, etc. He was satisfied with the arrangement and was happy to see many colleagues participating in the appointment ceremony. However, he noted that the response to EMSD visit was very poor. Prof. John Ho suggested that the number of participants in the week this year was similar to that of past few years and the small number would be the same unless there are new ideas which would arouse interest of

the people.

Mr. Benny Tam stated that Phase 2 & 3 of energy conservation activities such as competition would be launched later but the target would be mainly the staff and administrative departments. Mr. David Lim added that around 20 CDO and EMO staff visited EMSD before and he suggested the visit would be much useful for the person in the related industries rather than general staff and students.

Mr. W.T. Yu found there were more staff than students participating. He suggested more effort be paid to attract more students next year. Besides, the location of exhibition boards on Cultural Square should be re-orientated to improve manflow.

The Chairman suggested February and March might not be the best time. Instead, September would be better to attract the attention of new students and to inform them the university vision in environmental protection. But, September would have a difficulty as many staff would be on leave in summer and that would affect the preparation works. Besides, in September, the Week would clash with the University O'day in terms of schedule and venue. Mr. Benny Tam suggested railway station piazza was a promising candidate.

4. Preparation of Environmental Report 2006 (Paper 2005-06/005)

The Secretary reported the draft was sent to all members by email and it would be translated into Chinese. Then the finished report in both Chinese and English would be circulated to all members for comment. Besides, he would contact VC office to ask VC to write a message for the report and he would also submit the draft to AAC for comment. He expected the report would be designed and printed in CDs and hardcopies in June. Then, he would ask PR to assist in distributing the hardcopies.

The Chairman found he had received a lot of environmental reports by various organizations and it was impossible to read and keep so many. To reduce paper consumption, he suggested that the University would only produce the softcopy of environmental report and upload it to the USCE and USEO webpage.

5. Periodic Report on Tree Felling/Compensatory Planting (Paper 2005-06/004)

The Chairman thanked Mr. David Lim and Mr. Benny Tam to re-submit the consolidated Periodic Report on Tree Felling/Compensatory Planting. He was content with the format and information of the report and he requested the members to offer comments.

Mr. Benny Tam stated EMO faced difficulties in tree felling under the pressure of university communities. For instances, they did not fell the falling trees near Pond Crescent and they only used a wooden framework to support the trees instead. He worried the trees posing risk to public transport and pedestrian. He explained that the problem was due to the staff and students did not trust the administrative departments. Mr. David Lim added that he was concerned with the University's liability such as Mr. Hoi Dik Chu, an alumnus who climbed up for a photo taking in a wet and rainy condition. In response to a groundless complaint of illegal felling of 5 trees, CDO had spent tremendous effort and time in investigating the case and proven it to be a false allegation. In actual fact, CDO used to save trees if condition permissible even authority approval had been obtained and was strictly complying with statutory requirements, i.e. DLO approval.

Mr. H.K. Chao agreed trees could only be felled if absolutely necessary but all works must follow clearly defined procedures. Mr. W.T. Yu suggested more user-friendly information should be uploaded to let more stakeholders know what is going on. Mr. David Lim expressed CDO has improved the communication with the communities by providing more detailed information on works description at site location and CDO webpage.

The Chairman understood the difficulties faced by CDO and EMO. He stated the tree preservation policy drafted by USCE had been endorsed by AAC, but it might be not too detailed to cover all possible incidents such as trees fallen during typhoons. He suggested it was not the right place to discuss the problem and he believed the newly formed Campus Landscaping and Enhancement Committee and the senior management could handle any soft spots in the policy in the best interests of the university.

6. Items for Future Meeting

The Chairman reported that he had communicated with VC and Pro-VC few days before the meeting. He found that they were supportive of measures to protect the environment of the campus. Therefore, he would foresee some environmental initiatives for discussion in future meetings. He further stressed that USCE needs only to focus on matters at the policy level with clear direction. Firstly, he thought the Sustainability Indicators Study should be continued; campus development should be directed by a clear vision and strategy; and there should be sustained efforts in energy savings and efficiency. Secondly, he suggested the connection between AAC and USCE could be further strengthened by modifying the membership of USCE. Thirdly,

he suggested the senior management to set aside resources to the concern groups to promote environmental awareness and initiate environmental works on campus.

Finally, he gathered members' view/input for consideration in future:

- Mr. S.K Heung found many guests praise CUHK possessing a good campus environment. He suggested making a benchmark with other tertiary institutes to compare the campus environment. He also suggested using satellite photos to compare the percentage of green coverage in the past decades. Mr. David Lim added CDO bought and kept aerial photos from 60s till now. Mr. Benny Tam raised that, since 80s, the greening of CUHK was mature and the green coverage did not vary a lot. Besides, he pointed out that the definition of greening would affect the results.
- Mr. Tom Fong suggested the role of student representative is very important. It was constructive if they can deliver the messages to the students and alumni so that any mis-communication and misunderstanding would be avoided.
- Prof. John Ho suggested that the technical works on environmental protection were mainly conducted by CDO and EMO. He was also satisfied with the steering role of USCE in the past few years. In the past few meetings, tree was becoming the focal point but he suggested effort should be paid on other works.
- Mr. David Lim stated that CDO constructed many pedestrian shortcuts and disable accesses such as footpaths, steps on slopes, ramps, drop curbs and disable lifts over the years. He dreamed of a pedestrian campus. However, he always faced criticism on building footbridge and slope shortcut even he had consulted all necessary committees before. Besides, he supported the chairman to ask more resources to sponsor environmental projects. For CDO itself, they sponsored some slope greenery research projects in the past few years. Mr. Louis Heung suggested our committee could co-operate with the Health Committee to promote healthy walking habit within campus.
- Mr. W.T. Yu expressed that many members of the university community had no objection to pedestrian campus but they were concerned how this could be achieved. He found the lift such as MMW Building really helped the transport within campus but the design and landscape should be considered. Like Engineering Building I & II, he found they hide the Water Towers and altered the outlook and landscape of campus. Therefore, he suggested the design of future development should involve the staff and students.
- Mr. H.K. Chao found the committee could really do something on campus environmental protection. He also agreed that student representative should

bring messages to all students but the duties of communication with alumni should be taken by their representative Mr. Li Kai Ming (李介明). Besides, the University has responsibility to communicate with the staff and students by issuing mass emails.

- Mr. Benny Tam stated EMO also took part in establishing pedestrian facilities such as alumni trail which was planted with trees and Chinese medicine herbs and installed with solar lamps. Besides, concrete has been phased out and new road paving material such as recycled glass and reusable paver blocks would be adopted. Besides, Energy Task Force would subsidize 50% cost for hostel to install solar water heaters. Mr. David Lim added CDO applied UGC's funding for installing solar water heaters last year but not approved; reapplication this year was being considered and likely to be approved for \$15 million funding.

The Chairman thanked all members for their efforts and contributions in the past two years. Mr. David Lim also voted to thank the Chairman for chairing the committee.

7. Any Other Business

There was no AOB.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be determined in due course.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.