

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the University Steering Committee on Environment (USCE) held on **Wednesday, 4th Oct 2006 at 10:30 a.m. in 2/F Conf. Rm. 233, Wong Foo Yuan Building.**

Present : Professor K.C. Lam (Chairman)
 Professor Michael Hui, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor
 Professor K.C. Chau, Teacher Representative
 Professor L.M. Chu, Teacher Representative
 Dr. M.Y. Leung, Representative from 4 Colleges
 Mr. Louis Heung, representing the Bursar
 Mr. Tom Fong, representing Director of Student Affairs Office
 Mr. David Lim, Director of Campus Development Office
 Mr. H.K. Chao, Student Representative
 Mr. W.T. Yu, Student Representative
 Mr. S.K. Lam (Secretary)
 Mr. Jack Yung (Under-Secretary)

In Attendance: Mr. Arthur Ma, Campus Development Office

1. Welcome

The Chairman introduced the membership of the new term and welcomed two new members, Professor Michael Hui and Dr. Leung Mei Yee. Then he briefed members on the Terms of Reference (TOR) of USCE.

With regard to composition of the new committee, Mr. David Lim noted that EMO's duties are heavily related to campus environmental protection and hence suggested that Mr. Benny Tam should be included in the committee. The Chairman agreed to follow up with membership matter with the University management with a view to re-invite Mr. Benny Tam back to the committee.

He informed the members that all related documents were open to the public as all confirmed minutes would be uploaded to the USCE website. He thanked USEO for preparing all meeting documents in the form of softcopies to help reducing paper consumption and asked the Secretary (USEO) to double check the language of minutes before uploading.

2. Minutes

Subject to the minor amendments proposed by the Mr. David Lim, Mr. Tom Fong, Dr. M.Y. Leung and Prof. L.M. Chu, the minutes of the 20th meeting held on 17th May, 2006 were confirmed.

The Chairman reminded the Secretary to circulate the minutes at least 3 days before the meeting so that the members could give their comment asap.

3. Matters Arising

(a) Environmental Report (Item 4)

The Under-Secretary reported the Environmental Report 2005 prepared by ITSC had been uploaded onto the USCE website. The Chairman suggested the web-version should be publicized to the University community by some electronic means such as web-banner and mass-emailing.

(b) Discussion with the University Senior Management (Item 6)

The Chairman reported that he had met with the university senior management in May to discuss the duties and functions of USCE and the next step of the proposed sustainability study. He found the feedbacks from the administration to be positive. The senior management was committed to allocating resources to environmental activities, using more renewable energy and adopting theme planting on campus.

Prof. Michael Hui reported the four colleges agreed to conduct theme planting in their campus. For the renewable energy, he thanked CDO assisted in applying AA&I fund with \$15M from UGC for installing solar heaters in 27 hostel buildings. The project would be firstly implemented in Chih Hsing Hall and Xueshi Hall of NA College to install solar panels on their roofs.

(c) Memo from AAC on Request for Funding

The Chairman reported he had submitted a budget in August to AAC requesting funding for USCE activities in 2006/07. He was pleased to report that AAC had agreed to provide the necessary funding for USCE activities and phase 2 of the Sustainability Study.

4. Progress of Sustainability Indicator Study (Paper 2006-07/002)

The Chairman briefed members on the background of Sustainability Indicator Study asking members' advice on the way forward after reviewing the progress in the meeting. Then the Under-secretary presented the progress report submitted by BEC and reported the BEC had proposed to launch a forum in mid-November.

The Chairman opined that it was very important to encourage participation of the stakeholders so as to collect their feedback. The Under-Secretary suggested communicating the indicator set to the university communities through mass-emailing and webpage before the forum. Mr. Louis Heung suggested the committee members should comment on the indicator set first. Then these indicators should be amended and uploaded to the webpage for public consultation to collect the input from wider community. Prof. K.C. Chau suggested inviting the college environmental committee to comment on the indicators. Mr. H.K. Chao suggested placing some boards in Cultural Square to attract more staff and students' attention.

The Chairman noted the constraints and opined that the consultation should be done despite there is no guarantee on the number of people participating in the forum. He suggested that the consultation could be conducted at two levels: firstly, the staff and students could be informed by webpage, emailing and notice boards to promote the key issues of the S.I. study before the forum; and secondly, other key stakeholders such as the related departments, four colleges and USCE members could be approached. All feedbacks should be collected and forwarded to BEC before the forum. If possible, a meeting to discuss the indicators with the BEC consultant should be held

Mr. Louis Heung raised that the revised S.I. report contained 11 groups of indicator and many associated sub-indicators and he found the objective was too large. He recommended focusing on some indicators which were important in tertiary institutes. The Under-Secretary explained the indicator set was already simplified and the number of indicators was minimized. He further added that it was unavoidable to develop different sub-indicators, for instances: the Waste Management could be categorized into Chemical Waste, Biological Waste, Construction Waste and Domestic Waste. Dr. M.Y. Leung agreed that it was scientific to clearly define the indicators but she thought that the community would be scared by the large number of indicators. If information could be provided to the staff to explain the importance of the data and the related workload, it was helpful to reduce their worries.

The Chairman opined the feasibility and practical of the indicators would affect the

future success of future reporting and sustainable development. He suggested arranging one extra meeting to discuss the indicators. Dr. Leung asked whether mid-November would be the deadline of the forum.

Mr. S.K. Lam explained the 79 indicators were actually not 79 as they fell into different key dimensions and could be normalized. He suggested promoting the simplified indicators by posters. He stressed mid-Nov was just a suggested timeline and we could be extended given sufficient interest.

Mr. David Lim suggested it was not reasonable for BEC to submit to the final report one week after the public forum. Instead, the forum was just to alert people awareness. Therefore, he requested a longer time to get feedback from general public.

The Chairman summarized November was not necessary a deadline and he suggested a meeting should be conducted to further discuss these 79 indicators and decide whether to keep and delete certain indicators. Mr. Louis Heung suggested the consultant should show what data did exist and who would be the responsible party of each indicator in the next meeting. He would like to ask the consultant to define green purchasing. Mr. David Lim suggested it would be easier if the consultant got the first set of data. Mr. Tom Fong suggested it was important to present the data in simple way to let the layman understand. The Chairman alerted members that we were not yet at a stage to collect data. The job of the consultant was to establish the suitability of the indicator and data collection would come later. Therefore, USCE could discuss which indicator should be included in the coming meeting.

Prof. K.C. Chau believed that the consultant was expertise in preparing the indicators appropriate to the university. But he found that the forum was just to educate the public about the indicator set and a longer time should be given to gather more feedback. Besides, the data providers and stakeholders should be interviewed to gather their views. He suggested an aggregated index should be to assess the overall performance of the university every year. Prof. Michael Hui opined during the open forum, we should not only discuss the indicators but also explain why we need these indicators and how to use the data. Prof. L.M. Chu suggested the indicator study and forum should go ahead asap if data collection was not involved.

The Chairman summarized one more meeting would be needed to let the related parties meet and discuss with the consultant. Then the revised indicator set would be communicated with the colleges and the wider community. The date and arrangement

of public forum would be confirmed later.

5. Environmental Initiatives as Outlined in the VC's Open Letter

The Chairman reported that VC issued an open letter to the new students on 1st September and to all members on 4th September underscoring the university commitment on building a sustainable campus, controlling pollution, saving energy and conserving the environment. Besides, he briefed members on the existing decision-making structures which takes environmental concern into consideration.

Prof. Michael Hui opined VC recognized the value the USCE and seconded the balance between development and environmental protection in his open letter. Besides, he explained the division of labour between various committees: Steering Committee on Campus Master Planning would specialize on the future planning of campus development; Standing Committee on Campus Geotechnical Matters would keep eyes on slope projects and vet and monitor the progress of every slope improvement project; Building Committee which was a project-base and ad hoc committee would steer on the issues related to building project; Campus Landscaping Enhancement Committee would stress on landscape and greening issues, and University Steering Committee on Environment would work on broader spectrum such as sustainable development study and monitor the environmental quality. To facilitate the communication between these committees, Prof. Michael Hui was the members of all these committee and would sit in their meeting.

Prof. K.C. Chau found the existing environmental communication was from top to bottom. But he suggested from bottom to top was also important and the different students green bodies should combine to make a stronger power, which would be led by the students themselves, to takeover the environmental education and communication duties among the students. Mr. Tom Fong opined that the student representative may discuss this issue with the Student Union as the Student Union could act as a coordinator to join hands with the green student bodies of four colleges to form a committee as a collective channel to communicate between the university and the students at large. Mr. W.T. Yu opined that different student organizations had their own objectives and term of references. Therefore, it was very difficult to combine them. Mr. H.K. Chao also agreed Mr. W.T. Yu that it was very difficult to form a league. Prof. K.C. Chau suggested inviting the representative from Student Union to join our next meeting, if necessary. The Chairman asked Mr. Tom Fong and two

student representatives to communicate with Student Union and to report back in the 23rd meeting.

Dr. M.Y. Leung worried the communication between the committees was ineffective. Prof. Michael Hui explained the communication problem would not exist as the decision of one committee would always need other committee's approval, for example in UC Satellite Building Project, the Campus Landscaping Enhancement Committee (CLEC) found the future outlook of the building and the color scheme were very important. They forwarded these views to the Campus Planning Committee and the relevant committee responsible for the design of this building and would request them to forward all confirmed issues and further design to CLEC and keep communication before the approval of tree felling application. Prof. Michael Hui also reported that there would be a newsletter, called Sustainable Campus, to inform all communities about the environmental news on campus. The Chairman was glad the new initiative would not only educate the staff and students but also resolve some misunderstanding.

6. Focus of the Work of USCE in the coming 2-Year Term

With reference to the TOR, the Chairman underscored the main function of USCE is to raise environmental awareness among members of the University and he found the most effective way was to "practice with what we preach". He listed some possible tasks in the coming years:

- Environmental / Sustainability Reporting
- Environmental Week if there is something concrete and worthwhile
- Establishing a University policy and management system, the Tree Preservation Policy as an example
- Policy on Green Purchasing
- Encouraging College Environmental Committee to promote environmental awareness especially in their assemblies, and in other activities with possible funding from the University
- Day-to-day environmental surveillance to be conducted by USEO;
- Measures to step up recycling facilities

He then asked the members to give their comment on the abovementioned works:

Mr. W.T. Yu suggested that funding could be granted for Chung Chi College to sponsor them launching some programmes to encourage the students walking around the

campus instead of using school shuttle services especially from University Station to college's hostel blocks of Madam S.H. Ho Hall and Wen Chih Tang. Besides, some new slogan and concept should be promoted in the Environmental Week.

Dr. M.Y. Leung suggested that the education value of Environmental Week should be strengthened and special theme should be promoted every year to enhance the general environmental awareness. Besides, she also agreed to promote a pedestrian campus and she suggested scenery spots and natural trails could be established to reduce transport.

Prof. Michael Hui reported that AAC also agreed to promote walking culture on campus and one of the agenda items in last meeting was to discuss how to promote a pedestrian campus. Actually, EMO had adopted a shuttle lift in MMW Engineering Building II to facilitate the walking between rail station, main campus and upper campus. Besides, gymnastic facilities might be built in alumni trail to encourage leisure walk.

Dr. M.Y. Leung suggested the campus environmental history could be illustrated by aerial photos in order to tell the communities that the existing greenery was due to the continuous efforts of university.

The Chairman summarized the next meeting would concentrate on discussing the SD indicators, preparation of sustainability report and the Environmental Week.

Prof. L.M. Chu suggested that the Environmental Week should be orientated by the students. He hoped that it could be discussed in next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Mr. W.T. Yu raised that the campus environment was altered since 90's due to improper development. He further pointed out that HKU had a direction in developing a low density campus whereas CUHK continuously increased the building density recently. Besides, he stressed that the campus planning plan would affect the university in the next 15 to 20 years but the students, being the main user of the campus, had no representative in the campus planning committee.

The Chairman thanked Mr. W.T. Yu for sharing his views. Even the campus planning was not within the TOR of USCE, he thought the senior management was eager to hear

his advice.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

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

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 noon.