

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
UNIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the University Steering Committee on Environment (USCE) held on **Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov, 2006 at 10:30a.m. in 2/F Conf. Rm. 233, Wong Foo Yuan Building.**

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Present :     Professor K.C. Lam (Chairman)  
                  Professor Michael Hui, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
                  Professor K.C. Chau, 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. Arthur Ma, representing Director of Campus Development Office  
                  Mr. W.T. Yu, Student Representative  
                  Mr. S.K. Lam (Secretary)  
                  Mr. Jack Yung (Under-Secretary)

In Attendance:     Mr. Patrick Yiu, Senior Finance Manager  
                          Mr. Barry Kwong, representing Business Environment Council

Apologies:     Professor L.M. Chu, Teacher Representative  
                          Mr. H.K. Chao, Student Representative

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The Chairman welcomed Mr. Patrick Yiu of the Business Office and Mr. Barry Kwong of the Business Environment Council to the meeting.

As the progress on Sustainability Indicator Study was reviewed in last meeting, the Chairman would like this meeting to focus on discussing and finalizing the indicators in the presence the consultant.

Before the discussion, the Chairman briefed members on the background of the study and reported that the Administrative Affairs Committee (AAC) had requested that future Environmental Reports be replaced by a Sustainability reports similar to those produced by other UCG-funded institutions. This is also a response to the call of the HKSAR's Council for Sustainable Development. The new sustainability report would to focus on the

University's strategic measures to enhance environmental sustainability taking into account the well-being and expectations of the wider community. Accordingly, the Business Environmental Council (BEC) was selected through an open tender process to conduct the study. Ms. Rita Leung, Project Manager of BEC, had been invited to present the preliminary findings to USCE in April and she had various consultation sessions with the key stakeholders in June. A draft indicator report was submitted in July.

The Chairman noted that USEO had only seven months to prepare for the next environmental or sustainability report and he hoped that the sustainability indicators can be finalized as soon as possible so that CUHK could start sustainability report soon. Members were drawn to two points: firstly, the VC's open letter stating that building a sustainable campus would be the future direction of CUHK; and secondly funding was available for the sustainability study. However, the sustainability study could commence until the current sustainable indicators is finalized. Therefore, developing a practical set of sustainable indicators is important for the success of future environmental/sustainability reporting.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Patrick Yiu for attending the meeting and would like to discuss green purchasing first. He hoped Mr. Barry Kwong could introduce the indicators to members first. He informed members that before the meeting, a revised indicator set comprising 79 indicators had been re-submitted by BEC and some comments had been received from various key stakeholders including Director of Registry Services, Business Office and EMO. He then asked Mr. Barry Kwong to present the criteria of selecting these indicators. Mr. Barry Kwong explained the indicators were selected with reference to some large organizations, foreign tertiary institutes, local and international standards such as Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI). As a result, 11 main categories with 79 indicators were proposed for CUHK.

The Chairman commented and members agreed that it was very important to prepare a set of indicators with the following criteria:

- suitable and relevant for CUHK;
- simple and manageable; and
- readily available.

Members further agreed that further indicators may be added in the future if they were not available at the current stage.

## **Summary of Comments and Feedback**

### **1. The Sustainable Indicators were leaned on theory and might not be practical to CUHK**

The Consultant responded that the indicators could increase the organization's transparency and help the public to know its performance. Therefore, while it is important to know what the institution can provide, it is equally important to understand what the public wants to know. The GRI was well recognized and could facilitate the comparison of environmental performance of the institution with external establishments. Secondly, the Consultant indicated that the data sets were divided into Lapping indicator and Leading indicator. Lapping indicator is to report data in the past while Leading indicator is on future data. If an institution just reports available data and ignore unavailable ones, the environment report would be meaningless. The main point, therefore, is to ensure that all data is available. Thirdly, he pointed out that the indicators proposed by Ms. Rita Leung have already been narrowed to suit the situations of the University. Some ideas such as supply chain management supplier evaluation, supplier selection, supplier training, client requirements, etc. should be included, if not now, then at a later stage.

Mr. Patrick Yiu commented the idea of following common practice was good and the indicators should be suitable to the unique environment on campus. He further suggested that those indicators readily accessible could be used first while the others may be added onto the list later depending on availability and resources.

### **2. Comparison of Data with Other Bodies**

The Chairman pointed out that the indicator study would provide the framework for future studies and they serve to reveal our environmental performance, but there is no need, or any requirement to benchmark with other tertiary institutes. It is up to the senior management to decide on how to use the results having regard to implications of the environmental performance findings. Analogous to the body check, the sustainability indicators would indicate the status of health but if, and the kind of, treatments are needed depend on the findings and prerogative of the administration.

Mr. Louis Heung suggested the report should clearly state which finalized indicators were readily available and how much further effort would be required.

Prof. K.C. Chau found that the indicators were general and quite easy to understand. He

asked the consultant to make it clear that it is a process to collect sustainability data in a funding organization and is not an examination to distinguish pass or failure. The indicators provide a tool to show our environmental performance. The comment was supported by the Chairman.

### **3. Setting Priorities for Establishment of Indicators**

The Consultant supplemented that the study should be on voluntary basis and it just listed out the parameters to be examined. He quoted an example that the award programme used by ACCA to assess other organizations had more than 450 parameters. As the resource of the University was limited, it is agreed that priority could be set for these indicators. It is also the intention that the University should not be confined by the resources and workload but should consider the study as a self-improvement exercise.

Dr. M.Y. Leung opined she could not judge whether 79 indicators were too many or insufficient but the selected indicators should be relevant and useful to sustainable development. She found that not all 79 indicators are related to all departments. If the indicators and responsible parties are clearly listed, it will make future works easier.

The Chairman suggested that due to time constrain, members should move on and define who would be the responsible party for the data.

### **4. Green Purchasing**

Mr. Patrick Yiu briefed members on the roles of Inter-institutional Purchasing Liaison Group (IPLG) formed by the eight local universities in 2004, in particularly in collective bargaining and reference tenders.

Mr. Barry Kwong supplemented that the appendix for proposed indicators recommended for Business Office had listed some examples to explaining what green products are with suggested specifications. He explained that the items were used as examples since they were used by other organizations. As there is no legislation on green products, it would be difficult for consultant to set an absolute standard for the client.

The Chairman asked Mr. Barry Kwong to set a framework which could assist the Business Office in purchasing the green products.

Members continued to discuss availability and suitability of green products on the markets

and whether such are suitable for the University.

The Chairman highlighted the importance of setting the criteria having regard to the cost and availability of green products. He suggested that since IPLG had already set criteria on green purchasing, the same should be adopted for the University. The Chairman further stressed that there is no passing mark in greening purchasing and the University should set a good example to the society at large in promoting environmental sustainability. He also suggested promoting recycled products to various departments who are those directly involved in purchasing.

With regard to difficulties experienced by the Business Office in green purchasing, the Chairman invited Mr. Barry Kwong to visit Business Office for further discussion.

## **5. Energy Consumption Data**

Members were informed that the University is using SAP computer system which does not provide data on LPG consumption without modifications on the system.

Currently, departments would require ITSC's endorsement to purchase computers, AVSO's endorsement to purchase AV equipments and USEO's endorsement to purchase dangerous goods (DG) in common uses. It was suggested that similar mechanism could be considered for green purchasing.

Mr. Patrick Yiu also pointed out that Business Office had no way to tell whether the product was green or not as some of the purchase items were just symbols on the form. Besides, departments can place direct purchase order valued under \$10,000 which does not need to be processed by their office. Mr. Patrick Yiu suggested that perhaps circulars can be issued to advise on green purchasing with further assistance provided to departments.

The Chairman suggested that it is not necessary to include all data in the first sustainability report and one could start with the simple and straightforward indicators should the study run into difficulties. Due to time limitation, Mr. Barry Kwong was requested to discuss the green purchasing with Mr. Patrick Yiu after the meeting.

The Secretary supplemented that no deadline was set for the study and the consultation was kept on-going. Therefore, the set of indicators could be amended if the committees and related departments found that such change is appropriated. He also pointed out that green purchasing was just a concept without an absolute definition.

Mr. Barry Kwong hoped the committee members could understand that BEC, being a private consultant, had a milestone set for each project. The CUHK SI Study project was scheduled to be completed in summer and it was delayed for a few months. He reminded that stakeholders should decide on the set of indicators as soon as possible if the sustainability report is to be completed on time.

### **Request to the Consultant**

Prof. Michael Hui pointed out that the discussions were focused on the normative and practical indicators. He asked Mr. Barry Kwong to give further advice on indicators that he strongly recommended even though such are not available in CUHK at this moment. He suggested that data not available now may be excluded in the coming report due to the tight timeframe, and should such data become available in the future, they should be included in the set of indicators.

In response to Dr. M.Y. Leung's question on presenting qualitative indicator, Mr. Barry Kwong replied that descriptive method rather than number or percentage would be used.

Mr. Louis Heung asked Mr. Barry Kwong to amend the table and erase the non-related parties in the respective indicators, e.g. removing Business Office from Greenhouse Gas Emission. He also pointed out that the word "Bursar" was wrongly used as the office name in the table. Besides, Mr. S.W. Lee pointed out by means of email that there is no more Registry in CUHK and his office had since been called Office of Registry Services.

( Mr. Barry Kwong left at 12:30pm and the members still continued the meeting.)

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### **Further Action**

The Chairman reported that the indicator study had been going on for 11 months and he was mindful that there was little time left for the next Environmental/Sustainability report. Given the University determination to build a sustainable campus and the availability of funding for the sustainability appraisal study, he hoped all relevant parties to lend support to this worthwhile initiative. He invited members to suggest how best to bring the initiative forward.

After hearing discussion of members, Prof. Michael Hui raised 3 main points:

- the definition of some indicators and criteria of Green Purchasing were not clear;
- the responsible parties of the indicators were not clearly stated; and
- not all data were available.

He suggested that the consultant should visit the departments and discuss with them further to resolve the above issues. The consultant should recommend to the university which data should be included in the coming report and which could be reported later. Request for additional resources will be considered in order to implement the recommended indicators.

The Chairman then asked members whether the sustainability report should be published next year. The Under-Secretary informed that the sustainability report may not be completed in time in mid-year if the indicators are not yet confirmed. The Chairman suggested the committee should determine the way forward and discuss the indicator set and the USEO should manage the study.

Dr. M.Y. Leung suggested we should try to collect the data and write the sustainability report at same time. Prof. Michael Hui suggested the Under-Secretary should spend more time to liaise with the related departments and he agreed to start the sustainability reporting.

The chairman planned to conduct a meeting in December to follow up the progress and discuss Stage 2 of the study. He asked USEO to work closely with the consultant for his visit to concerned stakeholders and amend the indicators as needed. Requirements for extra resources, if required, could be brought to the attention of the Chairman and Prof. Michael Hui.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.