

HKUST Staff Association
Chair's Report (2019 -2020)

When I started to draft this Annual Report, I thought it would be relatively short because the work and activities of Staff Association were much affected by events happening in the University as well as the society. My guess turned out to be wrong. Staff Association was not only very active in the Fall Term, but we also continued to devote much of our work and efforts in serving the staff community in Spring Term when most class and work activities were affected on campus.

I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to all the Staff Association Executive Committee Members, fellow colleagues, SA members, volunteers, University offices and the Senior Management for the unfailing support and assistance that you rendered to the Staff Association in making all these happen and successful.

1. Membership

We welcome all faculty and staff members of the University to join the Staff Association Membership, while family members, staff of HKUST's subsidiaries, and former HKUST colleagues may register for Associate Membership. We value SA members tremendously as you are the strong support and driving force to our work and efforts.

The Staff Association currently has 1,080 Members and 81 Associate Members. The membership of 1,080 full-time staff is slightly lower than last year's figure of 1,158. We are concerned that SA's membership rate might be affected by staff turnover in the coming years, as more colleagues are retiring while younger colleagues might have higher mobility. We need your support and hope members can recommend more colleagues to join SA.

2. Classes, Teams and Groups

a) Regular Activities

From July 2019 to January 2020, a total of 13 classes, teams and groups of Staff Association conducted weekly activities of culture, sports and religion under the leadership of staff volunteers. We are particularly thankful to Mr. Jack Chan (CMO) and his wife Ms. Ellen Kong, Dr C M Li (HSEO), Mr. Lewis Li (Library) and Mr. Wallace Tse (CMO) for their commitment and service as the class instructors. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, all the activities were suspended after the Chinese New Year.

Classes: Chinese Dance, Health Qigong, Karate, Snake Crane Wing Chun, Staff Choir,
Tai Chi, Wushu Nanquan, Yoga

Sports Teams: Badminton, Basketball, Football, Table Tennis,

Others: Staff Christian Fellowship

b) Corporate Games Teams

Staff Association teams were formed in Basketball, Bowling, Long Distance Run, Table Tennis and Tennis to compete in the government's biennial Corporate Games. The Games would be resumed soon after being suspended due to the virus outbreak. We are grateful to Mrs. Emma Fung, a former FMO colleague and SA Exco members for coordinating the SA Corporate Games teams joining the competitions. A big thank you to Emma!

3. Activities

Staff Association welcomed colleagues to a new academic year with the distribution of free golden pears in early September, and followed on with a variety of activities in music, martial arts and interest skills. Due to the societal movements and virus outbreak, a number of SA activities including Staff Christmas Party have been cancelled since December 2019.

In the Spring Term, Staff Association worked with HSEO and mobilized staff volunteers to supply masks to colleagues for anti-virus protection. We also distributed 400 free bottled drinks to security guards, hall attendants and some others as a token of appreciation for their working incessantly on campus during the work-from-home period.

For ongoing communication with colleagues, the release of 22 issues of SA News was almost non-stop with special thanks to the assistance provided by Ms. Jeddy Mok (DSTO).

a) Workshops/Classes

11 September 2019 Free Chinese Flute Workshop by Mr. Wong Wai Man (王偉明)

4 November 2019 Free Lunch-time Martial Arts Workshop "Snake Crane Wing Chun-a Hong Kong Intangible Cultural Heritage" by Mr. Wayne Yung (ISO)

3/4 December 2019 Experience Clown Skill Class by Ken Sir

10 January 2020 Free AV Production Workshop "Video Editing using Da Vinci Resolve 16" by Mr. Shek Kin Shing (former colleague of PTC)

13 January 2020 Balloon Twisting Class by Ken Sir

b) Staff Gatherings

18 December 2019 Staff Christmas Party (Cancelled)

6 February 2020 Staff Chinese New Year Party (Cancelled)

c) Campus Activities

- 3 September 2019. Mid-Autumn Festival free gifts of golden pears to over 1,000 SA members and colleagues.
- January/June 2020 Mega Sale (cancelled)
- 27 February 2020 & Sale of over 30,000 Masks to faculty and staff (2 rounds)
10 – 12 March 2020
- 15 April 2020 Distribution of 400 free bottled drinks to security guards, hall attendants and others

d) Community Service

- 15 February 2020 Visit and Performances at Haven of Hope Hospital (Cancelled)

e) Member Activities

- 9 June 2020 Annual General Meeting

f) Staff Association News

- 22 issues were emailed to colleagues and SA members covering SA News, Special Staff Offers and Campus News.

4. University Affairs

- a) The Chair of Staff Association was the elected staff representative on the University Council and also a member of the University Court.
- b) Staff Association provided feedback on transportation and other issues to the University, and nominated representative to serve on catering tender committee.
- c) The following suggestions by SA were accepted for improving the benefits for Long Serving Retirees/Leavers:
- i) Library Borrower Card
More flexible arrangement to offer Annual Borrower Card Fee for Long Serving Retirees/Leavers, and also allow their spouses to apply for Borrower Card.
 - ii) Sports Facilities Guest Ticket
A new family-friendly arrangement allowing Long Serving Retirees/Leavers to buy guest ticket for their spouse to use the sports facilities.

5. Non-academic Staff Review

Staff Association proactively shared the staff members' expectations and concerns to HRO and VPAB on the implementation of NASR as well as the suggestions for improvement. The major issues raised were as follows:

- i) Better transparency for the outcomes of Merit Salary Adjustments to facilitate benchmarking and performance improvement;
- ii) Merit Salary Adjustment arrangement for salary catch-up cases in the re-banding exercise to achieve performance differentiation;
- iii) Conversion of Maximum Salary Point from the legacy system to the new salary banding structure;
- iv) Enhancements to ensure proper communications and implementation in the PDR process

The University was responsive with follow-up actions and plans to:

- i) provide relevant statistics on the PDR and Merit Salary Adjustment results;
- ii) grant merit salary to the relevant salary catch-up staff members on the basis of their PDR ratings;
- iii) introduce a consistent salary reference across all salary bands to modify the current non-academic merit salary allocation mechanism which is linked to the salary maximums of the legacy ranks for the serving non-academic staff;
- iv) continue to review and improve the PDR system for its betterment;

6. Concluding Remarks

I wish to thank all the SA Exco members again for working so hard together as a team in the past two years. I am so glad that most of them will continue in the new Executive Committee for 2020 – 2022. It is indeed not an easy commitment given the heavy work responsibilities in our offices today. Last but not the least, I'd like to bid farewell to Dr. Lijing Zhu and Dr. Tony Lam, former SA Chairman and Vice-chairman respectively, who are both retiring in June. Our deepest gratitude for their contributions to the Staff Association and wishing them a very happy retirement!

Grace Ling

Chair

9 June 2020