

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
HALL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
(“THE COMMITTEE”)

Hall Retreat 2012

Date: 4 February 2012
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Venue: Assembly Hall, Sassoon Road
Number of attendees: 85

Run-down:

- 2:30 p.m. Registration
- 3:00 p.m. Opening speech (by Dr. Samuel Chu)
- Report on the HED Project (by Mr. Anders Wong)
- Introduction of Residence-based Academic Advising (RAA) System (by Dr. Robert Chung)
- Notice of the new terms of service of wardens and senior tutors (by Prof. Frederick Leung)
- Report on the incentives and background of hall culture reform (by Mr. Anders Wong)
- 3:45 p.m. Group discussion on the following topics:
- Evaluation of the HED Project
 - Residence-based Academic Advising System
 - Impact on halls with the new terms of service of wardens and senior tutors
 - Review on the number of inter-hall sports competitions
 - Problems on the reputation of HKU halls
 - Development of non-residential halls
- 4:45 p.m. Tea break
- 5:15 p.m. Presentation by each group
- 6:15 p.m. Open discussion and sharing
- 6:45 p.m. The end

Conclusions made in group discussions:

1. Evaluation of the HED Project

- a. Hall education courses were expected to be more diverse.
- b. It was advised that HEDO should organize open sharing sessions for hall education course participants so as to promote the intellectual events held within the hall community.
- c. Concerning the Student Project Fund, the following comments were received:
 - Joint-hall projects should be in higher priority to be funded.
 - Currently, the Student Project Sub-committee will review applications for this fund every month. A suggestion was made that the Sub-committee can review the applications once every two to three months so that the funding can be better allocated.
- d. It was suggested that the hall admission committees may consider students' participation in hall education courses during readmissions.
- e. HEDO was suggested to take notes and keep records for all joint-hall forums, meetings and activities. The record library should be accessible to everyone.
- f. Progress reports from HEDO were suggested to be done in a half-yearly basis.

2. Residence-based Academic Advising (RAA) System

- a. Site-based RAA System may not be feasible for halls that are far away from other halls.
- b. It should be ensured that those halls with a smaller number of residents will also receive adequate assistance from student advisers.
- c. The reward system should be reviewed as this may not be fair to students having contribution in other aspects but not in the RAA System. This system was also commented as unnecessary as hallmates do not need any incentives to make contributions.
- d. Students were advised to think whether the work in RAA should be considered as hall participation and whether it is an opportunity for inactive hallmates to contribute to the hall community.

3. Impact on halls with the new terms of service of wardens and senior tutors

- a. The change was thought to have large impact on the hall community.
- b. It was agreed that the development of hall education in halls is a long-term and continuous process.
- c. Six-year-of-service of wardens was deemed to be too short and it will slow down the hall education development.
- d. Wardens may have a wide vision on the development of halls and may pay effort on the reform on hall culture. Once the new scheme commences and their terms of service normally end very shortly, they may have fewer incentives working on the reform.
- e. The current recruitment practice is good enough to remove any warden who is deemed to be unsuitable.
- f. The term of service of the executive committee is on a yearly basis and resident tutors often rotate. In view of this, a stable warden can help pass experiences and wisdom from generation to generation.
- g. It was queried of whether this change rooted in the bad reputation of halls. However, it was agreed that this change does not help improve such reputation at all.
- h. Students' Union representatives claimed that no student representative was consulted on this matter. If the proposal is ready to be put on the Council, the University may be perceived to be autocratic. It would be inappropriate if the University does not listen to students' voices and hall students' associations and joint hall committees were suggested to discuss about this matter and voice out their opinions.

4. Review on the number of inter-hall sports competitions

- a. It was agreed that the benefits gained from sports activities are undeniable and inter-hall sports competitions help build up bonding in the hall. For example, the relationship of hallmates in Morrison Hall has improved after joining inter-hall sports competitions.
- b. However, it is not good to the development of halls if sports activities are over-weighted. Moreover, if the achievement on sports competitions is over-emphasized, the educational values of sports activities will be lost. For example, University team members were normally recruited to play in the competitions while other hallmates would have fewer chances to participate.

- c. The obstacles in the reform of inter-hall sports culture are as follows:
 - Hall representatives have no voting right in the Sports Council;
 - No consensus was reached among the halls regarding the reform;
 - If the inter-hall competitions are cancelled, the sports team will lose their goals, and will be dismissed consequently;
 - If there are only competitions for selected sports, intra-team conflicts may happen.
- d. It was queried about the possibility of organizing new competitions other than sports competitions, in order to distract students from the latter. It was commented, however, that this may not achieve the aim, but will only add more burdens on the students.
- e. Joint Hall Development Committee was advised to meet with Sports Association to figure out a review on the membership of hall representatives in the Sports Council.

5. Problems on the reputation of HKU halls

- a. Although hall experience in HKU is deemed happy and memorable, it is undeniable that the reputation of HKU halls is bad to the public.
- b. Students in HKU halls are thought to be poor in academic aspects and time management, and inconsiderate to neighbors.
- c. The reasons of this problem are as follows:
 - The quality of the current students is not as good as students in the past as the quota for the University admission has increased;
 - Hall community is not transparent to the public and there is little communication between halls and the society, but hallmates don't seem to concern about it;
 - HKU students in general have a wrong concept in hall education;
 - Hall students seem to have a weak understanding of what qualities a university student should possess.
- d. It was suggested that social responsibility should be included in the review process during hall admissions.

6. Development of non-residential halls

- a. The resources in non-residential halls were not enough, so that not many activities could be organized. It was suggested that HEDO can provide them with more resources.

- b. There are only few members in non-residential halls. Therefore, the amount of subscription fee paid to the students' association is not enough activities with good qualities to be organized. This created a vicious cycle which worsens the situation.
- c. The role of non-residential halls should be reviewed. Hornell Hall focuses on the relationship with other Universities and organization of joint-university activities.

7. Other points made in open discussion and sharing

- a. Dr. Albert Chau made the following comments:
 - He welcomed ideas from students concerning the new terms of service for wardens and senior tutors;
 - He reminded the audience that the RAA System does not focus on academic tutorials, but instead, it stresses on consultation in course selection and time management in halls;
 - He agreed that there is room of improvement in relation to the communication between students and the University, and CEDARS will work on this issue.
- b. Dr. Robert Chung made the following comments:
 - He suggested organizing hall forums frequently, like once every two to three months instead of only holding one annual hall retreat;
 - He reminded the audience to put their words into action, and he hoped that an action plan can be created after the forum.
- c. Dr. Eric Chong reminded the audience that students' associations in halls are very powerful. With this power, much more can be done instead of only inter-hall activities.
- d. Abel, a tutor from University Hall, suggested HEDO to focus on long-lasting work instead of ad hoc functions.