

香港理工大學教職員協會

Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association

Annual Report 2009

We are pleased to present the Annual Report of the PUSA Executive Council for the year commencing December 2008.

One of the most important events of the year is undoubtedly the assumption of duty of the new President Professor Timonthy Tong. Given his background as a senior academic from an American University, we had high hope that Professor Tong would bring in a more open and transparent management style resulting in a more harmonious management-staff relationship. During the past eleven months, PUSA officers managed to have a couple of informal meetings with the new President to discuss a number of issues. On the other hand, we were disappointed that he declined to be the Chairman of the Management/PUSA Consultative Committee, and the more cordial working relationship between Management and staff has yet to be realized.

Here is a summary of other important events of the year.

1. **Council representation:** Having representation in Council is imperative for PUSA as it is an important forum for getting staff voices heard where it counts. With support from Exco, Vice Chairman and incumbent staff-elected member Joseph Lee sought re-election to Council in mid-November. On 17 November, it was formally announced that he had been re-elected to Council unopposed.
2. **Research at PolyU** While PolyU was ranked top 200 in a recent ranking survey, we are however concerned that the University might attach more or more of its weight on research and thus ignore its more primary mission – to educate and train our youngsters for the Community. We continued to raise staff concerns and sentiments towards the Policy Paper on Research, which required academic staff to meet various research thresholds, including successful applications of GRF. The President agreed to revamp the University's research policy when the new VP (R & D) is in place.
3. **2008 HRM Model** In the summer of 2008, PolyU put forward new conditions of service (the 2008 Model) for all staff employed after 1 April 2004 with a view to giving PolyU a competitive edge over other local tertiary institutions in the recruitment of high calibre staff in the run-up to 2012. Unfortunately, the proposal was on hold indefinitely because of the worldwide financial crisis. As the economy began to improve from mid-2009, PUSA urged Management to implement the new model without delay. The President however told us that he would not implement the Scheme until economy has improved further.
4. **Revamp of the Staff Appraisal System** Our current Staff Appraisal System has been in place since 2006. It was an ungraded, tri-ennial health-check type appraisal, but the Chairman of Council and the President were of the view that staff appraisal should be annual and graded. They have formed a working group to review the appraisal system. PUSA Officers expressed their strong reservation for changing the appraisal system because it has only been implemented for 3 years and was generally well received by staff due to its simplicity. They were promised that staff would be widely consulted before the new system is in place, probably in 2010
5. **Management/PUSA Consultative meetings** PUSA officers continued to hold regular meetings with Senior Management throughout the year to discuss a large variety of issues on both with

the aim of resolving specific problems faced by staff, and with a view to simply keeping channels of communication open.

6. **Extension of Retirement Age** In the run-up to 4-year university system in 2012, the Higher Education Sector may need to recruit up to 1000 qualified teachers in the next few years. PUSA proposed to Management that it would be the right time to extend staff's retirement age from 60 to 65 in order to alleviate the shortage of teaching manpower. While PolyU has already a system in place to extend staff's retirement age, it only applies to Professor grade or above. Based on a survey result conducted on retirement age 2 years ago, PUSA opined that PolyU should adopt as a long-term policy that all staff members should be given the option of retiring at the age of 65.
7. **Other events** PUSA has continued to be involved in the Walk for Millions held in January this year. More than 800 staff, students and alumni participated in the Walk, raising more than \$150,000 for the Community Chest. Our representatives also expressed PUSA's views on a number of issues including the establishment of an inter-institutional grievance mechanism in the Higher Education Sector. PUSA also submitted a number of used-items collections over the past 12 months. These were all enthusiastically supported by staff. Over 800 kg. of used items, mainly clothing and electrical appliances, were collected in the exercise held in early November.

In the year under review, PUSA officers helped a number of individuals who had grievances against their heads of departments in relation to contract renewal or working conditions. We were able to help resolving quite a few of these disputes.

Prepared by Gillian Humphreys