

# **The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association**

## **Annual Report 2012**

The year 2012 was extraordinarily busy for PUSA as it was in the previous year, primarily as a result of new curricula- and human resources-related policies and their implementation, as well as concerns arising from contingency timetabling and venue plans owing to the delay in completion of the new Innovation Tower and Phase 8 development.

As a result of the enactment of the amendment to The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Ordinance stipulating changes in the electorate for the two elected seats on the PolyU Council from and by full-time staff, a Council election was conducted in July for those two seats. PUSA's two candidates, our Vice-Chairmen Dr. Rodney Chu and Dr. Justin Law, were elected in this exercise with a landslide victory. The total number of votes for them was unprecedentedly high. PUSA Exco would like to thank all staff members who showed their support for the Association's mission and work by voting for them. Rodney will be serving on Council for a term of 2 years, while Justin will be serving for 1 year because of the staggered nature of Council membership for those elected staff seats.

Dr. Virginia Cheng, who was an elected staff member on Council up to then, had resigned as PUSA Secretary earlier in the year upon her success in becoming HoD(RO). PUSA Exco wishes to thank Virginia for her great contribution to the Association over the years, especially in recent trying times, and we congratulate her on her promotion. Mee-Ling Cham, Assistant Secretary, was kind enough to take up the duties of Secretary in the meantime, and her position as the new Secretary was confirmed in a subsequent Exco meeting.

PUSA's relationship with Council has continued to be very good. Our elected staff members on Council are also serving on its subcommittees (i.e., Finance Committee, Trustee of retirement funds, and Campus Development Committee). The Council Chairman even invited all of PUSA Exco to a lunch meeting to listen to the Association's views on the very important issue of whether the University should renew the contract of its President. PUSA has absolute full confidence in the Council under the leadership of the current Council Chairman.

In the eyes of the public, PolyU would perhaps be remembered this year for the negative media coverage it attracted: (1) a full front-page "Apple Daily" report on VP(IEE) that alleged her non-timely disclosure of appointments and related incomes from external bodies; (2) the stepping down of VP(AD) and reports on his instructions to staff to make special examination arrangements for non-local/inbound and outbound exchange students who might have difficulty changing their travel plans; and (3) the stepping down of HoD(EE) and related news coverage on his possible infringement of the academic freedom of an EE colleague. For all of those matters, PUSA officers have been proactively keeping an open dialogue with the University's Management to voice the Association's concerns.

The PUSA Consultative Group meetings have been running well as a platform for the Association to express many concerns and suggestions to Management. One example is PUSA's objection to the proposed cessation of unlimited free UHS consultations for full-time temporary staff. PUSA Exco would like to thank Management for listening and for suspending the implementation of the proposed changes for the time being. The President's bi-annual luncheons with PUSA Exco have also been a good channel to get concerns and suggestions heard at the very top.

Moreover, PUSA officers have been meeting frequently with Management regarding the new 2011 Appointment, Promotion and Retention Framework for Academic Staff and the notable number of appeal cases after the framework's initial implementation this year.

PUSA officers and other Exco members have also been busy on other committees to improve conditions for staff as well as the wider PolyU community and academia. Internally, PUSA's Chairman, Joseph Lee, continues to serve on the Knowledge Transfer Committee (a Council sub-committee) and externally as Vice-Chairman of the Federation of Hong Kong Higher Education Staff Associations (UFed). Mee-Ling, Linda Liu and Carman Law have taken over as PUSA's representatives on the Catering Committee. They have been doing a lot of work since PolyU has been expanding its number of catering outlets for the larger student and staff population, mainly resulting from the double cohort intake in 2012.

PUSA officers have continued to be involved in CFM matters, from negotiations about the percentage in annual salary increase, to suggestions on improving communication between CFM staff and management, as well as evaluation and assessment of the current bonus system. It is likely that PUSA will remain in this intermediary role.

There are still plenty of ongoing issues that PUSA is tackling, and the Association would like to thank all its members for their input and help.

Prepared by Joseph Lee and Mee-Ling Cham

For and on behalf of the Executive Council,  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association (PUSA)

30 November 2012