

## **Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association Annual Report 2016**

This is the Annual Report of the PUSA Executive Council for the year ending November 2016.

In the Annual General Meeting held on 16 December 2016, 8 new officers were elected, including Rodney Chu (APSS) as Chairman, L.C. Chan (ISE) and Ming Yin Chan (BSE) as Vice-chairmen, Jimmy M.T. Chang (ITC) as Secretary, Carman Law (BRE) as Treasurer, Christine Yeung (BRE) and CW Chan (AMA) as Assistant Secretaries and Nora Man (AMA) as Information Officer. As Secretary Jimmy Chang retired from PolyU in June, Vincent Cho (MM) was elected in an ExCo meeting in May 31 as the temporary replacement for the post of PUSA Secretary.

In May 2016, Chairman Rodney Chu was re-elected as a Staff elected member of Council uncontested. He, together with Vice-Chairman Chan Ming Yin, will continue to voice out staff views and sentiments in Council. In the Management Workshop held in December 2015 where Quality of Teaching was one of the main topics for discussion, they echoed the grave concerns and frustrations of staff members on teaching track as reflected by the second Work Situation Survey conducted earlier that year.

During the year under review, PUSA Officers met with PolyU Senior Management regularly through the PUSA Management Consultative meetings chaired by VP(R&D) and attended by senior staff of the Office of Human Resources, including the Director, to discuss a large variety of issues. They also met with Mr. Chan Tze Ching, the new PolyU Council Chairman, in February 2016 to discuss matters such as career ladder and prospect for staff on teaching track, career progression and promotion for non-academic staff, the annual appraisal system and the Referendum on Institutional Autonomy.

We now summarize a number of important events and issues in the year under review as follows.

(1) Referendum on Institutional Autonomy

This was the first ever joint event among staff of all local tertiary institutions which took place from 21 March to 23 March 2016. All full-time staff of the institutions are eligible to participate. The motions to be voted on are (i) to abolish the powers of the Chief Executive in appointing members to university councils and (ii) to increase the ratio of staff elected members and students in university councils. Both motions were endorsed by staff members by vast majority. A press conference was held on 6 April by the organising bodies, where results of the referendum and action plans were announced. This led to the materialisation of the public hearing on Higher Education called by LegCo's Education Panel on 18 June. PUSA, together with other staff unions in the Higher Education Sector, made use of the hearing to voice out its worries about the development of Higher Education in Hong Kong, calling for ordinance amendment of tertiary institutions as a way out.

(2) Our Stance on Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy

In the beginning of 2016, PUSA was engaged in a concern wide spreading in local tertiary institutions on whether some lately appointed Council members of certain institutions were intruding the academic freedom and institutional autonomy of the universities. PUSA was engaged in similar debates within PolyU, and after the issue of a public statement in the form of Big Character Letter on Democracy Wall on 21 April, a follow up newspaper article was printed at the Discussion Forum of Ming Pao on 20 May to state clear the stance of PUSA on her position surrounding this debate: that all existing rules and regulations of the University must be respected, and that if there is to be any change, it must go through a vigorous and transparent consultation process among all stake holders concerned.

(3) PUSA Forum in May on SRRS and on Outside Activities

In response to two HRO emails issued to staff in April, one on Salary Review & Reward System and the other on Strict Compliance with regulations governing Conflict of Interest and Outside Activities, PUSA organized two forums on 3 May and 6 May respectively to collect staff views on both policies. The second forum was attended by some senior members of staff from HRO, who gave on-the-spot replies to question raised therein. Concerns of staff expressed in the forum were subsequently brought to the attention of PolyU Senior Management in May. For details of the two forums, please refer to PUSA Alert No. 9 issued in July 2016.

(4) Used Item Collection Campaigns

Two used item collection campaigns had been held in the year under review, one in March and the other in November. Both campaigns were jointly organized with Community Recycling Coop, a charitable organisation in Shamshuipo. The campaign held in March was considered one of the activities of the Campus Sustainability Week 2016 coordinated by PolyU's Campus sustainability Office.

(5) PUSA Representatives in Catering Committee

David Barnard (ELC), Vincent Cho (MM) and Cecilia Ma (APSS) were nominated by PUSA Chairman to represent staff in the Catering Committee for a two year-term commencing February 2016.

(6) Consultation on Staff Medical Benefits Scheme

PolyU's Staff Medical Benefits Scheme with Blue Cross will expire by the end of June 2017. At the request of Management, PUSA solicited staff views on the Blue Cross Scheme in mid-September and subsequently reflected them to Management for its consideration. This would be followed by a tender exercise for our next medical benefit scheme covering a 3-year period commencing 1 July 2017.

(7) The Confederation of Tertiary Institutes Staff Unions (CTISU)

PUSA was one of the founding members of the Federation of Hong Kong Higher Education Staff Associations since the latter's inception in 1997. However, it has become clear that the general direction of FHKHESA was not in line with that of PUSA for some years. PUSA ExCo has therefore proposed to leave FHKHESA and join the newly founded CTISU in the AGM 2016.

While PUSA may claim a number of achievements in the past year, we should never be complacent. It has become clear that it is getting more and more difficult to recruit colleagues who are willing to devote their efforts to work for the welfare of staff on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, the ever changing environment in the Higher Education Sector will definitely lead to uncertainty for staff members. We will certainly face a large number of problems and difficulties. We therefore must work twice as hard to improve the quality of our work and at the same time protect the welfare and benefits of our members. It is our belief that with concerted effort from staff and Management, we will be able to build a better future for the University.

Prepared by:

Rodney Chu (for and on behalf of PUSA ExCo)

December, 2016.