

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association

Annual Report 2020/2021

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic since February 2020, PUSA AGM 2019 was postponed until November 2020. We consulted officers at Registry of Trade Unions, who advised that we might hold AGM 2020 and 2021 in one go. As such, this Annual Report would cover the period between November 2019 and October 2021.

The following were elected PUSA Officers for a two-year term during AGM held on November 25 2020. They were Rodney Chu (APSS) as Chairman, Vincent CHO (MM) as Vice Chairman, Peter Lo (AMA) as Treasurer, Christine YEUNG (BRE) as Secretary, John Sager (EDU) as Assistant Secretaries and K.P. Mark (EDU) as Information Officer. Former Chairman M.Y. Chan, former Vice Chairman Louis Leung and long serving ExCo member Salina Ma left PolyU in early 2021. On behalf of PUSA, we thank them for their service to the Staff Association and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

In June 2021, Vice Chairman Vincent Cho was elected member of PolyU Council with 743 votes, defeating his opponent by a comfortable margin. He, together with Chairman Rodney CHU, will continue to fight for staff benefits and voice out staff concerns and sentiments at Council level.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, PUSA Officers continued to meet and discuss a wide range of issues with PolyU Central Management regularly during the period under review through the PUSA Consultative meetings chaired by the

Deputy President (Prof. Alex Wai and Prof. W.T. Wong respectively) and attended by senior staff of the Office of Human Resources. Elected staff members also held informal discussions with senior members of Council on various matters of mutual interest.

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

(1) Merit Based Salary Adjustment

In view of the adverse financial situation of HKSAR, there has not been any general salary increase for Civil Servants and University staff for 2020 and 2021. While Civil Servants may still get their annual salary adjustment via their Master Pay Scale (or other similar pay scales), university staff have to rely on a merit based salary adjustment as reflected by their performance. For 2020, however, PolyU staff got absolutely no salary adjustment even though staff has gone through vigorous staff appraisal between July 2019 and June 2020, some with excellent or very satisfactory grading. We at PUSA were extremely disappointed at the outcome.

Recently, PUSA has made special effort to persuade CM once again to give all staff with satisfactory grading or better a moderate salary increase as a gesture of rewarding staff who have worked extremely hard during the past two years, with excellent achievements in many fronts. We can only hope that our very modest requests will be favourably considered by Management and Council.

(2) Used Item Collection Campaigns

Over the years, PUSA has been organizing used item collection campaigns jointly with Community Recycling Coop, a charitable organization in Sham Shui Po. We were unable to hold any such campaigns in the winter of 2019

due to social unrest, and in 2020 due to Covid. With the help of the Sustainability Section of FMSO, the used item collection exercise resumed in April this year, with a second one held in November 16-17. Several thousand kilograms of used items donated by staff were collected in each of the exercises. We thank PolyU colleagues for their ardent support to this meaning initiative.

(3) Survey on staff views on compulsory Covid vaccination

To reflect staff views and concerns regarding PolyU's request on all staff to have Covid-19 vaccination, PUSA conducted an opinion survey on 25 May 2021, consisting of two open-ended questions. Some 1,200 responses were received. They were sent to CM for their consideration. Details had also been disseminated to all staff in June 2021 via a mass email.

(4) Dealing with staff grievances

As usual, Officers have been involved in a handful of grievance cases, meeting with staff members concerned with a view to assisting them to resolve various problems at departmental levels.

(5) Career Prospect for academic staff on Teaching Tract

After a few years' discussions and negotiation, PUSA is delighted to learn that three most important issues that PUSA has so far voiced out for staff on Teaching Tract – the opening of senior posts, the serving length of individual contracts, and the availability of regular term option to those long-serving and outstanding colleagues – are being addressed by CM. We hope the recruitment of new posts and the contract renewal process would be transparent and fair. PUSA always welcomes updated information and questions from colleagues – be they from the staff side or the administrative side of individual Departments – if and when they come up with difficulties

in applying and implementing the concerned policy

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 can almost be certain that there are difficulties in the horizon. 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 (PUSA Chairman)

For and on behalf of PUSA ExCo

22 November 2021