

**THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT**

3rd SBM UG Student Representative Meeting 2017/18

Confirmed Minutes

Date and time of meeting:	March 5, 2018, 6:30pm - 8:00pm
Minutes Prepared by:	Wyat Lee
Attendance of SBM UG Programs Office:	Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Emily Nason, Ka Yee Lee, Frankie Man, Wyatt Lee
CUP Faculty Members	-
Attendance of UG Student Representatives:	Samantha STEPTOE, Savio HO, Alissa NG, Dennis LAM, Winnie LAM, Hin Ching WONG, Nikki WU, Jason MAK, Parcae SIN, Margaret YAU, Michael ROBERTSON, Anna MOON, Tiffany YIU, Ivan YEUNG, Christine POON, Caroline ELEONORA
Absence with Apologies:	Ince CHAN, Sam CHOI, Anna WONG, Taylor CHOI, Leonard LIU
Absence	Mandy TSUI

1. Confirmation of Minutes

As no further comment was received, the minutes of the 2nd Meeting of Dec 5, 2017 was confirmed.

2. Information Items

2a. Membership for Spring 2018

The Chair welcomed the 5 new members for joining the committee and thanked those who remained in the committee.

2b. Peer Sharing Program

The Chair first stated the background of the new Peer Sharing Program, which was an extension of the Peer Mentoring Program. There were 2 main objectives for the Peer Mentoring Program: providing information about UST and SBM so that students could learn more about various resources available, and helping students who felt out of place and had difficulties integrating. Feedback from students showed that the current Peer Mentoring Program might not achieve the second objective, and the Peer Sharing Program was therefore launched to bring students from different years with diverse backgrounds together. A total of 127 students signed up for the program and 43 of them attended the kick-off event on February 12. All participants were assigned to 13 groups according to their interests, and WhatsApp groups were created to facilitate group members' communication. The Chair also expressed gratitude towards representatives from the Business Students' Union (BSU), Anna Moon and Francis So, for being the Master of Ceremony. Miss Anna Moon commented that the idea of Peer Sharing Program was good, and the event was mainly for entertainment and relaxation instead of being informative.

2c. SBMT1111 Survey Highlights

The Chair reported that according to the survey of SBMT1111 in 2017-18, most of the students found it useful and convenient to get information from their advisors during the Fall term. It also revealed that the Peer Mentoring Program did a reasonable job in 2017.

2d. Major Selection (MSE) Information Week in Spring 2018

The Chair informed members of the Major Selection Information Week. There would be an exhibition in the

Academic Concourse outside LT-J during April 10-12. Together with the exhibition, on April 10, there would be information booths from 4 pm to 6 pm and mingling sessions from 6pm to 8pm organized by all SBM programs, as well as 3 information sessions hosted by UG Programs Office, ECOF, QFIN and GBUS (main round of major selection in Spring) from 6pm. For students admitted in 2017-18, they could apply for the first major from April 3-30 and interviews might be required during May 10-15. Students could re-prioritize their program choices by June 10 and results would be announced at the end of June. For students admitted in 2016-17 and 2017-18, if they would like to declare an additional major, they should apply between June 22 to July 3 and interviews might be required between July 6-9. Results will be announced in mid-July. The Chair invited members to share the information with students if applicable.

2e. Karen Lee Student Mentoring Center

The Chair shared the background of the Center with members. The Center was supported by the Dr Karen Lee Memorial Fund established by the generous donation from the family members of the late Dr Karen Lee who was a beloved part-time faculty member at the HKUST Business School. The physical center would be located at the existing open learning area and the adjacent classrooms on the ground floor, which would be linked by a staircase to the first floor open learning area. The Center would have advising rooms, meeting rooms as well as a relaxation area. Construction would start from June 1 to Aug 31, 2018 and be targeted to be fully functional at the beginning of the Fall term in 2018. Prof. Emily Nason, the Founding Director of the Center, stated that the donor wanted to provide more mentoring support to students. Part of the funding has been sponsoring Career Mentoring Program, Peer Mentoring Program, Peer Sharing Program, Public Services Internship Scholarships, and faculty/staff training, etc. She invited students to propose new activities as there would be funding available to support new initiatives.

Discussion Items

3a. Advising and Orientation for New Students

A staff member of the UG Programs Office presented the materials and programs designed for new students' transition and orientation as below:

- Credit Transfer Advising Session for Senior Year Entry Students (April)
- Logbook (July)
- Video Production for Academic Advising Sessions (July)
- Academic Advising Sessions (July – August)
- Peer Mentoring Days (mid to late August)
- School Welcome and Orientation (August)
- Peer Mentoring Program (August – October)
- SBMT1111 (September – November)

A member shared that he had a good experience with the business cohorts when he was a new student. However, in recent years, some new students did not know who to approach for academic information and contacted him by LinkedIn and Facebook for enquiries. Some members commented that it might be an exceptional case as after the Academic Advising Sessions, students should know who and where to approach for academic issues. A member who was also a member of the Business Cohort Community (BCC) recalled that not all students were engaged in the School Welcome and Orientation as there were too many people in the venue. They expressed that the peer mentors were not helpful in following BCC's instructions. In general, members agreed that the mentor to mentee ratio was too large and they should be matched according to the admission types to offer proper advice to new students. A member complained that her mentor did not even host one activity after the term started. Some mentors gave out limited timeslots to meet with their mentees and consequently the meeting was cancelled due to low participation. A staff member of the UG Programs Office explained that the meeting after Fall term started was not compulsory and the relationships between mentor and mentees really depended on the chemistry among group members. The Chair added that out of the 80+ peer mentors recruited last year, about 40-50% of them submitted reimbursement of their meeting expenses.

i. Roles of Peer Mentors and Other Student Helpers

A member enquired about the possibility of having student ambassadors as the peer mentors as well. A staff of the UG Programs Office replied that student ambassadors were mainly for outreach, and they were

welcomed to join any other programs according to their own will. Prof. Emily Nason added that as there were many programs, it would be difficult to consolidate all the duties in one role as students might not be able to commit themselves to so many duties. Some members agreed. Another member commented that since there were too many programs to serve many purposes, the School should clearly define roles of each type of student helpers although some overlapping might not be avoided. If a clearer objective was established, it would be easier to recruit suitable helpers for different programs.

ii. Compulsory or Voluntary Participation of the Peer Mentoring Program

A member suggested that it was necessary to force every new student to become mentees so that they could be benefited from the Program. Prof. Emily Nason expressed the struggles for making the program mandatory or voluntary. She further explained that the School wanted to give students more flexibility, but some students might not enjoy programs that were actually beneficial to them. A member felt that the Peer Mentoring Program should be an additional item (optional) as SBMT1111 was already a compulsory course. Therefore, students should be able to choose to join the Peer Mentoring Program or not while the School should offer more incentives to attract students to participate. The Chair commented that the participation depended on the self-confidence level of the students and those who were in need or not confident might not participate. A student member proposed opt-out option so that all the students were notified of the Program and who to approach if needed.

iii. Integration of Local and International Students

A non-local student member felt that international students who did not speak Cantonese could not integrate well with local students who would prefer speaking in Cantonese rather than English. They would remain quiet in the group when the local students were talking in Cantonese. Therefore, international students found it difficult to make new friends in the University. The Chair addressed the concern by pointing out that in the Peer Mentoring Program last year, peer mentor groups were formed by diverse background and nationalities instead of homogeneous grouping. The current design of mentor to mentee ratio (2:20) through pairing up two groups was to minimise issues when one of the mentors was absent. Some members recommended that the Peer Mentoring Program should focus on providing academic advice instead of social function, and the grouping should therefore be homogenous. A member shared her own experience as a mentor as it was very hard for her to answer questions raised by students of different admission types. Prof. Emily Nason emphasized that students should seek help from Academic Affairs and Advising Counsellors (AAAC) for academic issues and if the group was homogenous, students would miss the opportunity to learn from students with diverse background. Integration between local and non-local students was strongly encouraged by the School and the University.

iv. Roles of Peer Mentors

The Chair asked members about the roles of peer mentors. Some members suggested that mentors should establish a close relationship with mentees, and the unpleasant experience was a result of the lack of mentors, especially when non-local mentees were not matched with a non-local mentor. The Chair explained that only 20% of students were international and therefore it was difficult to match each group with an international mentor. A member commented that peer mentors could play 3 different levels of roles such as building network and making friends (lowest level), addressing questions and solving problems appropriately (medium level) and proactively identifying mentees' hidden difficulties and problems (highest level). Another member felt that peer mentors should be able to offer help any time. From her experience, none of her mentees responded or listened to what she said, so she was frustrated and finally gave up. She also mentioned that the group size was so large that she felt like she was doing a lecture.

v. Orientation for MAEC and BIBU Students

MAEC representative reported that they did not receive the log book or the invitation for both Business and Science Schools' Orientations. She felt that MAEC students were forgotten and not welcomed by both Schools. The Chair explained that there should be miscommunication between Schools as he thought that MAEC students could choose to join either one of the School Orientations hosted by Business or Science Schools. The Chair stressed that MAEC and BIBU students were cared for by the two Schools, and student representatives from the two programs were therefore invited to join this committee. BIBU representative shared the experience as a mentee in the School of Science where the program was mandatory and the mentees and mentors were matched by nationality. He further suggested that as the peer mentor was the first person met by new students in the School, it would be more comfortable and less awkward if they shared similar background.

vi. Set Up for School Welcome and Orientation in 2018

A member, also a member of BCC, mentioned that according to their experience, it was extremely difficult to think of a mass game that was suitable for more than 800 students, and the crowd control was difficult. A staff of the UG Programs Office responded that the School was actively exploring different options such as installing a large projection screen to facilitate student engagement. Some students suggested arranging the stage in the middle or splitting the new students into two groups to do School Welcome and Peer Mentoring Program simultaneously (and swapped). Both the Chair and Prof. Emily Nason agreed that the suggestions would be taken into consideration and we would discuss with the Science School about the stage arrangements.

vii. Formation of Sub-committee for New Student Orientation

A staff of the UG Programs Office invited students interested in providing feedback and brainstorming ideas for various items of the orientation activities with UG Programs staff to form a sub-committee which would be expected to meet 2-3 times. Six members including Parcae Sin, Savio Ho, Christine Poon, Ivan Yeung, Winnie Lam and Anna Moon volunteered to join the Sub-committee and they were thanked by the UG Programs staff.

Next Meeting

14 May 2018, 12nn-2:00pm at China Garden (changed to LSK classroom)

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

March 15, 2018