

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

**3<sup>rd</sup> SBM UG Student Representative Meeting 2019/20**

**Confirmed Minutes**

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| Date and time of meeting:                 | March 2, 2020, 6:00pm – 7:45pm   |
| Minutes Prepared by:                      | Maggie Yim   |
| Attendance of SBM UG Programs Office:     | Prof Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Prof Emily Nason, Ka Yee Lee, Maggie Yim  |
| CUP Faculty Members                       | Prof Ekkachai Saenyasiri   |
| Attendance of UG Student Representatives: | Donald Chan, Daniel Chan, John Chan, Gordon Cheng, Paco Cheng, Vanessa Ching, Wan-Yun Chou, Phyllis Chu, William Dong, Alexis Ho, Horus Leung, Gavin Li, Flame Lim, Tasneem Muchhaka, Jason Ng, Saras Sutedja, Annie Tam, Cyril Tong, Winston Ye, Rex Yeung, Vinnici Yeung |
| Absence with Apologies:                   | Anushka Srivastava   |
| Absence:                                  | ---  |

This meeting was conducted online using the Zoom platform.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes**

As no further comment was received, the minutes of the 2019/20 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting held on November 27, 2019 was confirmed.

**Matters Arising from Minutes**

The Chair reiterated that all exchange-in for Spring 2020 was cancelled and the Major Selection Information Sessions for Fall 2019 were postponed to be held online on December 4-5. At the last meeting, members had positive feedback on various online platforms such as RVC and PowerPoint slides with voiceover. According to the SFQ conducted by the University at the end of Fall 2019-20, Zoom was in general more well received by most of the students as Zoom was real-time interactive. In view of the latest development of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the University decided that all classes in Spring 2020 would be conducted in live interactive online mode (via Zoom) and all classes in SBM could be conducted online. Some courses offered by other Schools were cancelled or postponed to Summer.

**2. Information Items**

**2a Membership for Spring 2020**

We have 22 members this term. The Chair welcomed the nine new members joining the Committee and thanked those 13 students who continued to serve on the Committee. New members were invited to introduce themselves at the beginning of the meeting. The Chair

expressed that there would generally be four meetings every academic year with two meetings in Fall term and two meetings in Spring term respectively. Membership of the committee rotates off every term and new members are added to provide new ideas to the Committee every term. The Chair encouraged members to convey and disseminate information received at the meeting to their constituencies, the programs they are representing. The Chair also mentioned some of the past work done by this Committee and encouraged members to form sub-committees to work on different things of interest. He thanked Prof Ekkachai Saenyasiri from Department of Finance for joining this meeting.

#### 2b Spring 2020 Major Selection Information Sessions and Timelines

Members were informed that the Spring 2020 Major Selection Information sessions were advanced before the commencement of the Spring term and conducted online via Zoom on Feb 18, 2020. Video recordings and PowerPoints were published on the SBM UG website for students' reference. Members were informed of the respective timelines for Major and Additional Major selections and the schedule which might be subject to change depending on the development of the spread of Covid-19.

#### 2c SBMT1111 Survey Result Highlights 2019-20

The SBMT 1111 survey highlights 2019-20 was shared for members' information and the result was similar to last year. AAACs met students in a small group of 3 to 5 students and some students commented that they wanted more private meetings. The Chair highlighted that students would be informed of the availability of private individual meetings so that they could schedule as needed. The Chair also mentioned that there was nothing unusual in the survey and the UG Programs Office would review the responses for improvement every year.

#### 2d Peer Mentor & Mentee Survey Result Highlights 2019-20

The Chair gave members a brief account of the Peer Mentoring Program and there was a common feedback requesting a smaller Peer Mentor group but the number of volunteers to be Peer mentors (PMs) was limited every year, with around 70-80 mentors providing mentoring to about 800-900 freshmen. An Excellence in Student Mentoring Award was introduced in 2018-19 to reward peer mentors. It has unfortunately been observed every year that a small number of Peer Mentors were not committed enough or did not perform well. In response to the limited number of Peer Mentors and to avoid the problem of Peer Mentors not showing up, Peer Mentors are now paired up so that there would be at least one PM in the group if the other PM did not show up.

Another ongoing dilemma relates to whether we should mix students with diverse backgrounds in a group or arrange students with homogenous or similar backgrounds in a group. In a practical sense, it would be more advantageous for students with similar backgrounds to be in the same group, so that the mentor could address questions such as those relating to courses selection and credit transfer with specific advice as they shared similar study pathways with their mentees.

Some members concurred with this point and opined that it would be difficult for PMs to manage a group of students with diverse backgrounds, since PMs who did not have common admissions backgrounds may not be able to give pertinent advice.

A member found her mentor not helpful and only met him during the official programs before the Fall term started. Another member suggested surveying PMs about their preferences regarding grouping, and a staff of the UG Programs Office responded that the option would be considered and we would look into the timeline.

Prof Ekkachai Saenyasiri added that grouping mentees with similar background seemed to work better in achieving the major objective of the program, which was to give advice and help freshmen adapt to the new environment. Indeed, there were many other channels available for achieving the objective to make new friends with diverse backgrounds.

Another member suggested to reschedule the deadline of the compulsory meeting in which mentors should meet their mentees in an earlier stage, say September or October of a year instead of by the end of November as students might be busy with mid-terms or assignments in November and were less willing to attend gatherings.

The Chair also updated members that unlike last year, when the recruitment of PMs started in April, the recruitment of PMs this year would be postponed to late-May to keep up the enthusiasm of the mentors. Also, in response to a question by a member about the differences between Peer Mentors and other student group leaders, the Chair supplemented that Peer Mentors would be the official communication channel in advising freshmen on academic parts and they could advise mentees with the most updated information like major changes of curriculum or new school policies, etc.

## 2e University One-Button Online Feedback Form

In Spring 2019, the SBM Student Representative Committee had launched the anonymous online feedback form for SBM students. In light of the possible questions or feedback relating to online teaching in Spring 2020, the University used the SBM feedback mechanism as a model to create a new 'one-button' University Online Feedback Form. By clicking a link or scanning the QR code available on Canvas and the class and quota website, students could leave anonymous comments or questions on specific courses. University technical support would direct this feedback to the relevant technical team or instructors and UG coordinators or to address the feedback as needed.

The Chair briefed members that as of the current time, 175 items of feedback had been submitted for the University as a whole, and there were only a few comments for SBM courses. Among these, there were only two courses with problems where the professor was not responding to the feedback. To better equip all course instructors and TAs and to improve and optimize the on-line learning experience, different sharing sessions and training have been conducted. The Chair mentioned that Prof. Ekkachai Saenyasiri also helped conduct a training session in Fall. Two "mini-SFQs" would be launched in March and April to collect early feedback on teaching and exams respectively.

The Chair added that owing to the tight timelines of the major selection exercise in Fall, all SBM courses had to have exams in Fall and our School had thereby gained much experience in conducting exams online while other schools like SSCI and SENG which postponed their exams to February had relatively less experience in this regard. He was invited recently by the Provost Office to conduct a training session for about 100 faculty members to share the experiences in online teaching and exam.

*[Post meeting notes: Subsequently, the interim course-level student survey was conducted from March 5 to 11, 2020 to collect early feedback from students on Zoom classes. The overall feedback on Zoom classes at the University level was very positive. Over 70% of students indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the technical aspects of Zoom and the instructors' arrangements on the course logistics. Besides, over 60% of students rated that their learning has been effective or highly effective in the live Zoom classes.]*

### **3. Discussion Items**

#### **3a Student Feedback on the Academic Arrangements in Spring 2020**

The Chair reflected that the feedback from faculty and students on online teaching was overall more positive than expected. Students are participating more in online classes and the chat function enhanced interactivity in classes. Student representatives shared their views on the online class arrangements in Spring 2020, as summarized below:

##### *Positive comments*

- A few members commented that they thought online teaching was inferior at the beginning, but now they changed their mind. The online classes were going better than expected since it encouraged interactivity with no physical separation and students were more willing to speak up. For instance, students could share notes in some classes like LABU courses.
- Another student also mentioned that not only senior year students could participate more, even in large classes such as FINA2303, students could interact more with the chat function.
- Some students reflected that the online classes could save transportation time and cost (e.g. They could sleep more and have lunch with the packed class timetable). The Chair responded that we might keep some of the good things of Zoom teaching for future face-to-face teaching.

##### *Less positive comments*

- Some students reflected that they faced technical issues like connection problem in a MARK class and students could not hear the faculty nor get out of the breakout room; there was a problem of video without sound or sound without video, etc. Another student also mentioned that she faced another technical issue that the instructor faculty disappeared for 2-3 minutes in a LANG Chinese course. They were suggested to leave comments for any technical problems in the University Online Feedback Form.
- One final year student expressed that there would be no face to face interactions with friends due to online teaching. She also enquired if participation was required even for international students who might have the time zone difference. The Chair explained that all students were expected to attend classes, no matter international/local students although some international students had to attend classes at odd times due to time difference and he supplemented that the WBB program would have slightly different arrangements.
- A student found that Zoom classes were so efficient in a way that students always needed to be focused and pay attention and it would be tiring sometimes. Instructors should consider giving a break to students in each lesson.

- A member pointed out that she faced difficulties in getting groupmates for projects since there would be no chance to talk to each other. It was suggested that instructors set aside 15 minutes or so for students to form groups (camera must be turned on). Also, another student suggested to send bulk emails to all classmates in Canvas with resume, which was efficient and effective in forming groups.
- A member expressed that some instructors did not upload the class video in time. One instructor changed the class time unilaterally. The Chair replied that this case should be brought up to the related UG coordinator as the University had made it clear that classes should be conducted according to the original scheduled class times.

*Other comments*

- A student enquired if more class quota could be released or more students could be allowed to audit the class in view of the current mode of online teaching. The Chair responded that there would be limited capacity for increasing class quota since the workload for faculty and TA would increase further on top of the current heavy duties for managing and supporting on-line teaching activities and interaction such as tutorials and discussions, attending student feedback and marking of assignment without compromising quality of teaching. In addition, it was expected that classes might be changed to mixed mode if the situation would get better, so the class quota would still be constrained by the classroom capacity. The student was suggested to approach the course department for enquiry of course quota.
- The Chair also reiterated the importance for every student turning on the cameras (wearing a mask if necessary) instead of showing blank screen as it would enhance the interaction and dynamics of the classes, further enhancing the quality of teaching.
- Students were alerted that it would be a misconduct to use another student's account or change the nickname and pretend to be others and chat inappropriately. Moreover, such acts might even be a criminal case which might be prosecuted.

The Chair appreciated all the valuable comments received and encouraged all members to make use of as well as to disseminate the message about the new One-Button Feedback Form to channel student feedback. The University is in the midst of a transition, and some benefits of online classes should be preserved while at the same time the University was making the best effort to improve teaching and learning.

**4. Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on May 20, 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

May 11, 2020