

香港浸會大學教職員工會

Hong Kong Baptist University Faculty and Staff Union

團結 · Solidarity

自主 · Autonomy

公義 · Justice

Newsletter (47)

Work Report for the year 2004/2005

April 26, 2005

Dear Colleagues,

In the midst of bewilderment and confusion, we stood up.

For a year and a half, we have all felt uneasy as the university embarked on a review of the pay and reward structure. University employees have not been duly represented in the task force on the review, which has released misleading and inadequate information. The decision-making process was conducted in secrecy. The university administration would not even clarify inconsistencies in the English and Chinese versions of the new proposal, the content of which is ambiguous. Since its unveiling, the proposal has only added trouble and confusion to the university and entirely missed staff recognition.

In view of the university administration's rash approach in restructuring, we resolved that the union should work hard on four fronts: strengthen consultation with employees, safeguard members' interests and rights, follow up individual members' cases, discuss and participate in university affairs.

In *strengthening consultation with employees*, we have set up our own website, and distributed "Union Newsletter" and "Members' Newsletter" via email to report important developments of university affairs to colleagues. We have also emphasized on analyzing university affairs, making known our positions and suggestions. In addition, we have collected members' views on issues of common concern by questionnaires. Since last month, we have upgraded the online forum of our website to promote discussion, enhance mutual exchanges and deliberate various issues. Apart from enabling colleagues to make informed decisions based on facts and grounds, we are determined to press the university administration to face the reality and respond to employees' queries and challenges.

In *safeguarding interests and rights*, we have strived for members' job security, protecting them from dismissal on grounds of financial hardship; we have endeavored to set up a fair, just and open performance appraisal mechanism and expand it to cover senior administrators; it is our view that government funding increased in accordance with improved living standards should be redistributed to employees rather than unilaterally withheld; the retitling of teaching staff should be dealt with separately from the restructuring of pay and reward; senior- and low-ranking employees should jointly share the financial burden, rather than senior staff enjoying benefits while low-ranking ones

suffering; shelve the new pay proposal and review the restructuring issue from scratch. In the past year, university administrators have ignored employees' views and refused to discuss with us. We believe solidarity works and being justified will win us support everywhere. Apart from lodging complaints to the government, we have repeatedly spoken out in the Legislative Council to express our views and sought support from leaders of various political parties as well as individual councillors. We have also demonstrated our dismay to the public by protests, which have elicited media concern and reports. We wish to reiterate that we see communication and dialogue as the proper way to solving problems.

Other than concerning ourselves with the structure, we have also worked hard to *follow up members' complaints*. Although the new structure is not yet in operation, various problematic moves have been reported, such as unjustified dismissal, a contract being unilaterally altered, substantial increase in the workload, unreasonable treatment, etc. We are determined to follow up such cases to help resolve problems and settle disputes, and to provide legal advice to the members concerned if necessary. To defend members' interests and avoid us being unfairly treated in the long run, we are considering a series of measures which should provide colleagues with a peaceful and just environment to better serve the community.

At the time the union was newly formed, we were busy dealing with the restructuring of pay and reward as well as building up basic facilities and organization methods. We did miss out *attention to the university's developments* and relevant discussions. Nevertheless, we have repeatedly pointed out numerous drawbacks of the university building a campus in Zhuhai, and expressed our views on university education in Legislative Council hearings. Currently, we are conducting a questionnaire survey to understand members' views on the performance of senior university administrators. We hope to enhance understanding of university education and management on the part of university decision-makers, senior management, all employees and even students. In fact, we have been concerned with academic freedom from the start and stressed that any restructuring measures must not undermine such freedom. Let me give you an advance notice here. In the coming year, we will more thoroughly discuss various measures related to academic development and consider proper display of the humanistic spirit with a view to push ahead reforms and build the university ideals.

Going forward, we will take into consideration the situation from within and out, and persistently pounce on mistakes with reason, tackle division with solidarity and fight the might of the university administration with action. We will not only stand up, but also mobilize the others to fight for justice and peace with collective wisdom and power. We will join hands to establish a Christian university with humanistic quality.

Thank you for your attention.

Executive Committee
Hong Kong Baptist University Faculty and Staff Union