

Department of Communication Studies

Department Meeting Minutes

3rd Departmental Meeting

2022/2023

Date: 24 February 2023 (Friday)

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Venue: CVA932

Chairperson: Prof. Vivian Sheer (Head)

Participants: Dr. Jos Bartels
Dr. Regina Chen
Prof. Kineta Hung
Dr. Angela Mak
Dr. Florin Serban
Dr. Stephanie Tsang
Dr. Vivien Zhou
Ms. Mimi Yip

Dr. Terri Chan
Dr. Henry Fung
Dr. Vivienne Leung
Dr. Keon Young Park
Dr. Elina Tachkova
Dr. Dominic Yeo
Ms. Agnes Kwok (Recording Secretary)

Apologies: Dr. Leanne Chang (on sabbatical leave)

Prof. Kara Chan

Dr. Timothy Fung

I. Matters for Information

1. Report on COMS hiring

The Chair reported that this year's hiring exercise did not secure any viable candidates due to fierce competitions from universities in the US. The school has placed a centralized ad for the school, but she did not anticipate a good applicant pool for advertising and public relations positions. The department probably would need to start to search early in the next academic year.

2. New FO restrictions

The Chair reminded faculty members that the new Finance Office (FO) restrictions on the limits for hospitality expenses per head, the new policy was in effect from mid-January 2023.

II. Matters for Discussion

1. Finalizing the department's new name

Members unanimously agreed to change its current name (i.e., Department of Communication Studies) to the Department of Public Relations and Advertising (PRA).

Members expressed that the new name, PRA, reflected what our faculty members

taught and the types of research we conducted, and what our students were learning now and would do in the future. It would help academic advisors clearly explain the nature of our department to potential students, efficiently attract undergraduate and postgraduate students, and better align with industry sectors. Internationally, PRA is consistent with the similar academic departments in the US.

2. The positioning and branding of the department among key stakeholders

The Chair pointed out that the new department name, PRA, could strengthen the positioning and branding of the department among key stakeholders. Faculty members named potential students and their parents, industry professionals, and the top management as key stakeholders who often failed to recognize that our department did public relations, advertising, and other forms of strategic communication (e.g., communication management in organizations).

3. Future faculty hiring strategy

In addition to hiring faculty who have advertising, public relations, health and strategic communication backgrounds, members agreed that the department could recruit applicants who had training in social psychology or communication technology, but they must have an application area that was aligned with public relations, advertising, and/or organizational communication.

4. The distribution of postgraduate students

The Chair reported that the number of postgraduate students in the coming years would be increased. To recruit quality RPg students, an RPg Recruitment Committee would be formed to shortlist the PhD/MPhil applications on behalf of the department. Dr. Regina Chen would be the Chair of the Committee. The Committee would review the applications to nominate the applicants to be shortlisted for an interview and the final COMS list of shortlisted applicants to be submitted to the School. This would be counted as service.

(Post-meeting note: Dr. Jos Bartels, Dr. Regina Chen, Dr. Angela Mak, Prof. Vivian Sheer, Dr. Elina Tachkova, Dr. Stephanie Tsang and Dr. Vivien Zhou formed the RPg Recruitment Committee chaired by Dr. Regina Chen.)

5. Consultation on the new Annual Performance Review (APR) criteria and related documents

The Chair briefed faculty members on the updates of the new APR criteria, the criteria for ranking peer-reviewed journals and book publishers for research performance appraisal as well as the guidelines on research performance expectations for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion were discussed. Faculty members are specifically cautioned that they should not focusing on book chapters as contract renewal and promotions what weigh journal articles much more.

6. Report from teams and feedback from colleagues

Teaching and Curriculum Development Team

The use of ChatGPT was discussed, and members agreed that the department should follow the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning)'s email sent on 22 February 2023, i.e., if a student takes words or ideas from other sources, including ChatGPT and other AI technologies, and present them if they were the student's own without proper citation of the source(s), the student has committed plagiarism. The consequences of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty include reduced or failed grades, suspension of study, academic dismissal and other disciplinary actions. Members suggested that course instructors consider putting the plagiarism policy in the course syllabus, specifically including the tool ChatGPT.

Research Development and Knowledge Transfer Team

Dr. Vivien Zhou reported that the lunch gathering with research postgraduate students would be organized on 3 March 2023, and the research development team was planning to organize other events such as research-in-progress workshops, preparation for the International Communication Association etc.

Intranet and Communication Team

Dr. Florin Serban reported that the department would launch a new initiative to connect faculty research with communication professionals. He would write a summary to highlight the results and the implications for the industry.

Dr. Stephanie Tsang presented the department's own PowerPoint templates and faculty members were fine with it.

Student Relations and Nominations Team

Dr. Henry Fung reported the date of the study tour to Japan was to be confirmed as the air tickets were competitive. He also reported that the annual PRA Campaign competition organized by TYA would be scheduled on 26 March 2023, the client is Sanrio. Dr. Fung also mentioned that the team is preparing the internship toolkit, providing sample cover letters and resumes for students.

Dr. Angela Mak reported that PR Career Day 2023 would be scheduled on 26 Feb 2023, this full-day event is co-organized by the Public Relations Professionals' Association and School of Communication, attracting more than 100 students to register for the event.

III. Any Other Business

Dr. Vivienne Leung reported that two finalist teams (5 of them are PRA students) were shortlisted for the HK4As Students' Award 2022. The final results would be announced

at the award presentation ceremony on 13 March 2023.

(Post-meeting note: Two finalist teams won Bronze and Merit at HK4As respectively.)

IV. Adjournment

There was no other business. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.