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Introduction

Welcome to the 2008 Environmental Report of the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat. In this report, you will find our environmental policy, performance in 2008 and our targets for 2009.

Controlling Officer's Profile of Key Responsibilities

The UGC is appointed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Its main function is to offer impartial and expert advice to the Government on the funding and development of higher education in Hong Kong, and to provide assurance to the Government and the community on the standards and cost-effectiveness of the operations and activities of the UGC-funded institutions. The UGC has no statutory powers.

The UGC Secretariat is formed to provide secretariat support to the Committee. We had an establishment of 48 permanent posts and 16 contract staff as at 31 December 2008. We are located at 7/F Shui On Centre, 6-8 Harbour Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Environmental Policy

We are committed to contributing to a healthier and more sustainable environment by ensuring that our operations are conducted in an environmentally-responsible manner, in that -

- a. we work by the 3 "R" principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in the consumption of materials, supplies and energy and seek continual improvement to make effective use and reduce consumption of natural resources;
- b. we support and promote the practice of environmentally-responsible purchasing among staff;
- c. we promote greater awareness among staff in assuming their environmental responsibilities; and

- d. we review our activities and operations regularly to strive for continual improvement in our environmental performance.

The Clean Air Charter

To show Government's commitment to improve air quality, the Chief Executive signed the Clean Air Charter (the Charter) on behalf of the Government of the HKSAR in November 2006.

Like the previous year, we have actively supported the Charter by -

- a. following the "Environmental Friendly" Guidelines issued by the Government Logistics Department (GLD);
- b. conducting frequent checks for overheating or any other defects of vehicle;
- c. always reminding our driver to switch off engines while waiting as so to reduce idling emissions and achieve fuel saving; and
- d. using unleaded gasoline to help reduce emission of polluting particles.

Green Performance in 2008

In 2008, the following green housekeeping practices were taken in our workplace -

(A) Waste minimization

using double-sided network printers and photocopiers;

using the back of used paper for drafting before collection for recycling;

re-using file jackets and economising the use of envelopes;

reducing the use of fax covering and printing of fax journals;

minimising the use of paper cups;

using e-mails for distributing meeting papers thereby reducing the number of hardcopies printed;

promoting the extensive use of e-mail and the Local Area Network (LAN) in internal and external communications;

minimising the number of hardcopies of circulars issued to staff by disseminating

departmental information electronically or by circulation;

use of electronic-Christmas and New Year banners for seasonal greetings;

use of departmental electronic-Christmas cards in addition to paper ones;

encouraging shared use of reference materials through the intranet;

using environmentally-responsible products supplied by the GLD e.g. refillable ball pens, clutch pencils and recycled paper;

printing publications with papers made from wood pulp derived from renewable forests and uploading publications onto the Internet; and

using plain paper fax machines.

(B) Waste recovering for recycling

collecting waste paper for recycling;

collecting used toner cartridges for printers and fax machines for recycling;

collecting used plastic bottles and aluminum cans for recycling; and

adding the term on the use of degradable plastic bags or plastic bags with recycled content for garbage collection in cleansing service contract.

(C) Energy conservation

using computers, lamps and fluorescent tubes with Energy Efficiency labels;

installing energy saving fluorescent lights with electronic ballasts and occupancy sensor control on the lighting system;

affixing "Save Energy" stickers to air-conditioning and lighting switches;

disseminating green messages to remind staff to switch off their computers, lights and air-conditioning outside office hours or when not in use;

switching off unnecessary lighting and air-conditioning when area is not in use;

arranging for the last-man-out to check and turn off all lighting and electric devices before

leaving office; and

complying with the policy set by Electrical and Mechanical Services Department by maintaining the office room temperature at 25.5 degree.

(D) Improvement in indoor air quality

implementing government "Smoke-free Workplace" law; and

cleaning the office ventilation system on a regular basis.

(E) Environmentally-responsible purchasing

procuring energy saving computers and photocopiers with duplex function;

including common environmental friendly terms such as trade-in clause, recycling arrangement, etc., as far as practicable when arranging tenders;

using green products procured by the GLD; and

using recycled paper in lieu of plain wood-free paper for printing and photocopying.

(F) Raising staff awareness

disseminating tips on enhancing green management practices on regular basis; and

successfully organizing the "Donation Campaign for the Needed Members of the Community" in which colleagues gave out usable and/or recyclable items for re-use by other members of the society.

With the increasing awareness of our colleagues in following green management practice and the wider application of information technology in the office, we have made the following achievements -

(a) decrease in overall paper consumption by 5.78%, i.e. from 2,696 reams in 2007 to 2,540 reams in 2008;

(b) decrease in envelope consumption by 15.98%, i.e. from 12,320 in 2007 to 10,351 in 2008; and

(c) increase in waste paper collected for recycling purpose by 112.05% from 4,614 kg in 2007 to 9,784 kg in 2008.

The total electricity consumption was slightly increased from 268,569 kWh in 2007 to 271,683 kWh in 2008 (i.e. +1.16%). This slight increase in electricity consumption was mainly due to the increase in our number of meetings and business volume.

Targets for 2009

In 2009, we are actively exploring more concrete measures to seek improvement in green management. By reviewing our green performance in 2008 and taking into consideration our actual operational requirements, our targets will focus on -

(a) reduce paper consumption by using electronic means -

implement electronic information system of the General Research Fund (GRF) to cover monitoring and review of approved projects of all the four panels;

screen proposals/applications in computer instead of making hardcopies for all the four panel meetings; proposals/applications in computer instead of making hardcopies for selected panel meeting;

continue to upload new publications onto internet for public viewing in order to reduce printing on paper; and

continue to use electronic mails as the most popular means of communication within and outside the Secretariat.

(b) further increase the use of recycled paper and other green products available from GLD so as to help reduce subsequent waste disposal problems -

publication of UGC documents will continue to be on environmental friendly paper; and

photocopiers, printers and scanners with duplex function will continue to be used to facilitate double-sided printing and electronic record-keeping.

(c) collect waste paper/newspaper/toner cartridges/plastic bottles/aluminum cans and other solid plastic wastes for recycling.

In addition, we will step up our efforts in promoting greater awareness among colleagues by -

(a) adopting green housekeeping practices as appropriate;

(b) issuing guidelines addressing various aspects of resources consumption and

waste reduction during daily operations from time to time;

(c) arranging environmental protection activities to enhance colleagues' awareness, e.g. donating usable and/or recyclable items to needed members of the society and encouraging staff to participate in community-wide green activities; and

(d) soliciting support and suggestions for green initiatives from staff.

The way forward

Looking ahead, we will continue to explore the feasibility of more extensive application of information and communications technology commensurate with our operational requirements with a view to achieving, among others, the reduction of paper-based processes and records to the minimum and consequently, paper consumption.

We welcome comments on this report. Please contact us at ugc@ugc.edu.hk.

UGC Secretariat
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