

## Report of the Standing Committee on Young Barristers 2019

### Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Young Barristers (“YBC”) was established in 1993.
2. Its primary objectives are as follows:-
  - (1) To represent Young Barristers (i.e. barristers within 7 years of call) and pupils (collectively, the “YBs”).
  - (2) To convey the views of YBs to other parties, in particular, other members of the Bar, the Hong Kong Bar Association (“HKBA”) (in particular, its Council), the Judiciary, the local faculties of law, law students, other (young) professionals and other professional associations, and to convey the views of other parties, in particular the aforementioned, to YBs.
  - (3) To promote the interests and wellbeing of YBs, including but not limited to their fraternity with other YBs and other members of the Bar, their involvement in the Bar, the HKBA and the wider community, their continuing education, their network with other (young) professionals, public awareness of YBs and their roles, and, more generally, their development as barristers.
  - (4) To assist YBs with their queries and concerns regarding their profession.
  - (5) To contribute to furthering the objectives of the Bar and the HKBA as defined in the Rules and Regulations of the HKBA.
  - (6) To organize, make arrangements regarding, and participate in events that further the objectives above and/or with the objectives above in mind.
3. The YBC currently consists of 22 YBs. This Report summarizes the main work of the YBC from April 2019 to 10 December 2019.

### International Conferences

4. The following YBs were subsidized by the Bar to attend 4 international conferences this year:-

Dates	Conference	Location	YB attendees
8-12 April 2019	Commonwealth Law Conference 2019	Livingstone, Zambia	Isabel Tam
22-25 May 2019	Half-Year Conference by the International Association of Young Lawyers	Hong Kong	Candy Chan
22-27 September 2019	International Bar Association Annual Conference 2019	Seoul, South Korea	Sam Chow Karen Lau

26-29 2019	September	International Weekend 2019	London, United Kingdom	Angel Wong Katrina Lee
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5. The Commonwealth Law Conference 2019 was organized by the Commonwealth Lawyers Association in conjunction with the Law Association of Zambia. The theme of the conference was “The Rule of Law in Retreat? Challenges for the Modern Commonwealth”. It provided delegates with seminars on wide-ranging topics falling within the following four thematic streams: (i) corporate and commercial; (ii) constitutional, human rights and the rule of law; (iii) legal and the judicial profession; and (iv) contemporary legal topics. It is aimed at international lawyers and academics, and also those practising within the Commonwealth.
6. The Half-Year May Conference organized by the International Association of Young Lawyers provided delegates with the choice of one out of three thematic streams of seminars on wide-ranging topics: (i) “How to Raise Money from International Perspectives”; (ii) “Tax: a Dream, not a Nightmare”; and (iii) “Business and Private Clients in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities”. It is aimed at young international lawyers and in-house counsel, who are between the ages of 25 and 45.
7. The International Bar Association Annual Conference 2019 was organized by the International Bar Association. The Conference featured more than 200 conference session, with the core substantive committee sessions at the heart of the conference programme covering most sectors and practice areas. There were sessions on a wide range of topics, such as the challenges of law firm management and international relationships, ethics, the future of the legal profession, and the rule of law and human rights. The Conference served to advance the development of international law and its role in business and society and to provide international lawyers with world-class professional development opportunities to enable them to deliver outstanding legal services.
8. The International Weekend 2019 was organized by the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of England and Wales, the Young Barristers Committee of the Bar Council, the European Young Bar Association and the London Young Lawyers Group. It featured a mix of technical seminars, skills-based seminars, an overview of the legal system in England and Wales and an introduction to the City of London.
9. By participating in international conferences, YBC members were able to meet with their counterparts in numerous jurisdictions and to discuss the differences between the lives and practices of young lawyers around the world. They were also able to introduce and promote the legal system of Hong Kong to other countries.
10. To ensure that YBs who are not committee members of the YBC also have the opportunity to attend international conferences, there was an open call by way of Bar Circular for one other YB to be subsidized to attend conferences that YBC representatives were sent to.

## **Volunteer Service**

11. This year, the YBC organized the following volunteering opportunities:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Description</b>
20 April 2019	YBC Easter Visit to the Hong Kong Rabbit Society	Celebrating Easter by cleaning the cages and taking care of rabbits at the Hong Kong Rabbit Society
1 June 2019	YBC and Hong Kong Salvation Army Volunteering Opportunity to Visit the Elderly	Visiting elderly residents living in Yau Tsim Mong District and delivering food and festive items in light of the Dragon Boat Festival
31 August 2019	YBC and Hong Kong Salvation Army Volunteering Opportunity to Visit the Elderly	Visiting elderly residents living in Yau Tsim Mong District and delivering food and festive items in light of the Mid Autumn Festival

12. Around 10-15 members of the Bar joined each of the volunteer events above along with their friends and family members.
13. Members of the Bar who participated in the above volunteering events found them meaningful and moving. It is envisioned that the YBC will be able to cooperate with more charitable bodies in the future to organize more volunteering opportunities for members.

## **Private Screening of the Documentary “RBG” with the Standing Committee on Equality and Diversity**

14. On 23 April 2019, the Standing Committee on Equality and Diversity and the YBC hosted a private screening of the documentary “RBG” at AMC Pacific Place.
15. “RBG” explores the exceptional life and career of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who has developed a strong legal legacy while becoming a pop culture icon.
16. After the viewing of the documentary, there was a 30-minute sharing session featuring Ms. Jacqueline Leong SC, Ms. Gladys Li SC and Ms. Linda Wong. Participants indicated that the sharing session was an eye-opening and rare opportunity for gaining insight into being a female barrister, particularly in earlier times when the profession was very much male-dominated. The YBC is very grateful to the speakers for their valuable time and sharing.
17. This event was kindly sponsored by Ms. Gladys Li SC, Mr. Hectar Pun SC, Ms. Po Wing Kay and Ms. Linda Wong. The YBC sincerely thanks the sponsors for their generosity.

## **HKBA Debating Competition 2019**

18. A passion for debating often provides the spark for a career at the Bar. The annual HKBA debating competition aims to nurture this in secondary school students in Hong Kong.

19. This year, 30 secondary schools from across Hong Kong participated in the English and Chinese divisions of the competition.
20. As with previous years, the debate motions all revolved around socio-legal issues. The YBC believes that this is an invaluable opportunity to promote the rule of law within society and to allow students to study and debate highly topical legal issues with each other.
21. This year, the Grand Finals of both the English and Chinese divisions were conducted in the Large Moot Court of the University of Hong Kong on 6 July 2019. The motion was “This house would combat cyber bullying by criminalizing the use of electronic communications to deliberately cause serious emotional distress.”
22. The English Grand Finals were adjudicated by the Hon. Chief Justice Ma, GBM, the Hon. Mr. Justice Chan and Mr. Edwin Choy SC. The finalists in the English Grand Finals were Marymount Secondary School and St Paul’s Convent School. Marymount Secondary School emerged as the winner.
23. The Chinese Grand Finals were adjudicated by the Chief District Judge (Atg.), Mr. Ko King-sau Justin, the Chief Magistrate (Atg.), Mr. So Wai-tak and Mr. Jonathan Chang. The finalists in the Chinese Grand Finals were Munsang College and Diocesan Girls’ School. Diocesan Girls’ School won the competition.
24. The YBC expresses its immense gratitude to all members of the Judiciary and the Bar who assisted with adjudicating and chairing the debates in the various rounds of the competition (which all took place on Saturdays). The YBC also sincerely thanks the Law Association of the University of Hong Kong, all HKU student volunteers and all participating schools and students for their time and effort.

### **Social Events**

25. The YBC has a longstanding tradition of hosting social events (which are open to all members of the Bar) aimed at enabling YBs to meet with each other, other members of the Bar and with members of the Judiciary in an informal setting.
26. Two drinks events were organized this year:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
18 July 2019	Welcome to the Bar Drinks 2019	BB Jazz Lounge
29 October 2019	Welcome Drinks for Pupils 2019 (in Collaboration with Westlaw Asia)	BB Jazz Lounge

27. The Welcome to the Bar Drinks 2019 aimed to celebrate the joining of the Bar for newly called pupils, while the Welcome Drinks for Pupils 2019 welcomed the new batch of pupils who commenced pupillage in September 2019.
28. The Welcome Drinks for Pupil 2019 was partially sponsored by Westlaw Asia. The YBC sincerely thanks Westlaw Asia for its generosity.

## **Community Outreach**

29. The YBC launched a pilot “street law” outreach and public legal education programme with the LLM in Human Rights Programme and the Human Rights in Practice course of the University of Hong Kong this year.
30. A “street law” programme is an internationally recognised method of public and legal civic education, which aims to teach both practical aspects of the law and techniques of legal reasoning to the general public via interactive activities and games. Other than student volunteers from HKU, the programme will involve a variety of professional partners (who supply legally-qualified professionals to act as supervisors) and community partners (who supply teaching targets).
31. Participants are expected to commit 20-30 hours throughout the year and to be involved in the following:-
- (1) Attend training sessions provided by professional staff from HKU’s street law programme, which is a prerequisite to further participate in the pilot programme.
  - (2) Take the role of and work with student volunteers to prepare lesson plans and conduct actual street law sessions with HKU community partners.
  - (3) Take the role of professional partners to supervise student volunteers as they prepare lesson plans and supervise the actual street law sessions conducted by the students volunteers.
  - (4) Conduct a standalone street law sessions with HKU’s community partners.
32. 10 YBs signed up for this programme.
33. So far, they have participated in the following:-

7 September 2019	Participants attended the mandatory training session at HKU
5 November 2019	Participants met with the course coordinator of HKU to further discuss how YBs can participate in projects with community partners. It was decided that the YBC would work with EmpowerU and Branches of Hope for the coming year.
16 November 2019	Participants attended the observation session on 16 November 2019 with Branches of Hope.

34. It is envisioned that the programme will continue in January or early February 2020 after the school break.

## **Career Talks**

35. The YBC gives career talks at the 3 law schools of Hong Kong and to overseas students every year. This gives law students the opportunity to speak to YBs directly and to make the informed choice of whether to join the Bar themselves.

36. The following talks were organized by the YBC this year:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
29 August 2019	Career Talk for Overseas Students
31 October 2019	Career Talk for City University of Hong Kong Students
6 November 2019	Career Talk for University of Hong Kong students

37. The above talks were well attended by LLB, PCLL and LLM students. It is expected that a similar talk will be held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in January 2020.
38. For each talk, YBC members start by giving a brief Powerpoint presentation on the nature of the Bar in Hong Kong and the routes to becoming a barrister in Hong Kong. Students are then divided into small groups, where they are given the opportunity to speak and ask questions freely with YBC members stationed at each group. Each talk lasts about 2 hours, and students are invited to contact YBC members afterwards should they have any further questions.
39. Students have repeatedly indicated that they appreciate the honest and comprehensive sharing by YBC members at such talks.

### **YBC Mentorship Program**

40. Following its success in the previous years, the YBC Pupil Mentorship Programme was run again this year.
41. The Mentorship Programme aims to provide a helping hand to pupils as they cope with the challenges and uncertainties of pupillage. Mentors, who are all YBC members with relatively recent experiences of going through pupillage, provide advice on issues related to tenancy, substantive practice and professional development.
42. Further, it is hoped that long term fraternity between YBC is fostered through the Mentorship Programme.
43. This year, 15 current pupils signed up for the Mentorship Programme. Mentors are required to reach out to mentees and to meet with them at least twice during their year of pupillage. Regular communication is also encouraged.

### **Other Activities**

44. This year, the YBC assisted in the production of the play “Please Continue (Hamlet)”.
45. “Please Continue (Hamlet)” is a play produced by Dutch and Spanish theatre makers, Yan Duyvendak and Roger Bernat. It takes the form of a criminal mock trial, where Hamlet is charged with murdering Ophelia’s father. Each show requires the participation of actual judges and barristers to play the roles of the judge, prosecutor and defence counsel. No script is provided to the barristers. They are expected to prepare for trial, question witnesses (who are professional actors) and make submissions as though they are conducting a real case.
46. 4 shows were held in Tai Kwun, Hong Kong:-

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Language</b>
26 and 27 July 2019	English
2 and 3 August 2019	Cantonese

47. YBs were invited to participate in the play by taking up the following roles: (i) junior counsel to leading counsel for the prosecution; (ii) junior counsel to leading counsel for the defence; and (iii) court clerk.
48. The YBC thanks all the YBs who participated in this educational and meaningful play. Participants indicated that they enjoyed themselves very much and that they witnessed members of the audience engaging in lively discussions over Hong Kong's legal system during the play.

### **Members of the YBC 2019-2020**

49. The YBC currently consists of the following members:-

Fiona Chong (Chairman)	Bernacchi Chambers
Isabel Tam (Vice Chairman)	Denis Chang's Chambers
Billy Yau (Vice Chairman)	Wellington Chambers
Geoffrey Yeung (Secretary)	Denis Chang's Chambers
Alice Lau (Treasurer)	Parkside Chambers
Carol Wong	Sir Oswald Cheung's Chambers
Kerby Lau	Des Voeux Chambers
Candy Chan	Courtyard Chambers
Sean Li	Employed by the Competition Commission
Melvin Ho	Plowman Chambers
Lawrence Pang	Liberty Chambers
Tina Mok	Gilt Chambers
Sharon Ho	Plowman Chambers
Rachel Lau	Unity Chambers
Kevin Lau	Des Voeux Chambers
Sheena Wong	Temple Chambers
Jason Law	Wong Man Kit S.C.'s Chambers
Sam Chow	Albert Luk's Chambers
Angel Wong	Equity Chambers
Nicole Li	Erik Shum's Chambers
Esmond Wong	C/O Bernacchi Chambers
Raymond Tsang	Alan Leong S.C.'s Chambers

50. It is important for the YBC to be made up of YBs of different chambers, seniorities, practice areas and ages. This ensures balanced participation in the YBC and that the YBC receives diverse views and ideas from its committee members.
51. The YBC encourages all interested YBs and pupils to apply to become a committee member of the YBC in the coming year.

### **Note of Thanks**

52. The YBC is immensely grateful to the Bar Council, members of the Judiciary and members of the Bar for their unwavering support and guidance in the work and events of the YBC.
53. The YBC sincerely thanks the Bar Secretariat for their kind assistance throughout this year.
54. The YBC also expresses its deepest gratitude to the 22 dedicated YBC committee members, who have all devoted much personal time and effort in organizing and running YBC activities and projects smoothly and efficiently this year.
55. Members of the Bar and pupils who have comments on the work of the YBC or ideas for the YBC are highly encouraged to contact us by email at [abc@hkba.org](mailto:abc@hkba.org) or to approach any committee member of the YBC in person. The YBC hopes to see all members of the Bar and pupils at its events in the future.

Fiona Chong  
Chairperson  
Standing Committee on Young Barristers

10 December 2019