

Report of the Special Committee on Young Barristers

The Special Committee on Young Barristers (“YBC”) has had another busy year, organising events in line with tradition as well as trying new ventures.

YBC forum discussions

The fiat system was revamped at the beginning of this year, which caused some concern for a number of YBs. The YBC raised the issue with the Bar Council, and on 15 April 2011, YBs and pupils had the chance to hear from and talk directly with the Bar Council and Mr. Kevin Zervos SC, Director of Public Prosecutions. It was a valuable opportunity for dialogue.

YBC talks

Part of the YBC’s role is an educational one, and there were two YBC talks over the past year. The first was by Deputy High Court Judge Au-Yeung in March 2011 on interlocutory hearings, CMCs, PTRs and trials, and the second by Stock VP in August 2011 about the role of the advocate.

As a variation on YBC talks, for the first time the YBC organised a seminar jointly with the Young Members Group of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the Young Solicitors’ Group in October 2011. The seminar was on arbitration, and was entitled “*Out with the old, in with the new: A new Ordinance and a new interpretation*”. We were privileged to have Mr. Russell Coleman SC of Temple Chambers, Mr. Jonathan Wong of Parkside Chambers and Mr. James Kwan of Baker & McKenzie speak to us. This was the first time that the YBC has worked together with the Young Members’ Group and Young Solicitors’ Group to organise a joint seminar, and the YBC hopes that it will be the first of many.

Short attachments scheme

The YBC recognises both the importance of continuous training and the reality that it is not possible to become familiar with all aspects of practice from pupillage alone. The YBC has therefore proposed a Short Attachments Scheme to create opportunities for YBs to be paired up with members of the Judiciary and more senior, well-respected members of the Bar to observe and learn from the preparation of a case or matter in a field of their choice. The YBC is in the process of launching a trial run of the Scheme, and has written to members of the Bar and Judiciary to invite them to participate.

University relations

Like in previous years, the YBC took part in the Law Fair on 22 January 2011, an event which is attended by many law students who are considering their options. The YBC also visited the University of Hong Kong on 17 October 2011 to speak to PCLL students about applying for pupillage and life at the Bar.

A new initiative over the past year has been for the YBC to team up with the Young Solicitors’ Group to meet with law students together in more informal settings. Members of the YBC and the Young Solicitors’ Group have met with students from the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University to chat about career choices over a drink on several occasions. Further, several YBs and young solicitors joined

members of the HKU Law Association to do some volunteer work on 3 July 2011, spending the day with children of ethnic minorities on a trip to the HKFYG Organic Farm.

As part of the Bar's pupillage reform, by a letter dated 26 October 2011 the Bar Council requested that the YBC make visits to second year LLB classes at the law faculties at the various universities in Hong Kong to share about what it is like to have a career at the Bar. The YBC intends to arrange such talks for both second year and third year LLB students, and has been liaising with the universities accordingly. The Law Faculty of the University of Hong Kong has suggested arranging a talk in around February 2012, and the Aestus CUHK Undergraduate Law Society has suggested that the YBC speak to the LLB students at Chinese University in around mid-January 2012. The City University of Hong Kong has not yet responded to the YBC's attempt to arrange a talk for their students.

HKBA Debating Competition

The HKBA Debating Competition 2010-2011 culminated in the Finals on 26 March 2011, and we are now several months into the Debating Competition 2011-2012. The Preliminary Round for the English and Chinese Divisions of the 2011-2012 Competition were held on 19 November 2011 and 3 December 2011 respectively, and the Quarter Final Rounds will be on 17 December 2011. This year's Competition will be continuing through to the first quarter of 2012.

Sports and music

In June 2011, the Bar's dragon boating team took part in the Sun Life Stanley International Dragon Boat Championships. Like last year, not only did YBs and pupils participate, we also invited law students to join in, again an opportunity for students to chat to YBs about life at the Bar.

The YBC hopes that more YBs and pupils can become involved with sports and musical activities with other members of the Bar. In October 2011, the YBC and the Special Committee on Welfare organised a gathering for YBs and pupils to meet sports team captains and members, and to consider the possibility of starting up more teams and also forming music groups.

International trips

YBs and pupils are increasingly moving beyond Hong Kong and broadening their horizons in doing so. A number of YBs joined the Bar's delegation to Beijing in June 2011, and two YBC members attended the International Weekend 2011 in the UK.

Buzz

The YBC has continued to keep YBs and pupils informed about the YBC's events through its publication, Buzz. It published Issue 16 in April 2011, and is aiming to publish Issue 17 over the next few weeks. The highlight of Issue 16 was an interview with Chief Justice Li, and Issue 17 will contain a letter which Chief Justice Ma has kindly written to YBs and pupils.

Westlaw promotions

Through Issue 16 of Buzz, Thomson Reuters rolled out a special offer to YBs. For \$7,200 for the year, YBs gained access to the online research system, Westlaw HK Primary, for one year and also received either Hong Kong Civil Procedure 2011 (Volumes 1 and 3) or Archbold Hong Kong 2011 (main work only). The YBC is currently working together with the Bar Council to discuss other possible deals with Thomson Reuters.

A note of thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all YBC members as well as the numerous other YBs and pupils who have organised and participated in all the YBC events over the past year. Further, the Bar Council has given the YBC a great deal of support, for which the YBC is very grateful. Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Rani Romani and the rest of the Bar Secretariat for their kind assistance throughout the year.

Members of YBC 2011

Queenie Lau (Chairman)
Ann Lui (Vice Chairman)
Isaac Chan (Vice Chairman)
May Chung (Secretary)
Vincent Lung (Treasurer)
Gloria Tse
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Arthur Lam
Sabrina Ho
Selina Kung
Kay Seto
Emma Tsang
Hugh Kam
Adrian Wong
Deanna Law

Queenie Lau
Chairman of the YBC

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