

Report on Special Committee on Young Barristers

The Special Committee on Young Barristers (“YBC”), consisting of 20 members all within 5 years’ of call, is responsible for promoting the interest and welfare of young barristers in Hong Kong. We also serve as a channel of communication between the Young Bar and senior members of the Bar – to ensure that any ideas, issues or concerns affecting both ends of the Bar can be addressed effectively and efficiently.

This year, YBC continues to achieve this aim by organising and participating in local and international events of the Bar and to prepare for new challenges and initiatives for the benefit of the future Young Bar.

HKBA Debating Competition 2014

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the HKBA Debating Competition. The aim of the competition is to raise awareness amongst secondary school students on the importance of the Rule of Law and to encourage debates on current socio-legal affairs.

This year, there has been a change in the rules of the competition so as to increase the number of participating teams and to reduce the number of qualifying rounds. The competition continues to be hugely popular amongst secondary schools. There were 20 and 24 participating teams in the Chinese and English divisions respectively. The Grand Finals took place on 29th March 2014 at the University of Hong Kong. In the English division, St. Paul’s Convent School and Diocesan Girls’ School argued on the motion of “the Laws should be tightened to reduce the number of visitors to Hong Kong”. In the Chinese division, Munsang College (HK Island) and La Salle College argued on the same motion. In the end, Diocesan Girls’ School and Munsang College (HK Island) were the champions of their respective Gold Award category.

We are honoured to have the Honourable Chief Justice Ma, the Chief Magistrate Mr. Clement Lee, Mr. Graham Harris SC and Mr. Richard Khaw as the adjudicators of the English finals and Principal Magistrate Mr. Simon Lui, Chairman of the Bar Mr. Paul Shieh SC, Vice-Chairman of the Bar Mr. Paul Lam SC, Council Members Mr. Andrew Mak and Mr. PY Lo as the adjudicators of the Chinese finals.

Special thanks to Tanie Toh, members of the organising committee and all the Bar members who have devoted their time and effort in adjudicating the preliminary rounds of the competition. We would also like to thank all the student helpers of the University of Hong Kong for their kind assistance in organising this competition.

Annual Dragon Boat Championships 2014

The Bar’s dragon boat team – ‘Dragon Advocates’ once again took part in the Stanley International Dragon Boat Championships at the Stanley Main Beach on Tuen Ng Festival on 2 June 2014. This year, many new members, including pupils took part in the race. Apart from water training, there were also regular land training sessions for the team. The

training sessions have proven to be an excellent opportunity for members to interact and to keep fit and healthy. On the race day, our team made it to the second round. It was a very satisfactory result because many of the team members were first time paddlers. We would like to convey our special thanks to Katy Chung, Kelvin Tang, Newton Mak and all the participating members for their support and participation in this meaningful event. Given the high level of interests amongst the young members and pupils. YBC will continue to participate in this event in the coming year.

Convention Against Torture (CAT) Training 2014

On 8 February 2014, YBC assisted in organising the Bar's "Top-up" course on the new 'Unified Screening Mechanism' (USM) which was commenced on 3 March 2014. About 198 members have attended the "Top-up" course. The aim is to prepare barristers intending to enrol or to continue their practice as duty lawyers on the Convention Against Torture Scheme of the Duty Lawyers Service. We are honoured to have invited Ms. Sally Cheung of the Immigration Department to introduce the background and launch of the USM. Mr. Ambrose Chiu, representative from the UNHCR (HK Sub-Office) also gave a talk on 'Providing legal assistance to CAT claimants, model rules of ethics for legal advisers in refugee cases and other procedural matters'. Mr. Hectar Pun also shared with us the latest developments of the relevant law (both statutory and case law) on non-refoulement protection in Hong Kong. As of 2 August 2014, the CAT office has handled 6,748 cases, including 11 successful cases involving 22 applicants. We believe there will be increasing interests and demands from members to participate in these training programmes in the future.

University Relations: Talks

YBC maintains a tradition of hosting talks for law students (including LLB, LLM, PCLL & JD) in Hong Kong. We understand that the Bar can be quite a mysterious profession in the eyes of young law students. The aim of these talks is to give them first-hand information of what it is like to pursue a career at the Bar, and to clear some of their misconceptions of the Bar constantly instilled by social media. We hope these students will be well-informed before deciding to apply for pupillages or mini-pupillages. This year, we have been invited to speak at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on 27 January 2014 (mainly for post-graduate students) and University of Hong Kong on 27 February 2014 (for PCLL students).

Apart from local universities, YBC has also organised a career talk event on 11 August 2014 exclusively for law students from overseas universities. Participating universities include, for example, University of Oxford, Durham University, Warwick University, University of Bristol and University College London. As YBC did not participate in the Law Fair this year, the aim of this talk is to provide career advice to overseas law students who intended to join the Bar. We provided guidance to these law students on matters such as the timing and application of mini-pupillages and the choice of legal subjects. Talks such as these have proven to be more effective in helping law students in making informed choices to join the Bar. It is also more economical to host a career talk than manning a booth at the Law Fair because the latter would demand much resources, cost and time.

YBC Talk Series – “Arbitration for Young Lawyers”

This talk was jointly organised by YBC and the Young Solicitors Group (YSG) of the Law Society of Hong Kong. The aim is to introduce to young lawyers the latest developments and practices in the field of arbitration. We are honoured to have invited Ms. Teresa Cheng SC (Chairperson of the HKIAC and an arbitration specialist) to share with us her experience as an arbitrator, and the developments in international and local arbitration practices. As the audience were mainly young legal practitioners, we have also invited two guest speakers, Mr. Robert Rhoda (Senior Associate at Smyth & Co.) and Mr. David Fong (young barrister), to share with us their experiences in establishing their practices in arbitration. The speakers were also kind enough to stay behind after the talk to mingle and to discuss various issues with the audience. Special thanks to Robert Chan and fellow young members for co-ordinating this event.

YBC Talk Series – Meeting with the Chief Magistrate

This is a special event which focused on improving YBs’ criminal practices in the Magistrates’ Courts. We are honoured to have invited the Chief Magistrate Mr. Clement Lee to share with us his experience and day-to-day challenges as a magistrate, and how YBs can better equip themselves in handling cases before the Magistrates’ Courts. This talk was held on 26 July 2014 at the Kowloon City Magistracy. About 20 members (mostly 5 to 7 years’ of call) attended the talk. We are also pleased to have several young magistrates to share with us their experience at the bench. We received positive feedback from the participants and YBC will continue to organise similar judicial career briefings for members who are interested in pursuing a career in the Judiciary. Special thanks to Arthur Lam for co-ordinating this briefing session for us.

Short Attachment Scheme (“SAS”)

This year, we have received a few applications from YBs to participate in the Scheme. However, we have not been able to pair up the YBs with suitable and available Guiding Members. We shall endeavour to expand the pool of Guiding Members in the coming year so that the YBs will have more choices in the selection of dates and in the areas of practice they would like to observe. The SAS will continue to run and YBs are encouraged to apply. Information can be obtained from the Bar Secretariat and the circular issued to all members in 2013 (Circular No.060/13).

Joint Professionals Activities in 2014

The HKBA is one of the founding members of the Hong Kong Coalition of Professional Services (HKCPS) in 2001, along with other professional bodies such as the Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants. This year, the Young Coalition Professional Group (YCPG) of the HKCPS continues to organise a host of events, which were aimed at providing a platform for exchange of ideas between young members of various professional bodies within the HKCPS. The Youth Forum 2014 - “Hong Kong 2030: An Ideal City?” was held on 26th July 2014. YBC as

representative of the Bar in YCPG took part in the legal sector panel discussion. The panel speakers included the Honourary Secretary for Justice Mr. Rimsky Yuen SC. The discussion involved the competence of the Hong Kong's legal infrastructure and Hong Kong as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services. Moreover, on 13th June 2014, members of the YBC attended the Annual Dinner Party of the Recreation and Sports Club for Hong Kong Professional Bodies ("RSCP") at the Grand Stage of the Western Market. YBC will continue to take part in joint professional activities which relate to the enhancement and development of our practices. Special thanks to Rachael Siu for co-ordinating various meetings and events with the YCPG and other professional bodies.

BUZZ

This year, the Bar has combined the Bar Newsletter and BUZZ into one single publication. A new Bar Newsletter was issued in September 2014. From this year onwards, updates and reports on YBC activities will be published in the Bar Newsletter. YBs will continue to participate in the editorial works of the Bar's publication. Special thanks to Osmond Lam for his editorial support and guidance to the YBs on the latest issue of the Bar Newsletter.

International Conferences

A World Bar Conference (WBC) was organised by the International Council of Advocates and Barristers (ICAB) every two years in different cities worldwide. YBC took part in this year's WBC which took place on 4 to 6 September 2014 in Queenstown, New Zealand. The theme of this year's conference is 'Advocates as Protectors of the Rule of Law'. Prominent speakers from all over the world were invited to address a large group of barristers and advocates from different jurisdictions. YBC will continue to send representatives to attend the WBC, as the WBC is the only conference which brings all members of ICAB and guest jurisdictions together for a 3-day debate and discussion on topics directly concerning the legal professions and our daily practices as an advocate.

On 15 to 17 May this year, YBC has for the first time, attended the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. The conference focused on a wide range of interesting and pertinent topics such as the relationship between social media and the law, the creative use of exhibits and access to justice internationally. It was an excellent opportunity for young lawyers to network and to learn about the practices of their counterparts in other jurisdictions. It is also an excellent opportunity for YBs to observe how other young lawyers position themselves in the increasingly competitive legal market.

Christmas Drinks Party 2014

The annual YBC Christmas Party took place on 9th December 2014 at the Common Room in Central. As with previous years, this is a relatively informal event of the Bar. It is free-of-charge and is open to all members of the Judiciary, members of the Bar and pupils. This year, about 100 members attended the Christmas Party. Also, we are honoured to

have invited the Honourable Chief Justice Ma and many members of the Judiciary to join us to celebrate the festive season.

A note of thanks

YBC is immensely grateful to the Bar Council, members of the Bar and members of the Judiciary for their constant guidance and support in the works of YBC and in promoting the general welfare and interests of our young members. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to the 20 dedicated committee members who have devoted so much of their time and energy in executing our activities smoothly and efficiently this year. Finally, thank you to Ms. Natalie Kan and the rest of the Bar Secretariat for their kind assistance throughout the year.

Members of YBC 2014-2015:

Selina Kung (Chairman)

Deanna Law (Vice Chairman)

Hugh Kam (Vice Chairman)

Emma Tsang (Secretary)

Rachael Siu (Treasurer)

Esther Chan

Sabrina Ho

Alan Lo

Tanie Toh

Adrian Wong

Gary Leung

Emerald Shek

Robert Chan

Edward Chow

Kerby Lau

Ernest CY Ng

Carol Wong

Ryan Law

Michael Lok

Newton Mak

Selina Kung
Chairman
Special Committee on Young Barristers

10 December 2014