

THE PAST

Several years ago I was enjoying some beer at the (old) SCR with my colleagues from Ecology & Biodiversity. During our discussion, one of the SCR servers (Shadow) swaggered over to our table with a document in hand - an ExCo nomination form. With a few giggles, my colleagues quickly seized the opportunity to nominate me to the ExCo. I reluctantly obliged - assuming that I would compete for the vacant post and surely lose when it came to a vote. As luck would have it, I ran unopposed and joined the ExCo soon thereafter.

I committed to making the best of the situation. My platform was simple - to ensure that Heinz ketchup (no, not catsup!) remained available, and to encourage the regular rotation of quality beers on tap. I was partly successful on those fronts. Along the way I came to know the existing ExCo members led by our former chairman, Daniel Churchill. I was immediately impressed by their commitment to the SCR membership.

At that time the SCR was struggling from the onslaught of the pandemic, which seemed to be hastening a slow decline in the quality and quantity of our clubhouse and our membership, respectively. We needed the support of the University, which came in the form of a line of credit to keep the facilities running. The future was very uncertain.

Little did I know what was in store for all of us - an unprecedented change for the SCR was on the horizon. We were informed that the SMT was interested in revamping the SCR clubhouse, in an effort to help modernize the facilities and operations. Our former EVP, Steve LO took this on as a pet project - one of several reform projects under the WeServe umbrella that has seen many other reviews and changes across campus.

I felt some relief, and excitement that I could contribute. I knew something about renovations - and had some experience serving on the SWIMS expansion committee. I was also interested in lending my thoughts on food and beverage offerings. Steve's approach was aggressive - and he committed us to a break-neck schedule I believe was unprecedented on our bureaucratic campus. We had weekly meetings where all participating units were held to account for their successes and lapses and where a terse exchange or two was not uncommon. I joined simply as an alternate to Daniel - who was steadfast in representing the views of the membership.

THE PRESENT

The outcome of those meetings is manifest in our newly refreshed clubhouse - which I am immensely proud of. The Ming Pavilion is elegant and spacious - and the food is exceptionally good. Cafe 1951 is a vibrant and bright meeting place - with a dynamic menu and a broad range of refreshing beverages. As the pandemic wanes and life returns to campus, so too has the usage of the SCR. The facilities which at first seemed a bit sterile have become warm and vibrant with our members' returning. Recently, we were visited by a delegation from a sister university who came to see our clubhouse first-hand - in a hope they might emulate our success! This is a testament to the great outcome of the renovation project - and that word travels quickly that the SCR is back and better than ever.

That said, we have always anticipated that the complete reboot of our operations and business model would incur costs in excess of income, especially during this protracted economic downturn. In addition to the initial line of credit, the University has endeavored to further support the SCR. This assistance is not without oversight. We are grateful to have Mr. Tony LO, Director of the FEO as an *ex-officio* member. I leave the numbers for members to digest and welcome

discussion of financial matters at the AGM. I am also pleased to report that recent months have seen record-setting revenues in excess of \$1M - and there is yet more room for growth.

Beyond the clubhouse, one outcome of the SCR reform, was the inclusion of the “body-corporate” and ex-officio members to our Executive Committee. While some might leap to a conclusion that this undermines the SCR autonomy - my observation has been completely different. It is a great asset to the SCR to have the Directors of HR, Finance, and Estates present - who often provide real-time advice on all relevant matters under their portfolio. Let’s also not forget that they are part of our membership as well! The ex-officio members of the ExCo were critical in supporting the SCR over the last year, when Richard Van Ness Simmons and I were the only remaining elected ordinary members! I am grateful to Richard for sticking it out with me in our acting capacity as ExCo officers.

Fortunately, that circumstance will soon improve substantially with a new ExCo in place. Members will recall at the last AGM, the election results were nullified on account of irregularities in the voting process. Although we hoped to hold a by-election some time ago, the truth is that our membership database required intensive review and digitization, in order for us to reach our *active* membership. In that process it was discovered a number of unusual memberships that did not align to either our Constitution or Bye-laws. Today, I am happy to report that this has been rectified thanks to the diligent efforts of our management staff and the election will proceed prior to the upcoming AGM to install a new Ex-Co for the SCR.

The SCR will continue to improve as we rebuild our membership and increase our usage. In the past year we have grown by ~100 members through organic growth alone. Moreover, we have hosted nearly 100 events for various members and departments. In the coming months, we will roll out promotions and targeted marketing to attract more active members. We will also table a proposal at the upcoming AGM to establish a new alumni membership, which can help to increase the use of the clubhouse during off-peak hours (nights and weekends). By doing so, we can create a sustainable model for expanding our opening hours, lowering prices, and expanding our services to all members. Indeed, the more we use the Clubhouse, the better it will become!

THE FUTURE

The new ExCo will fully realize the potential of our new clubhouse, management, and services. I am excited to see the contributions our newly elected officers will bring to the scene - including their ideas for member-oriented events, such as tastings, galleries, music, cultural and festive seasonal events, and more. The SCR is our home, and we should enjoy it! I hope that the new ExCo will continue to nurture the relationship with the University and management so that we can work cohesively towards a bright future - together.

Last but not least, I want to give my sincere thanks and appreciation to Paul Lee and David Ting, who have spent considerable time with me and the ExCo to better understand the membership and digest our feedback. I also wish to thank President Xiang Zhang and other members of the Senior Management Team, past and present, for their steadfast support of the SCR.

Sincerely,

David M. Baker
Acting Chairman