

EXISTENTIAL CRISIS FOR TKU STUDENT CLUBS

For those who still consider joining a student club as a prerequisite of campus life are in for a shock. On modern campus, such thinking is history, and ultra modern students no longer see extra curriculum activities as a 'must' to their happiness nor future success. Such a shift of attitude is well reflected in recent years in the decreased number of student clubs in TKU, which used to have the most clubs among Taiwan's universities and colleges. The statistics regarding the fluctuation of club numbers, such as 10 new ones two years ago, two new one this year, but a loss of 5 clubs last years, does show a tendency for this declining. These numbers speaks volumes for the marginal role clubs have become amongst the four elements: Grades, Love, Clubs and Part-time Work, that used to be essential for a fulfilling student life.

Today, many student clubs at Tamkang are on the verge of closing, and most of them are of academic and social servicing nature. For example, Ching Pu Club, a servicing one, which was very active in the 60's and 70's, was closed down years ago, whereas Fortitude-Simplicity Club, another one with servicing nature is facing the threat of being closed down, too. Both of them, together with Children's Welfare Club and Tamkang Volunteer Worker's Counseling Service Club were once considered the four biggest and best servicing clubs at Tamkang. Unfortunately, clubs like these, as Huang Shi-Bang, the former Ching Pu Club Director put it, need a great deal of man power to run as they frequently have volunteer activities on various communities. As these activities demand a lot of energy and time, many students are hesitant in joining and existing members often quit due to exhaustion. All these have led to the present crisis these clubs are facing today.

Another reason for the decline in membership for some clubs, according to

Jiang Yi-ling, the former Chinese Herbal Medicine Study Club Director, is that as life has become more versatile, a lot more choices for amusement are presented for young students today. Activities in clubs, in comparison, are neither novel nor exciting. For her, this is not the worst problem but the problem caused by this phenomenon. She believes that the lack of support for the leadership, arising from a shortfall of members, in running club affairs is the most worrying. Most club directors, she points out, often end up running a one-man or one-woman show, which in the long term, is not sustainable. There are exceptions, of course. Some of the athletic clubs, may have been affected by the Olympics in Athens, have attracted many new members this year.

Even though there is this shift of value in what a good university life should be and student clubs may not be as entertaining as other amusements, you can still broaden your perspectives, making great friends, learning invaluable interpersonal skills and effective time management by participating in them. Besides, it is free, so join one now.

2010/09/27