

Opinion: Hong Kong deserves democracy

By Tim Young & Jose Velazquez

On Sept. 22, two student groups, Scholarism and the Hong Kong Federation of Students, started protesting against China's decision to not allow universal suffrage within Hong Kong, according to The Guardian newspaper. Universal Suffrage is the public's right to vote in an unrestricted way during elections. China is looking to screen candidates for the chief executive of Hong Kong (the highest office) by a panel of 1,200 Beijing loyalists according to the British Broadcasting Corporation. Students and other Hong Kong residents are opposed to this.

According to CNN, student protest groups moved through the city, and ended up standing outside the government headquarters demanding that the Hong Kong government not allow China's government policy. Later, as time progressed, more and more activists joined, and the movement gained the attention of the world. In the past weeks, protesters in the movement, dubbed the "Umbrella Movement" because Hong Kongers were seen protecting themselves against tear gas using umbrellas as shields

from Hong Kong police, have been very active. As the attention grew rapidly, the number of protestors increased from a few hundred to thousands of activists. Progressively, these activists have immigrated from Hong Kong's streets to a formal debate that took place on Oct. 21, according to Reuters. Five student leaders, primarily led by Lester Shum, and the five Hong Kong officials led by Carrie Lam debated and shared many arguments; neither side of the debate seemed willing to yield to the others case.

After these debates, Hong Kong officials would still not budge on the idea of electoral reform. Although the debate did not sway the Hong Kong officials, students continue the fight for a real democracy in Hong Kong. Students believe, although a nuisance to people that need to go to work, these protests are necessary to continue moving forward towards their goal of universal suffrage.

Students of the movement still felt very disturbed and unsatisfied after the first talks between the student leaders and Hong Kong officials, according to the International Business Times.

Student leader Alex Chow told the Christian Science Monitor that city officials "can now decide whether to be democratic heroes or historical villains ... I believe every Hong Kong citizen is waiting to see."

Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chunying was recently quoted in saying "Democracy would see poorer people dominate [the] Hong Kong vote" in the South China Morning Post. To date, the protests continue, marking one month of the Umbrella Movement. Clearly, vast difference exist between both parties. In learning from the mistakes of Occupy Wall Street, protestors should chart out a clear course for next steps. Eventually, they may lose support from the very same people they are trying to help by occupying physical spaces, disrupting Hong Kong; however their goal is very much worth fighting for.



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"Democracy would see poorer people dominate [the] Hong Kong vote."
- Leung Chunying

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