

Hiring process
HOLZ Carsten A <socholz@ust.hk>
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To: [Division head, SOSC faculty]

Dear [Division head],

I don't want to know how much time you have spent on that write-up for the Provost. I offer my respect.

Sorry that I now need to launch an attack on the hiring system that you inherited.

Are we adopting normal professional practices? I.e., do the faculty members jointly decide on a new appointment, following joint discussion and a one-person-one-vote procedure?

Or do we continue to follow the North Korean Model, where the commander-in-chief makes the decision (or a committee appointed by the commander-in-chief recommends to the commander-in-chief, who then makes the decision)?

If we do not follow normal professional practices, why would I want to attend the job talks (or meet with the candidates) – unless I have a personal research interest in the topic or the person?

Then you have to be consistent in the application of the North Korean Model and make explicit that everyone who doesn't attend gets shot.

Or use some form of blackmail (“if you don't attend, I will use my vast powers to stamp out your career”).

-- There is a historical context. Some years ago, a search committee for a division head made a choice for a particular candidate. I then organized a proper vote by all faculty members which showed about 8 votes against, 1 for, and 1 abstention. (We were a small department then. Those on the committee did not take part, and some people were absent.) The Vice-President for Academic Affairs abstained from making the appointment and accused me of making trouble. I concluded that the VPAA either is an idiot -- does not *see* the utter failure of his “faculty consultation” process -- or a hypocrite /liar -- on the one hand says he wants “faculty consultation,” on the other hand prevents it by retaining the North Korean Model.

To me, the North Korean Model is bankrupt.

Best,
Carsten