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0.65% real salary increase

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Bcc: [School faculty]

Dear colleagues in HUMA and SOSC,

I got a 3.25% nominal salary increase (to HKD 111,995) — a 0.65% real increase with a March 2018 CPI of 2.6% — compared to (i) civil servants' same-position (no promotion) across-the-board 4.06% nominal salary increase and (ii) the corresponding 4.06% increase in salary money received by HKUST from the government.

This is the sixth year in a row that every single civil servant in Hong Kong and the average private sector employee — always without any promotion or any gain in seniority — was deemed by Provost Shyy Wei and by the dean of the School of Humanities and Social Science (SHSS) to be superior to me. As of September 2018, the missing (cumulative, 0% interest) salary amount is HKD 188,000.

My income today is either the same or worse than 23 years ago when I started at HKUST as Assistant Professor. See attached file “CompareSalary1995-2018.” — A big issue is that the home financing allowance has ended. Why I did not buy a house back then is a long story that I may write up some day. One aspect: Dean William Tay violated university rules and thereby kept my allowance at such a low rate that it just never made sense to buy. I wrote this up twelve years ago (<http://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/HKUST-SOSC.html#Review0405>).

New dean, new request for a salary raise. The last request, in 2015, was ignored by James Lee. This year's got a 'No' with declared empathy.

Somewhere between rumor and credible information: Our school, unlike the other three schools, some years ago decided that the SHSS will not switch to the provost's 'cap and top-up' procedure — salaries are capped but the school can then freely top up — because a couple of people in SHSS have such high salaries that they would be hurt by a cap. (Looks like those couple people happen to be “the school.”)

Some fun facts:

(1) The HKUST home financing allowance is tied to the university's salary scale and over the years I have received a number of tables that show the correspondence between salary categories and allowance. The three tables that I could readily find show that in 2001 (1 April 2001) my salary was 8% along the range from the lowest to the “highest or above” salary in the table. — This is just the plain nominal salary without any adjustments. — Twelve years later, I had moved ahead and was at 27% of the range. Yet after another four years later, by 2017, my salary had fallen back to 24% of the range.[1] If salaries were uniformly distributed, 76% of HKUST faculty earn more than I do, 23+ years into working at HKUST or two-thirds through a lifespan at HKUST and with a research record and

teaching experience to match. If salaries were normally distributed, it looks even worse. (The distribution is probably right-skewed. This is a public university, I expect the use of tax payers' money to be in the public realm.)

(2) For the next fun fact you'll get to enjoy your social-scientist pattern recognition capabilities. See attached file "ResearchTeaching."

(3) As in previous years: All Business School students are de facto prohibited from taking SOSC 1440 'Introduction to Economics' (a course that I, and others in the division, teach). Students from Science and Engineering, if they want to minor in economics (or business studies?), are also prohibited from taking SOSC 1440.

Best,
Carsten

[1] In 2001, the lowest HKUST salary was HKD 51,740 and the highest was "HKD170,750 or above." My salary of HKD60,730 covered 8% of the range from HKD51,740 to HKD170,775 $((60,730-51,740)/(170,775-51,740))$. The official salary interval in 2013 was from a low of HKD57,275 to a high of "HKD201,950 or above." The official salary interval in 2017 was from a low of HKD67,270 to a high of "HKD236,165 or above."

2 attachments

 **CompareSalary1995-2018.xlsx**
12K

 **ResearchTeaching.pdf**
205K