

**RE: Need to define research inactive faculty**

**Carsten Holz** <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 26, 2019

To: [Division head]

Bcc: [School faculty]

I object to the exercise of defining "research inactive" to begin with.

I object to "canvassing" faculty opinion on the definition of "research inactive" without specifying why one needs to define "research inactive," and what the consequences of being "research inactive" are (and who decides the consequences).

I object to asking faculty to respond within 1.5 work days unless it is a routine, unimportant matter.

Regarding the 3 criteria you list:

(1) Publications: In economics, a 3-year horizon may not be enough.

And maybe not only in economics.

As far as I understand, our colleague [X] would have failed this criterion several years in a row.

What would you have done in [X's] case? Would you have fired him?

(2) GRF [General Research Fund] publications [this should read: applications]: I most strongly object to #2. Being a researcher has nothing to do with making money for SHYY Wei (to give to other people).

Please provide evidence of a positive correlation between making money and research. In my own experience, it is a \*negative\* correlation. Having to deal with making money distracts from my research.

You can be a Nobel Prize winner (in economics, at least) without ever having received a single grant.

If SHSS establishes such a ridiculous requirement, I will feel free to put in an equally ridiculous GRF application to meet your GRF requirement. You may wish to establish pre-submission censorship criteria within HKUST for GRF applications.

-- Come to think of it, I could propose a GRF "How to Rapidly Depreciate a University's Only Asset (the Faculty) and Run the University into the Ground."

(3) Conference: I guess if you require faculty to make money (and SHYY Wei can't take it all away), you'll also need to require them to spend it. Fortunately, there is plenty of vacation trips masquerading as conferences. -- It's not my favorite.

The requirements you propose reduce the scope for academic research by only allowing that type of research and behavior that suits the dictator controlling the institution.

The requirements are alien to academia, they are against freedom of research, and ultimately constitute censorship of research methods / approaches. They reduce the scope

for research and eliminate diversity.

I judge your endeavor to be 'complete idiocy,' comprehensible to me only as intentional destruction of academia.

To me, this endeavor disqualifies those who pursue it from leadership positions at an academic institution.

If you absolutely need to \*measure\* research, you have the RAE [government's Research Assessment Exercise] information.

Carsten

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-- This email may be freely shared.

-- This email is bcc'ed to everyone listed under SOSC and HUMA on HKUST's Faculty Profiles list. (I don't know who is on your staff list and I can't use it in a \*gmail\* 'reply all'.)

On Fri, Nov 22, 2019 at 8:41 AM [Division head] wrote:

Dear SOSC Research-Track Faculty –

In response to the University's request, SHSS is working on what constitutes "research inactive" faculty. Dean Tsai has asked me to canvas you in regard to the following criteria. My understanding is that a research-track faculty member should meet all three conditions in order to be considered "research active". Please send me your feedback before Noon, Nov. 25 (next Monday).

Definition

*In the humanities and social science, faculty may be regarded as "research inactive," demonstrating less than the 40% expected effort and research output, when any ONE of the following conditions apply:*

- 1. Zero peer-reviewed books, peer-reviewed articles, or peer-reviewed chapters in edited volumes for three years in a row.*
- 2. Zero GRF applications for three years in a row. Attempted applications count. Faculty who applied but were not funded will not be penalised.*
- 3. Zero conference/workshop presentations or invited academic speaking engagements for three years in a row.*

Thank you for your attention.

[Division head]