

Real salary increase of 2.1%

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Bcc: [School faculty]

Dear professorial colleagues in HSS,

I am pleased to share that in this year's "merit review" I received a 2.1% real salary increase or a 4.16% nominal salary increase for my nominal salary to reach HKD116,650. (The year-on-year March 2019 CPI change was 2.1%.)

This assumes that our military regime doesn't have its agents penalize us for not doing a better job turning students into yet more compliant cogs of the machine.

My salary change is also, as usual, great news for you: Since my salary increase is below average, yours, on average across faculty, must be above average.

This assumes that SHYY Wei is not cheating everyone.

In the case of the non-academic staff review, Apple Daily reported on 20 March 2019 (<https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/daily/article/20190320/20637170>) that the very top level of the university had issued internal quotas for salary reviews that would contradict the publicly stated policy of the university. Mark Hodgson, Vice-President for Administration and Business, in his lengthy and seemingly carefully crafted email equally dated 20 March 2019, writes, among others, that "there is no forced performance rating distribution for departments/offices." – Judge for yourself. I append a google translation of most of the Apple Daily article (Appendix A). Mark Hodgson's email you already have (he sent to everyone). – Since I have zero trust in the HKUST administration, I continue to demand full, public disclosure on faculty financial compensation going back to at least 2008.

If the "merit review" were a performance review, my performance has been judged worse than the performance of the average private sector employee in Hong Kong for the sixth year out of seven (one time it was judged equal). The cumulative shortfall in my salary as of end-September 2019 compared to the average civil servant pay increases over the past seven years has reached HKD 264,515. This does not yet include the automatic seniority pay and the promotions that civil servants receive (and it assumes an interest rate of 0%). Overall, my current financial benefits at HKUST—salary and all other, including non-financial benefits—approximately equal those I received when I was an Assistant Professor at HKUST. (See my last year's salary letter for details.) My question is how to reduce my google scholar citations by 98% to match what the administration judges my worth.

Something that has been on my mind for a while: One can't retire on The HKUST Staff Superannuation Scheme at the mandatory retirement of age 65. There is a very big hole in retirement funding. See the item "Retirement Finances" at <http://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/FakeMeritReview.html>. I actually backed out the internal rate of return of different funds, which in itself is of interest. Bottom line: It makes sense to regard a good part of your salary as necessary retirement saving rather than as disposable

income. – There is more stuff on that webpage that goes back to my April 2019 entry in the “Annual Report Form,” which I append below (Appendix B).

We don't have a HKUST faculty labor union that protects our interests. Consider joining what may be the next-best thing, <https://www.hkptu.org/english>. Membership is HKD 60 per year and you'll find some colleagues there.

Best,
Carsten

Appendix A: Apple Daily article

Excerpts [with minor adjustments] via google translate

Apple Daily 20 March 2019

<https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/daily/article/20190320/20637170>

科大逼主管評 70%員工不達標非教學職系變相減薪兼隨時被炒

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has reformed the salary structure for all 1,800 non-teaching staff this year, changing their pay increases [to] half [of] pay based on performance. It is reported that the school has always claimed that if the performance is good, the salary increase will be better than the old system. However, the source told "Apple" that HKUST management ordered that the proportion of employees who can be paid based on performance be limited to 30%, and put pressure on the relevant department heads: "If you [don't] know how to do appraisal, I will I suspect that you (the supervisor) have problems."

...

HKUST sources explained that the school will trial a new structure in the 2017/18 school year, according to the university's ... five-level performance appraisal mechanism, staff [whose] performance is rated as meeting expectations, exceeding expectations, and excellent

... can get the entire salary increase, [i.e.] take the remaining 2.5 percentage points in the above example [assumed average 5 percent salary increases], together with the guarantee [2.5 percent to] raise [their] salary by a total of 5 percentage points. [If staff are] rated as in need of improvement or [unsatisfactory], in the above example, only a total of 2.5 percentage points increase in salary can be achieved. [If one doesn't meet the standard consecutively for two years, one can] get fired.

Sources continue to point out that during the trial of the new structure, an average of 70% of the staff met the standard that year, [leading the upper levels of the university to afterwards] be extremely dissatisfied and to summon the heads of all departments to "take care of the lungs" [照肺], indicating that they did not accept the compliance rate as high as 70%, requiring that the proportion of employees who meet the standard after the formal conversion must be controlled to 30%, with one [of] the vice principal university management was pressured by supervisors [who] said, "If you don't know how to do appraisal, I will doubt your ability."

It is reported that if the university is officially restructured next academic year, all departments need to [do a] final calibration [after having received the achievement evaluation forms], [supposedly to guarantee that the] scoring guidelines for each

[department] are [fair]. In fact, it is necessary to control the proportion of final employees to meet the requirements of the senior management of the university, that is, within 30%.

...

About half of the employees who were requested to restructure this time, that is 900, joined the company before 1997 [and receive] provident fund benefits. It is reported that if you choose not to change the system, you will be forced to change the contract terms in the new school year. In the future, HKUST will only calculate the provident fund contribution amount based on the "guaranteed salary increase" mentioned above. Criticized by employees for being extremely unfair.

Appendix B: Carsten's entry in the April 2019 "Annual Report Form"

All entries in this submission except this window/paragraph (and the Consulting "declarations") have been pre-filled by automated mechanisms or by people other than me. I consider the merit review a farce and have no interest in giving face to HKUST President SHYY Wei's fake merit review. (The recent revelation in the popular press about HKUST management lies and cheating in the context of staff merit review, with abysmally inappropriate and for a university unacceptable management behavior, do not help.)

I request complete transparency about salary, salary changes and underlying faculty performance documentation for the years since 2008—normal university practices rather than the current mafia practices.

I submit three documents that substantiate my view that SHYY Wei's merit review is fake and that SHYY Wei is systematically destroying my livelihood.

(1) On SHYY Wei's fake merit review see the Social Science Division draft "merit" review guidelines of 9 November 2015.

(2) I have written up the retirement fiasco at SHYY Wei's imposed mandatory retirement age of 65.

(3) A few years ago I brought the retirement/salary situation to the attention of (then) Dean James Lee, with no response. I have brought it to the attention of Dean Kellee Tsai in fall 2018 and was told there is nothing she can do. I submit here that salary request of fall 2018 (with the retirement finances now calculated to greatest possible detail and provided in (2)).

The three documents are posted at: <http://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/FakeMeritReview.html>