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Add School Board meeting Agenda Item: Disbandment of SHSS Re: SHSS School Board Meeting ~ 7 Sept 2021 (Tuesday)

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Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 9:45 AM

To: [dean's office for distribution to school faculty]

Cc: [School faculty]

[Omitted: communication with dean's office]

Agenda item: Disbandment of SHSS

(1) I would like to hear how my professorial colleagues in the School of Humanities and Social Science feel about the exodus of colleagues—some of them “front-line” in the resistance to the *Gleichschaltung* (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gleichschaltung>)—and the disappearance of academic freedom in the school. I would like to hear how they see the future (if any) of academia in SHSS. I suggest to go around one by one to hear everybody's view, perhaps giving each person one minute to speak.

(2) I would like to hear what the HKUST administration has to say about the *Gleichschaltung*: Do they want to continue pretending it's ‘business as usual’ or do they have a strategy for the survival of SHSS as an academic unit?

This is what I observe:

(1) A quiet exodus of colleagues who are able to leave, whether that is because they retained earlier jobs outside Hong Kong or are financially independent.

(2) Total silence from the HKUST administration about the exodus, with not a word on who is leaving or who has already left and what the administration has done to prevent the exodus. People just disappear, like machines that are removed from a factory floor at night.

(3) Colleagues thinking daily about how much to self-censor in their teaching and research.

(4) A university president who a year ago stated “we remain steadfast in our support for academic freedom” (email “A Message to the HKUST community (7 September 2020)”) and then discards HKUST's *core value* of academic freedom at the first opportunity (the Jane Zhang incident, <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/06/08/hong-kong-universities-penetrated-by-foreign-forces-intent-on-indoctrinating-students-claims-chief-exec-carrie-lam/>). (An independent inquiry into the Jane Zhang incident, with the outcome shared with faculty, is missing.)

(5) Most of us cannot leave HKUST given the particular characteristics of the job market for academics in Hong Kong, and finding a job outside Hong Kong is, at this stage, after the long-running demotion of SHSS from a research-focused PG program to a community college, and the accompanying destruction of academics' careers, near impossible.

This is what I think should happen:

(1) Stop all hiring. No self-respecting academic will join SHSS at this point. All that can be done is to hire people who think they don't need academic freedom or are willing to sell out academic freedom. At which point, we have left science behind.

(2) Practice integrity (another one of those HKUST core values): Disband SHSS since social *science*—and I would think it's similar for the Humanities—is no longer possible at HKUST. Provide a decent separation package for professors who have given their lives to HKUST.

[End]