

I appreciate that in the 2022 “merit salary review” I received the full civil service pay adjustment (rather than the usual half and thereby yet another real salary cut). I also appreciate that some HKUST manager insanities of recent years seem to have quietly dropped away.

The questions I raised in my last year’s personal statement (items 2 and 3) have not been answered.¹ I also note the continued, unprofessional lack of transparency about faculty salaries.

Due to a past teaching credit that I was told I had to take or lose—not that this makes any sense since one of the courses in a regular teaching load could simply have been considered a *new* teaching credit—I had a teaching-free semester in spring 2022. This allowed me to completely rewrite my paper “The Process of Economic Development in West Sichuan: the Case of Daocheng County” (accepted for publication in *The China Quarterly*). The appendix runs to 66 single-spaced pages and there is also a polished, 50% longer version of the article.

In 2022/23 I am/was on no-pay leave from HKUST to take up a position as Visiting Professor at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs to teach (i) an advanced undergraduate Chinese economy seminar and, in the (mid-career) Master of Public Affairs program, (ii) a required core macroeconomics course for public policy makers and (iii) an elective, seminar on “Economic Growth and Reform in China.” This amounted to 2.5 new preparations. Teaching has taken up most of my time at Princeton.

Visiting an institution overseas, on no-pay leave from HKUST, comes at considerable cost in terms of time and income. (i) The container shipment from Hong Kong to Princeton took 5 months, the return shipment will again consume months, and the hassles associated with moving take a large toll. (ii) My Princeton contract does not include retirement benefits, moving or research allowances, nor full health coverage. No-pay leave from HKUST means a significant blow to my finances and research; yet it is my only option to lead a normal academic life when HKUST managers blatantly violate HKUST’s sabbatical leave rules.

I cannot resolve the impossible trinity of (i) remuneration in the bottom 20% of the HKUST pay pyramid,² (ii) vastly insufficient HKUST retirement funds in eight years’ time when I reach the mandatory retirement age,³ and (iii) the lack of a housing allowance.⁴ I brought this up, in writing, with an earlier dean, who ignored it. A later dean said “there is nothing I can do.” (In a colleague’s similar case something *could* be done.) Refusing to accept HKUST managers’ condemnation to retirement in poverty, the uprootedness in the absence of a home and work space (and my household in storage) is not conducive to academia.

HKUST’s leave regulations impose yet another obstacle to academia: none allows for spending summers—when Hong Kong’s climate has proven(!) to be detrimental to my health—somewhere more conducive to health and work. As the only possible venue of summer escape, I repeatedly paid summer visits to institutions abroad. Such visits require me

¹ <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Initiative/2022-4-24-PersonalStatement-CarstenHOLZ-24Apr2022.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Retirement/HKUST-Pension-Underfunded-22Dec2020.pdf> In simplest terms, my future HKUST monthly retirement income is unlikely to exceed 20% of my current monthly HKUST salary.

⁴ <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/FakeMeritReview2019/CarstenHolz%20HFA.pdf>

to produce research along the lines favored by that institution and since I don't write papers in a 4-6 week timeframe, this means being diverted from, if not losing, my own research. (Writing useless GRF applications under pressure from management similarly harms research, as does consulting, though my consulting career was cut short when, in a project on the PRC's state-owned enterprises, I refused to remove *all* references to the CCP.)

I find myself labeled a 'legacy' professor, one who sacrificed research to teach three courses outside their discipline in their first year at HKUST and to build a postgraduate-focused research division. Then provosts imposed a nonsensical "elite" undergraduate program and eviscerated the postgraduate program. Does 'legacy' professor mean that I am now treated as a waste product of HKUST history, together with all the reneged on manager assurances?

HKUST managers' gross violation of HKUST sabbatical leave rules, their treatment of HKUST faculty as prisoners, absurd measures to alienate (if not impoverish) faculty members and impair academia, and the inane destruction of a division (or school) stand in stark contrast to HKUST's values of integrity, inclusiveness, diversity, and respect.⁵

The following doesn't help. An email I received a few years ago reads: "Dear Members of the [journal name, omitted] Editorial Board, I am writing to the 18 members of our newly reconstituted Editorial Board to ask for your help in a very serious situation for [journal name]. There are over 100 submissions that were assigned to co-Executive Editor [*name of ex-colleague in my HKUST division*] that have gone without action for a very long time, some up to nearly nine months. I have accepted the responsibility of taking on all of these assignments and am writing you to ask for your help in this urgent situation. In the next day or two, I plan to send each one of you 3 or 4 of these submissions, hoping that you [...]." It is not particularly pleasant to have to clean up after an ex-colleague who was favored and promoted by HKUST managers.

Or consider a career break-through paper published in a top discipline journal by another favored and promoted ex-colleague in my HKUST division. A blog post by a new PhD (in the same discipline, summarizing their dissertation) provides hard evidence and concludes on *this ex-colleague's paper*: "This is extremely suspicious. Speculating, it looks like the authors had a nice paper using provincial data, but a referee asked them to extend it to prefecture leaders. To fit their story, they needed to find an effect of land sales for secretaries (but not mayors), and an effect of GDP growth for mayors (but not secretaries). But maybe the data didn't agree, and their RA had to falsify the mayor promotion data to get the 'correct' result. This wouldn't be easy for referees to spot, since the replication files didn't include spell-level data. But how else did they collect such error-ridden data that also just happened to produce results consistent with their story?" The same ex-colleague postponed their application for a particular promotion at HKUST for years until I went up, on schedule, for such a promotion, so that they would be successfully measured (with a record of many more years) against me.

⁵ <https://hkust.edu.hk/about/mission-vision>. In my view, they also stand in stark contrast to principles of good university governance, from accountability to transparency and academic self-administration.