

**PUSA ALERT**  
**Issue No. 1B (September 2014)**

**Item 2 PUSA's view on Framework for Career Development and Promotion for Non-academic Staff**

The University is planning to introduce the "Framework for Career Development and Promotion for Non-academic Staff". A briefing on the draft of this Policy was given by HRO to PUSA officers in August 2014. The intention of the University is to announce this policy in the first quarter of 2015. PUSA sees that this Policy will affect the well-being of more than half of the university staff, and strongly advises the University should organize Open Forums for hearing views from concerned stakeholders.

Based on the draft tabled in that meeting, PUSA raised the following points/questions:

***Career Development***

1. Will there be any support provided by the university to the career development of non-academic staff?

***Promotion***

1. One of the criteria of eligibility for promotion as seen in the draft is achieving 'very satisfactory' grade in the appraisal exercise of two consecutive years. Is there any flexibility on this criterion?
2. It is foreseeable that this promotion exercise will demand much administrative work to start with, so it is important to streamline the process so as to avoid overloading of departmental administrators in handling the process.
3. It seems that Old Term staff cannot enjoy the "promotion" opportunity as much as New Term staff, as the former group usually have entered PolyU's workforce more than ten years when at that time a Bachelor degree was not a must. But if the prerequisite for promotion is a relevant degree, then this promotion path is actually a non-starter for them, whether accidentally or intentionally.

**Item 3 PUSA's view on the Re-appointment of the Provost**

PUSA was asked in late July to use one month to solicit views on the Re-appointment of the Provost upon the expiry of his contract by end of February 2015. PUSA had difficulties to launch a comprehensive consultation to collect views from staff in August when many were not on campus, so PUSA was planning to launch a survey to collect staff views on all aspects of performance of the Provost and submitted to the Senior Management. But PUSA was told in the meeting that the tight schedule in wrapping up a report on the Re-appointment exercise would mean the PUSA survey would not necessarily be included as a formal view. In the end, PUSA could only express its views collected from members within that period in a meeting with the President, Professor Timothy Tong, on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2014, captured as follows:

1. PUSA expresses concern on the workload on the Provost, and consequently, his effectiveness in delivering his duties in a timely manner.
2. The vacant post of VP(AD) has resulted in the Provost taking up of both staffing and academic matters, and resulting in the dragging out of important policies such as the Promotion Exercise, the Appraisal System, the establishment of the Framework for Promotion of Non-academic Staff, and the like. For instance, the delay in approving the annual Departmental Staffing Plan has chain effects on the recruitment of departmental staff (academic or non-academic) which could affect other staffing arrangements on the whole. PUSA urged the Senior Management to take necessary action accordingly.

#### **Item 4 PUSA's concern on the latest refinement of (a) Staff Appraisal System and (b) on Language Proficiency Test (LPT)**

##### **(4a) Staff Appraisal System**

It was announced in July 2014 that "People Skills" would become part of the assessment component of the performance criteria for all staff in the new round of appraisal exercise. PUSA understands and appreciates the importance of "People Skills" towards a constructive working environment. However, PUSA is having much concern about the implementation of this indicator in the appraisal process, especially when it is done in such a hasty manner.

Our view is that this new criteria should be applied to appraisal period prospectively (i.e. 2014/15 or onwards) rather than retroactively (i.e. the current arrangement of 2013/14 academic year). Also, we notice that the suggested guideline criteria for assessing on "People Skills" is identical for academic/teaching staff and non-academics, but given the different job natures, guidelines for the academic/teaching track should be modified, not to mention there is no indication of the weight of this element in contribution to the overall rating. And many non-academics do not have job responsibilities that facilitate them to be assessed according to the suggested "People Skills" criteria. Such ambiguity in assessing "People Skills" can bring about confusing, divisive and unfair feelings.

We are told that some staff can be rated 'NA' under "People Skills" if it is decided that their nature of the job does not require such skills. We are also told that some Departments/Units have kicked off this exercise and have no difficulties with this input, let alone Departments/Units Headship can work out the scope of meaning of "People Skills". PUSA maintains the concern whether this 'NA' would cause disadvantage to the overall rating, and PUSA would like to urge Department/Unit Heads to have dialogues with their staff members and reach a clear deliberation of the term before launching the new round of appraisal exercise.

##### **(4b) Language Proficiency Test**

The University introduced a Language Proficiency Test (LPT) for appointment of non-temporary executive / administrative posts at band 4 or above (excluding technical and clerical post) effective from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014. According to HRO Notice dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014, such a policy is also applicable to serving staff for appointment on promotion / transfer. As the policy has a direct impact on serving staff's career development, PUSA requested a dialogue with HRO on this issue and it took place in late August. PUSA stated at the start of the meeting that a better involvement of stakeholders in discussing the amendments of policy details that could affect them would bring about a much smoother transition. On the LPT, PUSA seek clarification from HRO:

1. If it is going to be a horizontal transfer for the concerned staff, why is there a need of LPT?
2. What is the format of the test? Who sets the papers? How is the grading system like?
3. Will there be training course or sample test papers for reference?
4. Can the Chinese paper be exempted if English is mainly used at work?
5. Is there any validity period for IELTS result? Will exemption be also granted to other public examinations, such as HKALE, SAT and the like?
6. Why is that should a concerned staff member fail in the first attempt, it needs a 3-months interval before another LPT to take place? Will this deprive one's chance for promotion?

Soon after our query, HRO issued another mail on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014 providing the "Frequently Asked Questions" Q and A as additional information to the LPT arrangement. PUSA is delighted to see HRO responding to some of the questions we have asked, but there are also areas that PUSA sees the need for further pursuance. In the meantime, PUSA welcomes any comments and suggestions from staff.

**Item 5 PUSA's feedback on the Staff Appraisal System for Staff at HoDs and above levels**

PUSA was asked to give feedbacks on the captioned document. PUSA raised two concerns on the Appraisal Guideline: (a) Is there any assessment on the teaching performance of the Head apart from one's leadership skills, research development, and achievements in student and staff development of the department? (b) Is there any chance of adopting a 360 degree evaluation on the Heads so that different stakeholders may participate in this evaluation process? On item (b), the Senior Management maintained the Dean would invite different stakeholders of the Department to express their views of the Department Head; PUSA reiterated the importance of full participation instead of invited participation. On item (a), there was a post-meeting clarification from the Senior Management that Department Head would not necessarily have to teach; PUSA has made a follow-up inquiry asking how to differentiate the appraisal of two categories of Department Heads if one is teaching and one not. PUSA is still awaiting the answer from the Senior Management.

**Item 6 PUSA's discussion with the Senior Management on the Class Boycott and Occupy Central Campaign**

PUSA officers discussed with the President on students and staff's possible participation in the Class Boycott and Occupy Central Movement during a meeting held on 29 August. The President contended freedom of speech as a core value of our society, and PolyU would respect staff and students' rights to express their views. On the other hand, he would like to urge colleagues and students to present their views peacefully and rationally, and at the same time respect others' opinions. Students are repeatedly reminded to act responsibly and be mindful of the consequences of their actions. The University will ensure that its regular operation be maintained in the case of a class boycott. Staff members of all natures are expected to discharge their professional responsibilities. If colleagues decide to cancel classes in order to participate in either movement, they are required to apply for leave and inform their respective HoDs in advance so that prior arrangements may be made, if appropriate.

PUSA was also informed that PolyU had set up a team, led by Dean of Students, to assist students involving in either campaigns, including counselling service and legal advice (for the OCM). When asked what PolyU would do if staff members involved in such activities were arrested and subsequently convicted, the Senior Management would have to look into the matter and might have to consider case by case.

PUSA EXCO  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014

## 理工大學教職員協會會訊 第 1B 期〈2014 年 9 月〉

### 第二項： 本會對『非教學人員職系發展及晉升政策』的意見

大學正計劃推出“非教學人員職系發展及晉升政策”，人力資源處於八月向教職員協會簡單介紹了該政策之初稿，並表示暫定於明年第一季公布此政策。本會認為此政策關乎超過半數的大學僱員之福祉，故強烈建議大學應為此政策舉行公開論壇，讓相關員工表達意見。本會在當日的會議就著初稿進行討論，並有以下觀點及提問：

#### 職系發展政策

- 大學在非教學人員提升才能方面，可否提供協助或資助？

#### 晉升政策

- 相關員工獲晉升所需條件之一，為在過去兩年的週年工作表現評估中，連續達致“非常滿意”之評級。此項要求，可否彈性處理？
- 處理個案和程序上，應避免複雜化和過分耗時，以免部門主管及行政人員百上加斤。
- 對舊制員工而言，很多已工作了多於十年，而當時的在職起步點不一定需要學位資歷。但若建議中的晉升機會都以擁有學位為基本資格時，對舊制員工可能是一重很難攀越的障礙，以致整個晉升機會變得遙不可及，希望校方能作出相應考慮。

### 第三項： 本會對有關常務副校長的續約事宜的意見

本會在七月下旬獲邀請在八月底前就常務副校長陳正豪教授續約事宜〈陳教授將於 2015 年 2 月底約滿〉提供意見。有鑑於八月份為暑假，本會本欲向全體員工就常務副校長續約一事作意向調查，以便向校長提供多一個參考數據。但校方表示需要在九月中提交報告，由於時間緊逼，故不能保證調查結果能被納入。本會最後只能把期間收集了的意見，在 8 月 29 日向校長唐偉章教授反映如下：

1. 本會對常務副校長的繁重工作量感到關注，並擔心這兼顧對其工作成效產生負面作用。
2. 因學務發展副校長職位在過去兩年一直懸空，常務副校長要對職員政策及教學政策作出兼顧，致使在過去一年多在推行相關政策上都出現延誤，並由此而構成一定的混亂。例如，部門/單位的週年職員計劃一日未能獲審批，對相關崗位之聘請及人事調動亦構成影響。本會希望大學高層能認真處理目前的情況。

#### 第四項： 本會對有關近期兩項微調的政策 (a) 教職員評核機制及 (b) 語文能力評核試的意見

##### (4a) 教職員評核機制

人力資源處於本年七月宣布 2013/14 年的教職員週年評核機制將會加入 “People Skills” 元素。本會明白及欣賞把這元素納入評核範圍對建立一個有建設性的工作環境之重要，但本會擔心其推出的倉促性。本會曾建議應在 2014/15 年度的週年評核機制才引入 “People Skills”，以便同事特別是教學人員對此元素之評核準則和要求有更清晰的了解。本會被告知個別單位/部門可按同事工作性質，就此元素填上「不適用」。然而如相關同事（非教學職員亦有不少「獨處」性質的工作）在這層面的評核為「不適用」時，這對其整體評核會否有負面影響呢？人力資源處指出有部分單位/部門已引入此評核元素，而且相關的單位/部門亦有自主權對 “People Skills” 作出定義及指引。本會在此懇請相關單位/部門與員工在這元素的定義上作出真誠溝通，以避免帶來可能出現的混亂、分化及不公平的感受。

##### (4b) 語文能力評核試

大學由 2014 年 6 月 1 日開始，凡聘請職位在職級表四級或以上之非臨時合約行政或管理人員（技術和文員職位除外），應徵者都需要應考語文能力評核試（下稱 LPT）。而人力資源處在 7 月 11 日再發出電郵通告，宣布此措施亦適用於現職同事，無論升級或申請調遷同一職位，其中英語文能力都要被評核。鑑於此措施對現職同事的工作前景有直接影響，本會在八月下旬與校方就相關議題作出對話，並表達了政策之變動成敗與員工能否參與其中之討論是有著正面的關係。協會並在會上向人力資源處作了一系列的提問如下：

1. 為何申請調職至同等職位也需要考 LPT?
2. LPT 以何種形式舉行？怎樣評核？
3. 校方會否舉辦訓練課程或提供考試樣本給員工參考？
4. 如相關職位之語文應用是以英語為主，此等職位可否豁免中文評核試？
5. IELTS 成績有效期是多久？除 IELTS 成績外，其他同等資格，如 HKALE, SAT 等會否被認可？
6. 同事若 LPT 不及格，為什麼要設立三個月內不可重考之限制？這限制可能會使相關同事錯失晉升機會。

本會歡迎人力資源處於 9 月 12 日就上述部分問題作出闡釋。本會會繼續跟進與此 LPT 政策有關之其他問題，歡迎同事提供意見。

#### **第五項： 本會對有關部門主管或以上的評核指引之回應**

本會被邀請對相關指引提出意見。我們提出兩項關注：〈1〉教學部門主管除了要在其領導才能、部門學術研究水平、學生及教職員的成就等因素被評核之外，其本身的教學能力是否亦在評核之列？〈2〉為了使所有持分者都能參與，校方會否容許一個對教學部門主管全方位的評核？關於第 2 點，校方表示現時院長在處理教學部門主管的續任事宜時，會廣邀不同崗位的同事提供意見。本會則重申全方位的參與跟被邀請的諮詢有別。關於第 1 點，校方在會後查證之後回覆本會，表示大學沒有特別要求教學部門主管需要參與教學工作。本會作出跟進提問，如有教學部門主管確實有參與教學，其教學方面的評核如何跟一個沒有參與此元素的主管相互比較，本會正等待校方的回覆。

#### **第六項： 本會與大學高層就罷課及佔中兩項運動的討論**

本會幹事與校長於八月二十九日討論大學如何處理同學或員工參與「佔領中環」和「罷課」。校長表示言論自由是香港社會的重要價值，而大學一向尊重同事和同學表達意見的權利。校長同時希望同學或員工能以和平理性的方式去表達意見，亦要尊重他人的想法，和對自己的行為負責。大學會在罷課期間維持正常運作，他祈望同事，特別是教學人員，要時刻履行其專業的任務。如果同事參與「佔領中環」或「罷課」，必須先向其系主任請假，以便安排和配合。

大學已成立了一個由學生事務長率領的小組，向參與這兩個運動的同學作適當的輔導和提供法律意見。被問及如果有教職員因參與活動而被拘控及定罪，校方會否將有關同事解雇。校方的回應是大學不可能就此下結論，應按個別情況作彈性處理。

香港理工大學教職員會幹事

2014 年 9 月 22 日