

PUSA ALERT 21
August 2020

Dear colleagues,

PUSA would like to wish you all the best for the new academic year and hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during the pandemic. In the past few months, PUSA has been striving for a better working environment for all of us at PolyU. Below please find a few updates for your information.

Special Attention to Major Review Cases in academic year 20/21 and the follow up concerns

The pandemic has affected many facets of normal social and work life, this could have much impact on the progress of research work taking place no matter in laboratories or in the field. PUSA shared these concerns collected from professorial track staff members to the Senior Management (SM) as early as March. PUSA was delighted when SM made an announcement in June to the concerned staff members who were supposed to face the major review exercise in 20/21 that they could ask for a deferment of this process for one year if they so wished.

But if 'the year' is affecting the research/publication progress of the professorial grade colleagues to face major review this year, it is 'the same year' that is affecting the research/publication progress of professorial grade colleagues to face major review in the year 21/22. PUSA has raised this concern to the SM recently and pleaded for them to have exceptional handling in the Promotion and Staffing Exercise given the sweeping affects on all aspects of life in this pandemic era, which must have affected the work schedule of concerned staff members. PUSA will attentively follow up on this issue.

Support to working parents of the University Community in this difficult time

PUSA has been receiving messages from anxious staff members, in particularly from the administrative side who have young kids at home, on the upcoming full scale e-learning arrangement of local schools which will start the 20/21 academic year next week. As the online mode of teaching will remain until further notice, this will fully affect staff members who have young children engaging in full day e-learning.

In light of this demand on working parents, which means there must be an adult at home to accompany the children and further IT skill support to help the kids adopt to the e-learning mode as soon as possible. PUSA has already suggested to the SM that a more relaxed adoption of 'work-from-home' practice at the discretion of the Department/Unit heads should be adopted for special arrangements of staff members engaged in the above difficulties. It is a general impression that the normal running of primary schools may happen within September, so this special arrangement should be a short-term solution. PUSA encourages the SM of the University, which is proud of being a 'caring company', to extend its helping hands to this group of staff members in this difficult time, and other staff members may help one another in a mutually supportive manner.

MBSA Issue

It was announced by the HKSAR Government that there will be a freeze on the General Adjustment of Civil Servant Pay Scale. PUSA has received concerns from staff members on how this would affect their take-home pay when most of the civil servants still maintain a point-jump for morale maintenance and living quality enhancement. The MBSA scale has become the only mechanism that may reflect the recognition the University gives to hard-working staff members. PUSA will follow up closely with the SM and will inform the University community accordingly.

Appeal for donation of Usable Items

In the past, PUSA has worked with The Community Recycling Coop (社區二手店), an organization under Industrial Relations Institute (勞資關係協進會), to organize “Usable Item Collection Campaign” twice a year on campus. Tons of items have been collected every year from PolyU staff members, which were then sold at very cheap price to lower income families in Sham Shui Po. Unfortunately, the Usable Item Collection Campaign scheduled in November 2019 was cancelled due to siege of PolyU Campus by protesters. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, it is also highly unlikely that similar activities would be organized on campus in 2020.

In this connection, we urge PolyU staff to donate your used items to The Community Recycling Coop by delivering the items to their outlet at your convenience. They welcome clothing, shoes, bags, household items, bedding, books (excluding textbook and magazines), stationery, toys, non-pirated DVD and CD. It is expected that items donated are reasonably new and well-functioning.

The Community Recycling Coop opens daily from 10:30 am to 6:30 pm. It’s address is **Unit 5C, 5/F, Cheung Kong Factory Bldg, 5 Cheung Shun St, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon (九龍荔枝角長順街5號長江工廠大廈5/F C室)**. More details may be obtained from their website www.iri.org.hk. You may also call 27297023.

Benefit to staff members

Because of the extraordinary situation in the past year, PUSA has not had the chance to arrange on-the-spot promotion activities for the benefit of staff members. PUSA will continuously look for similar benefits for staff members, and the two most recent arrangements are ‘Notebook Purchase Program’ (liaising with the Student Union and the Alumni Association of PolyU) and the dining promotion privilege with Kerry Hotel, Hung Hom (the benefits cover all types of staff members as well as retirees). For details, please refer to the following two links:

Notebook purchase program

<https://www.moss.com.hk/nop-entry/#/polyu>

Kerry Hotel Dining Benefit

https://www.polyu.edu.hk/PUSA/marketing/20200828_Kerry_Hotel.pdf

