

# Tunneling Through Academia

## Mukhtiar Ali Soomro

PhD Graduate in Civil Engineering



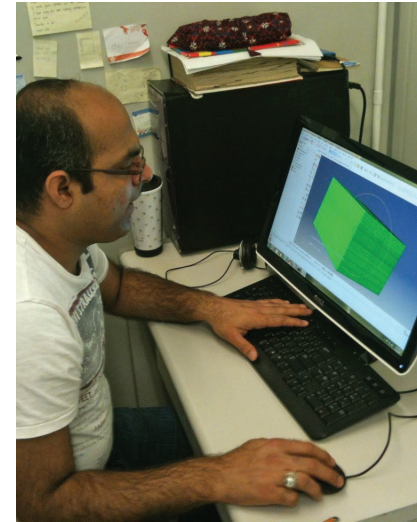
A geotechnical engineering specialist, Ali's academic work focuses on soil structure interactions, specifically looking at tunnels, excavation and slope stability. Chosen for its engineering complexity, real-world implications and capacity for intellectual discovery, his work on soils while at HKUST was extremely productive. By using the state-of-the-art geotechnical centrifuge facilities at HKUST, he was able to conduct fine element analysis on complex soil structures. A challenging, yet rewarding field, Ali has leveraged his success at HKUST to return to Pakistan and begin a promising academic career at home, where he currently works as an Assistant Professor at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology.



### Embracing the Views

Hong Kong's status as a global hub was particularly attractive to Ali when he was looking outside Pakistan for a place to continue his studies. A recipient of a fully-funded scholarship from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, Ali seized the opportunity to get outside his comfort zone and experience his new environment with both hands.

*"Hong Kong is a truly multi-cultural destination, hosting some of the world's best universities. I was particularly attracted to HKUST. The university offered me a place to live, learn and admire, and the perfect scenic view from my campus apartments."*



### Supervisory Support

Ali's most important academic partnership throughout his time at HKUST was with his supervisor, Professor Charles W.W. Ng, with whom he established a close working relationship. Regular meetings, discussions and contact with Professor Ng enabled Ali to flourish during his time at HKUST.

*"Professor Ng has been a continuous source of support throughout my research. Besides, I also discussed personal issues with him and always found him kind. He is a perfect mentor to me, continuously guiding me on my current research and career moves."*

In fact, the connection they formed was so positive that they have remained in touch. Professor Ng's continuous guidance is helping Ali to contribute to the improvement in research quality coming out of Pakistan.

Beyond this excellent student-mentor relationship, Ali relished the opportunity to collaborate with his contemporaries at HKUST, and found their positive interactions to be essential to his development.

*"I found my teammates humble and helpful. We have been like a family and we talk and help one another when in need."*



### A Sublime Campus Experience

Ali found the quality of HKUST's campus to be one of the most enjoyable and useful aspects of his university experience. In addition to the world-class laboratory facilities that allowed him to conduct his research, he found the convenience of the campus to be critical to his academic endeavors. As most labs at HKUST situated in a few buildings, the compact environment helps enhance multidisciplinary collaboration and inspiration. Beyond the academic assistance the campus gave him, Ali loved the environment of HKUST.

*"I particularly enjoyed playing sports, and reading books in the marvelous library, which allowed me to enhance my intellectual experiences. Looking out of the windows of the library, you can see a beautiful sea view and it was always refreshing to enjoy the spectacular sights after a long read."*



### Ample Opportunities at HKUST

Such was the quality of Ali's education at HKUST that it far exceeded the expectations he held before arriving.

*"HKUST provided me with the opportunity to learn the best of research in my field, and gave me the chance to meet with many highly skilled researchers... I truly miss my days in Hong Kong, especially in HKUST."*

Ali is keen to advise anyone from Pakistan, or anywhere else for that matter, to expand their horizons. With this in mind, he advises his students to think outside of their box when considering their further education, and, of course, HKUST is the first place that he would recommend.

