

Minutes of the meeting of the 14th Academic Council of Sikkim University held on 13th November 2013 at Bara Sadan Building, 5th Mile.

Members Present:

1. Prof. T.B. Subba, Vice-Chancellor
2. Lt. Gen. Aditya Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Rtd), Haryana
3. Prof. S.F. Patil, Executive Director, International Affairs (Research & Training) Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Bharati Vidyapeeth Bhavan, Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, Pune
4. Professor Rajkishor Gupta, HoD, Director, North Maharashtra University, Maharashtra
5. Dr. M.P. Thapa, Principal, Namchi Govt. College, Sikkim
6. Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Daniel Bara, S.J., Principal, Loyola College of Education, Namchi
7. Prof. Pratap Chandra Pradhan, Dean, School of Social Sciences & Humanities, Sikkim University
8. Dr. Dhaniraj Chettri, Dean of Students' Welfare, Sikkim University
9. Dr. S.K. Gurung, I/C Controller of examinations, Sikkim University
10. Dr. Subir Mikhopadhyay, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Physics, Sikkim University
11. Dr. Sohel Firdos, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Geography, Sikkim University
12. Dr. N.K. Paswan, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University
13. Dr. V. Krishna Ananth, Associate Professor & Head, Department of History, Sikkim University
14. Dr. A.N. Shankar, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Commerce, Sikkim University
15. Dr. N. Sathyanarayana, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Botany, Sikkim University
16. Dr. Manish, Associate Professor & Head, department of International Relations, Sikkim University.
17. Dr. Kabita Lama, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Nepali, Sikkim University.
18. Dr. S. Manivannan, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Horticulture, Sikkim University
19. Dr. Manesh Choubey, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Economics, Sikkim University.
20. Dr. Amitabha Bhattacharya, Associate Professor, Department of Physics, Sikkim University
21. Prof. A. S. Chandel, Officiating Librarian, Sikkim University
22. Shri. T. K. Kaul, Registrar, Sikkim University

At the outset the Chairman welcomed all the members of the Council and specially the external members with *khada* to its 14th meeting.

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the 13th meeting of the Academic Council

The minutes of the 13th meeting of the Academic Council were confirmed.

2. ATR on the minutes of the 13th meeting of the Academic Council

The ATR on the 13th meeting of the Council was noted.

3. Reporting Items

The Chairman reported on the following matters relating to the University:

1. Approval of the Bar Council of India

On 14th August 2013 the University received the approval of the Bar Council of India for its undergraduate law course. This was a major achievement of the University, as the approval of the BCI was pending since the integrated BA-LLB-LLM course started in 2008 and the final year students had become restless over their future without the approval of the BCI.

2. Quantum jump in enrolment in July 2013

The 12th Academic Council and 16th Executive Council meetings held on 9th and 17th March 2013 respectively approved the recommendations of the University Review Committee, which included change of admission policy. This was one of many reforms that the Committee undertook in response to a letter dated 17th October 2012 from the Jt. Secretary of the UGC Dr. K. P. Singh. According to the old admission policy of the University, admission notice was published in some leading newspapers of India and five SAARC countries (Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka). Admission tests were held in 32 cities of India and the capitals of the five SAARC countries. While this was an expensive exercise (a little more than 0.5 crore per annum) less than 200 students actually took admission in each academic year and even during 2012-13 only 34% of the total intake capacity was filled up with the cut-off marks coming down to as low as 40% in some departments.

Under the new admission policy, advertisements for admission were published in three leading English and one Hindi national dailies and some local/regional newspapers. Seats were allotted as per the Government of India norms of reservation and on the basis of marks obtained by the candidates in their qualifying degrees. Counseling of students in and around Sikkim was also done by groups of University teachers, which must have contributed to improving the intake figures dramatically. The total number of students who were finally admitted in July 2013 was about 750, which is about four-fold increase in intake with 100% occupancy in 27 out of 29 departments and with more than 62% as cut-off marks in some departments. The increase in intake capacity is partly due to addition of 10 new departments started during 2013-14 out of the XI Plan allocation of teaching posts. Further, unlike in previous years, the University could admit only 30 to 50 percent of the applicants in many departments and the only two departments that could not achieve full occupancy, despite encouraging number of applicants, are Anthropology and Hindi, both of which had started this year.

3. Revision/Drafting of the syllabus

While increasing access to the University education is an important goal of the UGC/MHRD the other important goal equally emphasized by the UGC/MHRD is improvement in quality of higher education. Hence, Sikkim University undertook with all seriousness both drafting of syllabi for the 10 new departments and revision of the syllabi for 19 old departments in a big way since the passage of the University Review Committee recommendations by the University Authorities in March 2013. The new/revised syllabi of Master's and MPhil/PhD coursework of some departments were placed before the Academic Council of 9th March 2013 and the remaining syllabi were approved by the Academic Council meeting of 13th November 2013.

Except in a few cases where the syllabi were adapted from established universities like Hyderabad University and North-Eastern Hill University, syllabi revision/drafting committees were duly constituted with at least one external member in each committee. In some cases, the syllabi drafted/revised by the full-time and guest faculty members were sent to three external experts for their comments and suggestions. All this was financially draining but academically a rewarding experience.

4. Students' feedback on teachers

Another important step towards improvement of quality of education taken by Sikkim University is students' feedback on their teachers. Almost all students responded by filling up the questionnaire. Their feedback will be communicated to their teachers in the coming weeks.

5. Presentation on the University before the Chief Rector

On 4th October 2013, the Vice-Chancellor made a presentation on Sikkim University before the Chief Rector Hon'ble Governor of Sikkim Sri Shrinivas Patil for three hours. During the session the Hon'ble Governor gave several valuable suggestions for campus development and employment of the students of the University. He also offered all possible help to the University for its development.

6. Signing of MoUs for academic collaboration

The following MoU was signed since July this year:

- i. MoU with IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), New Delhi for research on "Value of Ecosystem Services provided by the Tista River System in Upper and Lower Riparian Regions of India and Bangladesh".

7. Campus Development

The progress in this regard has been mixed despite active cooperation received from the government of Sikkim.

- i. The mutation of 265.94 acres of land handed over by the state government on 25th January 2013 is completed but handing over of the remaining 34.06 acres to Sikkim

- University has not yet taken place. The acquisition of the land and its transfer to Sikkim University is expected to take place within 2013.
- ii. The villagers have agreed to relocate their church, temple and monastery and are vacating their houses on campus land. It is expected that most of them will vacate the campus land by the end of November 2013.
 - iii. The process of vacation and resettlement has been slow but peaceful and there has been no need for use of force so far. The strategy of counseling and persuasion has finally begun to work.
 - iv. The construction of the boundary wall is going to start within a short period.
 - v. The University received very encouraging response from Indian architectural firms to its advertisement for Expression of Interest. The last date for submission and opening of tenders was 31.10.2013 The Building Committed has constituted an expert committee of three members to short-list the firms after which they will be asked to present their designs for the campus and its buildings.

8. *Recruitment of teaching staff*

This is one area in which the progress has not been satisfactory, as a large number of teaching posts continue to remain vacant.

The University has 132 vacant teaching posts, all of which have been advertised and screening of applicants has also been completed. However, the University has not been able to start the recruitment process because it is yet to receive the Visitor's nominees from the MHRD, Government of India for its selection committees.

The University is managing its classes with the help of guest and contract faculty members from different parts of India, including one from Oxford University. The University has also mobilized its own faculty members as adjunct faculty for teaching integrated courses in other departments.

9. *Future Plan*

The University seeks to focus its energy during the next six months on (1) the planning and designing of campus, (2) filling up of vacant teaching and non-teaching posts, and (3) revision of the UG syllabi and norms of evaluation in order to revamp undergraduate education in the state. It is also expected that there will be a fair degree of progress regarding boundary wall, road connectivity, electricity and water supply to the campus.

4. **Ratification Matters**

Nil.

5. **Matters for Consideration of Approval**

i. On anomalies in English degree syllabus

The 13th AC meeting decided to constitute a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Pratap C. Pradhan to sort out the anomaly regarding repetition of two topics in Paper 2 and Paper 9. The committee met on 31st October and recommended that Paper 2 would remain intact and Paper 9 would be on Lepcha folklore with selections from

C. de Beauvoir Stocks' article "Folklore and customs of the Lapchas of Sikkim" published in 1925.

The proposal of the committee headed by Prof. Pratap C. Pradhan was approved.

ii. *Syllabus matters*

The syllabi for the subjects and programmes mentioned below have been duly considered and recommended by the Boards of Studies and School Boards for consideration of the Academic Council:

Sl. No.	Subject	Programme(s)	Decision of the Academic Council
	Anthropology	MA/MSc (complete)	Approved
	Botany	MSc (complete) MPhil/PhD	Approved Approved
	Chemistry	MPhil/PhD	Approved
	Commerce	MCom (II & IV) MPhil/PhD	Approved Approved
	Economics	MA/MSc MPhil/PhD	Approved Approved
	Education	MA (II, III & IV)	Fr. Daniel Bara to go through the syllabus carefully and submit the same to the Chair for approval.
	English	MA (complete)	The syllabus for I and III semesters revised by Prof. B. Chakraborti, Pankaj Thapa and Dr. Shova Sharma was granted post-facto approval and the syllabus for II and IV semesters was approved.
	Geography	MA/MSc MPhil/PhD	Approved Approved
	Hindi	MA (complete)	Approved
	History	MA	Approved
	Horticulture*	BSc	Approved
	IR	MA MPhil/PhD	Approved Approved
	Management	MBA (I & II Semesters only)	Approved
	Mass Comm	MA MPhil/PhD	Approved Approved
	Mathematics	MSc	The recommendation of the concerned Board of Studies and School Board for Sciences to discontinue with BSc-MSc Integrated was approved as an

			interim solution, which may be reviewed after three years when faculty position may improve. However the present I and III semester students of BSc-MSc Integrated may be given the option to continue with the Integrated course.
	Nepali	Basic MA	To be revised Approved
	PCMS	MPhil/PhD	Approved
	Physics	MPhil/PhD	Approved
	Pol. Science	MA	Approved
	Psychology	MPhil/PhD	Approved
	Sociology	MPhil/PhD	Approved
	Tourism	MA (II Semester only)	It was decided that a committee consisting of Dr. Firdos as chairman and Dr. Paswan and Dr. Shankar as members would look into the syllabus and submit it to VC for approval by the end of November 2013.
	Zoology	MSc (II)	Approved

*The criteria for admission to BSc, MSc and MPhil/PhD programmes in Horticulture were also approved.

iii. NVEQF in Tourism and Service Industry

The 13th Academic Council approved the proposal of the UGC to start NVEQF scheme in the University. In view of the huge potential of tourism industry in the state and the fact the University has already established the Department of Tourism, the Council may consider approving B.Voc Programme in Tourism and Service Industry at the Diploma Level only to start with. If approved, the University may be directed to draft syllabus and place it in the next AC meeting so that it may be started from Monsoon 2014 session.

The Council approved the proposal of the University to start Diploma in Tourism and Service Industry and directed it to draft appropriate syllabus and place it in the next meeting.

iv. 'Bridge Course'

As a follow-up of the 5th India-UK Education Forum meeting held on 30th January 2013 the Secretary of UGC in his letter dated 21st October 2013 has asked the VCs to "create necessary framework for conceptualizing the 'bridge course'" in certain areas of studies for Indian students wishing to return from the UK after doing one year's Master degree programme.

The Council resolved that the concerned HoD, in consultation with the Dean of the School, may suggest which and how many papers, but not exceeding 32 credits, an Indian student returning after doing 1-yr Master degree in UK should take.

v. *Recognition of postdoctoral research/teaching experience*

There are about 8 science faculty members who joined the University with varying years of postdoctoral research experience in reputed institutions in India and abroad. Such faculty members bring in considerable experience into their research and teaching, thereby contributing to a better academic standard of the University than a fresh PhD holder does. Teachers with postdoctoral experience are given a higher grade pay by institutions like IITs (annexure 4).

The selection committee may actually make recommendation to the Executive Council for a higher grade pay or a number of increments, but the same did not happen in the case of the abovementioned 8 faculty members when they were selected by Sikkim University.

The Council decided to form a committee of the following members to draft an ordinance to facilitate rewarding the teachers with postdoctoral experience:

Sri Dibakar Kanujna – Chairperson
Dr. Sathyanarayan- Member
Dr. Subir Mukhopadhyaya – Member
Sri Veer Mayank - Member

vi. *Professional and Non-Professional Courses*

The Vice-Chancellor constituted a committee under the chairmanship of the Dean of Students' Welfare to ascertain which subjects and programmes are "Professional Courses" and which are not, as it has a direct bearing on the tuition fees charged to students. The Council approved the following courses offered by the University at present as "Professional Courses" and all other courses are not professional courses:

- a. BA-LLB and LLM
- b. BBA and MBA
- c. BCA and MCA
- d. MA in Mass Communication
- e. PG Diploma in Tea Management
- f. BSc and MSc in Horticulture

vii. *Discontinuing Integrated Course in Mathematics*

Currently, two separate BSc and two separate MSc syllabi in Mathematics are under operation, one for the students of Integrated Course and the other for Non-Integrated Course. Till now there is no serious problem because BSc (non-integrated course) is taught in the colleges and BSc (integrated course) is taught in the University. Further, the students of Integrated Course have not reached the MSc level yet. But in the Monsoon 2014 semester, there will be two batches of students doing their MSc in Mathematics in the same department of the University, one coming from the

Integrated channel and the other from non-integrated channel undergoing two different syllabi of MSc Mathematics. This is bound to create confusion in the minds of students (annexure 6).

Therefore the Council may consider accepting the recommendation of the School Board of Sciences for doing away with Integrated BSc-MSc in Mathematics from the next academic session (annexure 7).

The Council approved the recommendation of the School of Board of Sciences to discontinue with BSc-MSc integrated from the next academic session as an interim solution to be reviewed after three years when faculty position is likely to improve.

viii. Payment Norms

The Examination Department has been making and receiving payments for various examination related works but such payments have not received due approval of the Academic Council or other Authorities of the University. The Council may therefore consider granting approval to the proposed "Payment Norms" drafted by the In-Charge, CoE and placed in annexure 8.

The Council approved the "Payment Norms" with some suggestions in the proposed payees and the amount to be paid.

ix. Regulations on Conduct of Examinations

Conduct of examinations in the University and colleges affiliated to it is a very sensitive matter and must be handled in the most reasonable and efficient manner so that the trust of the students in the examination system is not affected.

To ensure this, the University has proposed a regulation on conduct of examinations, which is placed in annexure 9 for kind consideration of approval of the Council.

The Council approved the proposed regulation with some suggestions for amendment.

x. Rental subsidy for teachers

At present 31 teaching and non-teaching staff are receiving rental subsidy to the tune of 12% of their basic on an average and 27 new applicants are waiting for more than one year for the University's decision on their applications. This facility is extended to the contract employees as well.

The subsidy is implemented through what is called a tripartite agreement between the employee, house owner and the University, where the employee identifies the house and the University pays the rent as per the terms of agreement to the house owner every month and deducts the HRA and the nominal license fee from the employee. The details of this mechanism are placed in annexure 10.

There are very serious issues related to this arrangement, which are given in detail in the same annexure for the Council to debate and make appropriate recommendation

for the Executive Council, as it concerns not only non-teaching staff but also the teachers of the University.

The Council decided to recommend the extension of rental subsidy to the teachers of the University to the Finance Committee and Executive Council.

Any other matter with the permission of the Chair

There was no other matter for consideration of the Academic Council. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks from the Chair to the members for their valuable participation in the deliberation of the Council meeting.


Sri T. K. Kaul 19-11-13
Registrar & Member-Secretary


Prof. T. B. Subba 19/11/13
Vice-Chancellor & Chairman