

Minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2016

The first Student Affairs Council (S.A.C) Meeting of the academic year 2016-17 was chaired by Prof. V. Ramgopal Rao, Director IIT Delhi. The meeting began with the Chairman giving his opening remarks.

The Chairman talked about the need to improve systems in place and the necessity of working within timelines for speedy progress.

Also, he informed the council that renovation of hostel kitchens will be starting soon and that he, in principle supports free messing in the hostels and wants to establish a system that works for the same. He assured everyone that soon non-vegetarian food as well as different Indian cuisines will be available in messes soon. Further, he urged the council to take relevant action to establish a system for food inspection of the messes as well as the outlets in the campus. He stressed that the positive actions of the administration should reach the students and an effective communication channel needs to be built to dispel pessimism about the state of affairs.

1: Approval of the meeting held on 28th April 2016

No comments were received and hence the minutes were approved.

Report of the actions taken:

1. Constitutional Changes

- a) All the constitutional amendments have been approved but the constitution manual is yet to be edited.
- b) The decision of making the functioning of Spic Macay as independent from BRCA has been put on hold, on the objections raised by the President, Spic Macay. The issue will be looked separately by the administration in more detail.

Action: Dean (SA)

2. Issue of shortage of water

General Secretary, BSA raised the issue of shortage of water for the sports grounds. Dean, Infrastructure informed the council that a tender for sewage treatment plant will be floated and then there will be no more shortage. It was told that a Unit for Hostel Maintenance will be set up in the next 10 days. The chairman urged the authorities to look into waterless toilets and sensor based urinals that save water to replace conventional toilets at all possible places.

Action: Dean Infrastructure
Institute Engineer

3. Hospital Issues

- a) Sponsored students and married research scholars' dependents still not getting medical facilities was brought to the attention.
Hospital Advisory Committee shall ascertain the total number of dependents present within a week and the policy decision shall be made after that.
It was agreed that regular consultancy and homeopathy medicines should be provided to them.
- b) Lack of dedicated physiotherapist and orthopedic was brought to the notice and Head, Hospital Services was asked by the chairman to have positions created for these doctors on a contractual basis on an urgent basis since its already been approved in the last meeting.

Action: DD (O)
Head, Hospital

4. Lack of Reading Rooms

The General Secretary, SAC raised the issue of lack of reading space and expressed concern about there being limited areas with sufficient charging points and air conditioning. It was decided that certain rooms in the institute will be identified where work of installing more charging points and air conditioners will take place and such rooms (possibly VI 427, 430 etc.) will be kept open 24*7 for reading purposes. Further, it was decided that one student lounge in the LHC can be opened 24*7. Security arrangements will be made for the same regard. Also, CPWD will be pursued to expedite the remaining work so that transfer of LHC can take place as soon as possible.

Action: Dean, Academics
Head, Security

5. Issue of noise in Udaigiri, Satpura and Girnar

Chairman assured that this issue will be carried forward by the authorities.

6. Drain near Kailash hostel

Chairman suggested that the drain should either be covered or regular cleaning can take place. Dean, Infrastructure assured that suitable actions are being taken.

7. Changing rooms and toilets for girls near Lawn Tennis Court

It was discussed that the work should have started on the changing rooms before and that it will be looked into by Dean, Infrastructure on an urgent basis since its already been approved.

Action on Points 5-7:
Dean, Infrastructure

End of the Action Taken Report

2: Centralization of No Dues Process

The General Secretary discussed the issue of manual and cumbersome process of clearing Dues by the final year students every year. A prototype online system developed by SAC for streamlining the process was presented. The council urged that more improvements needed to be made to it. Dean, Academics suggested that the process should remain manual, reasoning that students should visit all laboratories of their department before leaving the campus. However, the Chairman assured that a system will be worked upon and implemented so that no student has to visit multiple labs etc. from the next year onwards.

Action: Dean (SA)

General Secretary, SAC

3: Proposal to remove LAN Restrictions post 1 a.m.

The general secretary, SAC presented a survey report on the issue, taking opinions of around 650 students. He informed that a majority of students wanted the removal of LAN restrictions post 1 a.m. citing difficulties during exams, academic submissions, freedom among other reasons.

The chairman stated that he was in principle convinced that such moral policing should not be done after a certain extent. But he cited the comparatively more number of suicide cases in other IITs than IIT Delhi which may be attributed to the issue of LAN availability.

Associate Dean, Student Welfare informed the council of a large number of students under academic probation and said that removal of LAN Ban might aggravate the situation.

Finally, the council decided that since most of the students face difficulties due to the LAN restrictions only around exam time, the LAN restrictions in hostels will henceforth be lifted 2 days before both the minor exam upto the last day of the exams; and a week before major's upto the last day of the exam.

The chairman further suggested that a system of linking academic grades with the LAN access be created, if implementable. Such a system will give incentives to students to work hard and also effectively restrict internet access post 1 a.m. to those who don't have the requisite grade points.

Action: Head, CSC

4: Sanctioning of a holiday after exams

General Secretary, BRCA put forth a suggestion that there should be a holiday post the minor exams to ease the academic stress on students. It was decided that a provision will be made to either start the exams so that they end on a Saturday or compensate for the holiday by extending the semester by 2 days or compensating for the same from the semester break.

The chairman wholeheartedly supported the idea, and directed Dean, Academics to look into

the same. Dean, Academics informed that necessary action will be taken after going through the scheduled calendar.

6: To institute posts of Web/Design Executives for S.A.C and all boards under its purview

General Secretary, SAC proposed that 1 Web and 1 Design Executive (nominated) position be made for each board. BSP and BSA already have such a post.

Basic Function –

1. She/he shall be responsible for design and maintenance of website and other online portals
2. She/he will assist in designing of publicity materials

The applicant should have completed at least 1 semester in the institute

He/she should be a nominated by the concerned General Secretary at the beginning of his term in consultation with the Board President.

The proposal was approved.

Action: General Secretary, SAC

7: Transportation issues in the campus

The council was briefed on the issues of under-capacity of existing two buses and the inefficiency of the manual rickshaws.

Two proposals were put forth:

A. To introduce e-rickshaws in the campus to replace the current rickshaws.

Dean, Infrastructure informed that the initiative is already in process. Around 17 E-rickshaws will be introduced in the campus.

Further, Head, Security informed that the present buses will go out of service from December. Thus, new buses will be inducted soon. President, BRCA asked whether the chassis of the bus can be designed by the students themselves to which the reply was in the affirmative.

B. To institute a Bicycle Sharing system

General Secretary, SAC informed the council that the SAC last year had already cleared a proposal for such a system that was to be designed by IIT-Delhi students themselves and a budget for the same was cleared. But the student project was unable to take off due to difficulties. Thus, it is proposed that such a system of bicycle sharing, its operation and maintenance be handed over to a professional company. Deputy Director (S&P) is already looking at the project. The council in principle accepted the proposal and the chairman urged to continue the progress on the same and take necessary actions required. Appropriate bicycle sharing model will be decided.

Action: DD (S&P)

DD (O)

General, Secretary, SAC

8: Sanctioning of cycle repair shops and creation of cycle parking spaces

A. Cycle Repair Shops:

The General Secretary, SAC informed the council of the need of 2 cycle repair shops on each end of the campus. One out of them near the institute side is a must.

Dean, SA agreed that 2 cycle repair shops should be sanctioned in both ends of the campus whose location can be decided. All the repair shops and two major cycle stands in institute side should be provided with facility for filling air through compressor.

B. Cycle Stands:

Further, the need for creation of cycle stands/ parking spaces was discussed, according to an audit report prepared by SAC. Dean, Infrastructure informed that the number of cycle stands has to be deliberated further but one stand near L.H.C should be built.

DD(S&P) will coordinate the building of cycle parking spaces/stands and setting up of cycle repair shops.

Action: DD (S&P)

9: Updates on the Indoor Sports Complex

It was discussed whether constructing an expensive facility just for the purpose of hosting Inter-IIT was worth it or not. However, it was brought to the notice that the construction of Indoor Sports Complex, in-principle had already been discussed earlier and approved.

The chairman said that the matter will be taken up and discussed further, separately. President, BSA and General Secretary, BSA, requested for immediate repairs of badminton court and squash court in the meantime. Dean, Infrastructure, assured that repair work will be taken up immediately.

Action: Dean Infrastructure
General Secretary, BSA

10: Representation of Differently Abled in SAC

It was approved that there will be one nominee of the Director in the council, from the differently-abled category. This will enable the council to discuss/mitigate issues related to the community more effectively.

Action: Dean (SA)
General Secretary, SAC

Any other issue with the permission of the chair

1) LAN in type A homes/House Allotment/Blood Test facility for students

It was decided that LAN in type-A homes will be installed on an urgent basis.

Action: Dean, Infrastructure

The MRS, Sac Representative detailed the current process where difficulties is faced because of offline house allotment results. The chairman directed that the process be streamlined and be made online.

Action: DD (O)

On further discussion on blood test facility, Head, Hospital informed the council that for all days except Sunday blood test facility is provided and on Sunday it will be done by a private agency.

2) BRCA trophy

General Secretary, BRCA informed the council that the BRCA board has unanimously decided in a joint meeting of the cultural and club secretaries with the general secretary BRCA and the president BRCA, that BRCA trophy be made non-competitive from this year.

The reasons for the decision are mentioned, as a resolution of the BRCA Board in this regard, in the Appendix attached with the given minutes.

It was decided that BRCA Trophy will be made non-competitive from this year for a period as decided by the BRCA Board.

3) Associate Dean, Student Welfare pointed out to the increasing number of non-technical fests and activities in the campus throughout the year. It was agreed that all the general secretaries would conduct an audit of such activities and report the same.

Action: All General Secretaries

4) Accessibility of websites for Day scholars:

It was informed that the inability to access various institute websites from outside the campus will be resolved soon as the issue is under consideration. With the due launch of MoodleX, Moodle will become accessible from outside the campus.

Action: Head, CSC

APPENDIX

Reasons with regard to the conversion of BRCA Trophy to a non-competitive system

NON-COMPETITIVE SYSTEM: A BRIEF OF SECRETARIES' MEETINGS

The chief differences between the inter-hostel competitive system and the non-competitive system are centered on the aspects of *hostelism* and the nature of competition that ensues between rival hostels. Currently, there is an over-arching pressure on the hostel members to win the coveted trophy in some way or the other. But observation provides deeper insights into the nature of detriment that an inter-hostel system rigidly incorporates into the Board. Several of these have been attested to and extensively deliberated by the club and hostel secretaries and are described hereafter.

An inter-hostel competitive system stifles improvement in several ways. A big aspect to be discussed in detail here is that of ***collaboration and cooperation that completely dies in a staunchly competitive structure***. However, this is an essential part of self-improvement and competence development at an institute level. Several instances were elaborately discussed. The performance of IIT Delhi delegation at debating tournaments, for example, that happen

across the circuit in Delhi and outside is remarkably poor because the teams that eventually end up participating have not already spoken together sufficiently as a team for the simple reason that their belonging in different hostels in a fiercely competitive setting discourages them from spending time on such ancillary collaborations when the cup is at stake and one must focus on participants from one's hostel for practice sessions for victory. This also kills the need and desire for sharing and learning from each other, by sowing seeds of savage rivalry between talented participants of different hostels. This takes away not only from a cultural enrichment but also impedes interactions and cooperation among people of similar interests.

Another pressing issue arising from this lack of collaboration is **stagnation**. Freshmen in a lot of hostels who have a deep interest, perhaps even the preliminary experience and talent, who wish to hone their skills and learn from the best in the institute cannot, because those seniors might be from other hostels and will not be foolish enough to groom students of other hostels that might threaten their own hostel's prospects in the harsh competition. The culture in such a hostel with a lack of experienced seniors stagnates and successively, fewer and fewer people actually have the knowledge of the skill and techniques needed for competence in that hostel. In most cases such hostels even tend to lose all interest in a particular club for this reason because they deem it wiser to focus on the others where more points can be gained. **An interested freshman in such a hostel is largely doomed.** Workshops and joint sessions are of no use either because selfish interests of the hostel also dictate one not to be sincere in contributing to the combined pool of talent in the institute.

A cut-throat competitive environment also **incites the nefarious activity** observed widely in the past and allegedly in the previous year, **of rigging of events**. The selling and purchase of event positions across hostels as opportunity presents itself, is not unknown. The act of rigging is difficult and can be perhaps be made much more unlikely by simple reforms, but the desperation for winning the trophy, particularly towards the end when things are close and stakes are high, fuelled uncontrollably by *hostelism*, becomes a mighty catalyst to push any person to the brink of taking such risks. On the other side, with such fierce competition in place, the **mindless accusations and mud-slinging becomes routine**. Even by now, there have been ugly incidences and heated argumentations and reckless slandering of participants and judges, with even freshers having the impression that the whole system works on greasing palms.

The competitions and contests have **completely become divorced from appraisal of genuinely good performances and celebrating the effort put in by the participants, but have become absolutely centered on details about point distributions and arithmetic of the points tally**. Last year presented numerous examples wherein all participants tried to jump in at any sniff of ambiguity and pitch for disqualification of as many rival teams as possible on almost trivial grounds, letting creativity die a slow death. An event was scrapped and another required a panel meeting to be convened up to early morning for resolution of such heated disputes and allegations, which eventually sap overall culture.

Many performing arts clubs face the brunt of such incidents due to the fundamentally subjective nature of their activities. Making inter-hostel competitions watertight to prevent such bursts of accusations and allegations, leaving no room for creative thought, use of innovative materials and styles will eventually lead to detriment. Such contests will necessarily have to be classed under the non-competitive events category. And that is the genesis of another immensely problematic situation.

The value of such non-competitive contests and events where points are not up for grabs, falls tremendously. There is a clear differentiation that is created between inter-hostel comp and non-comp events and in the face of such distinction, a natural devaluation of events that do not contribute to the trophy occurs. An instance of poetry workshops wherein freshmen from most hostels did not turn up because participation in the upcoming comp inter-hostel dramatics event was prioritized over some non-comp event. This precedence naturally rules out a lot of interested students who face a choice between shirking from contributing to the hostel and the trophy and their own inclinations. Essentially, the devaluation of non-comp events, even discussions and workshops, which are a crucial and embody the essence of the club, is tremendous. The enthusiasm and participation in these events approaches zero, more so in case of inter-hostel comp events in vicinity.

It was acknowledged that an ***inter-hostel competitive system makes it 'easy' to convince seniors to participate because points are a cheap and easy motivation.*** The seniors often find out time to attend so that a few points trickle in favor of the hostel. But this was also seen as ***against the ideals of the Board itself.*** The Board ***should not breed the notion that participation and engagement is to be done for the sole sake of points,*** which is the quintessence of the case presented. It is a fundamental failure of the Board that the students participate in activities and events selectively and solely for earning points and not because they actually developed an interest or liking for cultural activities over the years. The whole system has reduced to a rat-race for earning points with utter disregard for enjoying or taking interest in the cultural activities and utmost focus on devising stratagems for disqualification of rivals and pointless slandering of opponents and even judges invited for the events.

The general opinion was that over time and with active involvement of club and hostel secretaries, a healthy environment where a furious chase for half a point won't be the sole motivation and driving incentive for participation, could be arrived at, leading to a much more wholesome and desirable system.
