## PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH

Minutes of the first meeting of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) constituted by the Vice Chancellor and approved by Syndicate vide para 33 R(xi) to discuss the following agenda, held on 16.10.2015 at 12.00 noon in the Seminar Hall, ICSSR Complex, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

**Agenda:**

1.      To discuss the activities (past and future) of the IQAC.
2.      Its role in improving the ranking of the Panjab University on all possible parameters.
3.      Any other agenda with the permission of the Chair.

**Members Present:**

1. Professor Satya P. Gautam, Former Vice Chancellor, Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, former Professor, Department of Philosophy, Panjab University, Chandigarh and Professor, Centre for Philosphy, JNU, New Delhi
2. Professor Ronki Ram, Fellow (Political Science)
3. Professor Karamjit Singh, Fellow (UBS)
4. Col. G.S. Chadha, Registrar
5. Professor Akshaya Kumar, President, PUTA (English)
6. Professor Dinesh K. Khurana (Mathematics)
7. Mr. Guldeep Singh, System Administrator, MIS Cell, PU
8. Mr. Ravinder Kumar, ASO, DUI's Office
9. Ms. Prinka Rani, M.Sc. (Hons.) (Biochemistry)
10. Professor Archana Bhatnagar, Associate Director, IQAC Cell, PU
11. Professor Rajiv Lochan, Director, IQAC Cell, PU

Professor Rajivlochan requested Professor Satya P Gautam to chair the meeting. Professor Satya P Gautam was gracious enough to accept the responsibility. This was followed by a round of introductions by the members. Subsequently Professor Rajivlochan made a presentation pertaining to the activities of the IQAC in PU, the recommendations of the NAAC on PU regarding IQAC, the subsequent actions taken by PU and further tasks that needed to be performed (attached in appendix).

In the course of the discussions Professor Gautam informed that the IQAC had been formed in 2001. However, it remained substantially in a limbo.

Dr. Guldeep Singh shared his experience of collecting information about the university and the manner in which he had handled the charge of the IQAC singlehandedly.

Col. Chadha pointed out that at the moment there are many things amiss in the routine working of the university. Drawing upon his experience in the army and in industry he suggested the need , the need for continual improvement and the necessity of setting systems of work on the basis of rules. He said that quality cannot be a one-off objective; quality needed to be embedded within the systems of the university.

Professor Ronki Ram underlined the need for setting up of department-level IQACs through the office of the Dean University Instruction and linking them formally with the IQAC of the university. This would be important for, he said, embedding the idea of achieving quality within the university system. He insisted that there has to be a portal through which each and every department could relate to the university level IQAC. The departments needed to keep their respective websites updated on a real time basis. He pointed out that with the help of Sh. Guldeep Singh we could identify **specific points on which information was needed from the departments so that even the departments knew the specific points on which to focus** for the purpose of maintaining quality on a regular basis.

Professor Rajivlochan informed that a seminar for departmental level representatives was going to be organized with the objective of taking the idea of quality to the departments. Professor Gautam suggested that it should not be a seminar but a workshop for, it was here that plans had to be set up, goals had to be identified, with the objective of quality enchancements. Effort has to be made to **regularly upload data** pertaining to students, faculty, departments and other activities of the university.

Dr. Dinesh Khurana agreed with the idea of embedding the need for quality within the departments. He suggested that instead of merely collecting data about the departments it was important **to make them partners in the process by first informing the departments about the tasks that needed to be undertaken in order to maintain quality on an on-going basis**.

Col. Chadha said that the start point for quality assurance would have to have as start point the defining of processes. Whichever is the process for doing something needs to be documented and converted into a manual so that the process is available to everyone at any particular time. Then came the assigning of responsibilities to specific persons. Once that had been done then there was the need to conduct internal audits [rather than wait for the NAAC to come]. **The internal audit needs to check out whether whatever process had been assigned had been actually followed. And in case it had not been then these needed to be noticed as 'non-consistencies' and steps needed to be taken to ensure that the non-consistencies had been removed**. This process of internal audit would have to be done every few months, say three months or six months. And once these systems of creating and documenting processes and ensuring that they were followed had been set up in a workable manner then, Col. Chadha said, we would be NAAC ready perpetually.

Professor Karamjit Singh explained the basis on which the system of IQAC was created as a result of a workshop at NAAC in 2005. He informed the members how the special guidelines for quality maintenance were created. To improve the quality in HE the need was **to embed the culture of quality within the system** of the university. Today this had gotten reduced to merely facts and numbers—numbers of paper, numbers of students and sundry other numeric information. Need was, he said, to rise beyond this and focus on improving the culture of the university. This would imply, having a proper website that had institutional information with the purpose of connectivity and engagement. He gave the example of the Pune University where these systems had been put in place with respect to the examination system.

Professor Bhatnagar said that we already have an outline of what the IQAC is to do, what it should do etc.

Professor Gautam informed the members of the basis on which the idea of IQAC came up as a result of universities finding it difficult to manage the idea of quality. He also said, while taking guidance from the parameters provided by the NAAC, the need was to make quality a process of a quest for quality enhancement has to be a reflective exercise rather than a fact collecting exercise.

Dr. Akshay Kumar said there was need also to identify intermediate structures in place. He suggested the need to have these intermediary structures between the departmental IQAC and the university IQAC.

Professor Gautam informed how **each department in JNU had a weekly faculty meeting that was always held in which various issues pertaining to the department and university were discussed as and when they came up**.

Professor Ronki Ram added that the purpose of the IQAC needed to a. assure quality in the form of the data being demanded by NAAC; and b. use this data to have a cascading effect on the working of the universities so that we can learn from our experiences and improve our working accordingly.

Professor Rajivlochan informed that the PU already had considerable protocols in place for taking decisions. However, over the years some have gotten rusted, others seem to have been forgotten. Hence the need is to have some kind of manual for use to work that are simple and easy to follow. At the moment basic record keeping in the departments seems to have gone for a toss.

Col. Chadha added that surprisingly at the moment there are so many instances when even when someone is transferred from one department to another there is no handing over or taking over of charge. Even such basic norms of bureaucratic functioning have been given a go by. There are no job descriptions. As a result there seems to be functional chaos all around. There were no institutional memories as a result. Professor Rajivlochan concurred with the idea of having institutional memories. Professor Akshay Kumar cautioned that the beauty of higher education was that it was not too strongly tied down to bureaucratic rules.

Professor Ronki Ram also pointed out that the NAAC was just one evaluating agencies. Today the university had to be evaluated by a large number of agencies and therefore the need is to not only maintain one set of records but to basically maintain all sorts of records. There has to be a system whereby the members of the university should be able to maintain records of all the activities of its members. After all, he said, a university gains by the sundry activities in which every person in the university is involved.

Professor Akshay Kumar pointed out the **need to set up some standardization for how the activities of the university would be evaluated**.

By way of the lacunae that remain within the university a generalized discussion ensued in which Professor Gautam informed of the need to educate colleagues on what was of academic and professional value.

Co. Chadha informed that the university could help out by giving the first push for improving quality. But the point was that **it was for the members of the department to ensure that things get done properly on an on-going basis**.

Professor Gautam pointed out the need to also **involve students** as part of the improvement of quality project. He specifically gave the example of JNU in which the university identifies students who need special remedial courses and then uses students to help students remedy their problems. He said, quality also presumes equity and equal opportunity: in terms of remedying the shortfalls of students by going beyond the limits of regular classroom teaching and helping them out with their courses and professional skills. Pofessor Akshay Kumar, Guldeep Singh, Bhatnagar and Karamjit Singh concurred with the need to help out students improve quality too.

Professor Karamjit Singh also raised point that even after manuals and protocols had been created the need was to ensure that every member of the university follows it. He suggested the need to set up systems that ensure the implementation of plans.

Col. Chadha suggested that the internal audit is the one that would be able to catch such non-consistencies. He suggested that the removal of non-consistencies would have to be made time bound. This, he said, was the only way of moving forward.

Professor Ronki Ram said, we have to maintain a record and sensitise the entire faculty, students and administration about the optimal use of resources of the university. He gave the example of the tremendous slippages in the use of space in the university and the need to at least keep a record of existing resources.

Professor Gautam underlined the large amount of work that was needed to be done on our campus. We needed to improve all quality at our own level for our own benefit.  And for this purpose the need for having a proper staff and infrastructure. He said that at JNU they had a team of 4 staff members to help out the IQAC with the administrative work.

Professor Bhatnagar underlined minimally the need to have an office, an address for the IQAC. At the moment, she said, the Director and the Associate Director were the only staff who needed to do all the running around. A formal structure needed to be created. After all, Professor Rajivlochan pointed out, if the IQAC itself is running on an ad hoc basis it may not set a good example of quality in the first place.

Professor Gautam said that the IQAC could have many more meetings with the internal members of the cell. The meetings with the external members should happen only twice a year or so. As for local members, he underlined that it was part of the academic responsibilities of the local members to be perform the functions associated with improving quality in the university.

Honorarium to be paid to External Members of the IQAC:

The meeting also agreed to recommend to the university the need to pay an honorarium to the external IQAC members equivalent of what is paid to NAAC peer teams. These minutes have been approved by the  Vice Chancellor, PU who has also instructed that the same may be circulated to all Chairpersons/Directors/Heads of PU.

Director
IQAC

# **Appendix**:

The presentation which became the basis for the discussion for the meeting of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at the seminar hall of the ICSSR

**Baseline for tasks for the Internal Quality Assurance Cell**

| Tasks Identified by the Peer Team Report of the NAAC 2015 | |
| --- | --- |
| **Task/Lacunae in PU** | **Action Taken** |
| Install a fully functional IQAC | IQAC created, is functional, |
| Introduce Choice Based Credit System | Will be implemented at UG level by the next session |
| Student Feedback | The feedback pro forma approved by stake-holders. |
| Embed quality in the institutional culture of PU | Process for setting up mini-IQACs in all organs of the university. |
| Faculty shortages | ?? |
| Student shortfall in many departments | Schools formed. Needs to be formalised. Club departments together?? |
| Make e-classrooms functional | Hand-holding and funds needed |
| Research Promotion and Quality | RPC exists, is being strengthened |
| Anti-Sexual Harassment Cell | Has been reconstituted |
| Vehicle use on campus | Commuter buses have been introduced |

**Tasks Identified by the Peer Team Report of the NAAC 2015**

| Task/Lacunae in PU | Action to be taken |
|---|---|
| Improve teaching quality | Organise teaching skills seminars; encourage faculty to attend conferences |
| Global competencies among students | Incorporate it into syllabi |
| Awards and honours for faculty | Some handholding required by those who know |
| Improve citations and journal articles | Some handholding required by those who know |
| SC/ST Cell | Needs to be made operational |
| Maintenance of toilets | ?? |
| Strengthening internal security | On-going process |
| Vehicle use on campus | One set of feedback taken to restrict vehicle use |

**Infrastructure for the Internal Quality Assurance Cell**
At the moment some rooms have been earmarked but the necessary orders, staff and funds awaited. Till now, from within the university, one person was responsible for the IQAC; now nine people from the university are, of which two have been given administrative responsibilities. Plus there are:
- Five external members of the IQAC;
- Two former-VCs, with extensive interest in PU one of whom is also an alumnus;
- One a senior professor from another high-performing university who is also an alumnus;
- One senior industrialist and business leader;
- Two well-known public figures who have taken interest in PU affairs for many decades who are also alumni.
- Two research students, one from sciences one from arts.