

Minutes of the Meeting of the 3rd Governing Council

held on 30-04-2008 at KSHEC, Trivandrum.33

The 3rd meeting of the Governing Council was held at the office of the Council at Science and Technology Museum Campus from 11.30 AM to 2.45 P.M. on 30-4-2008. **Shri.M.A.Baby**, Hon'ble Minister for Education and Culture presided. The Following members attended the meeting:

1. 1.Dr. K.N.Panikkar Vice Chairman
2. 2.Dr.M.K Ramachandran Nair, Vice Chancellor, Kerala University
3. 3.Dr. Jancy James Vice Chancellor, M.G.University
4. 4.Dr.P. Chandramohan, Vice Chancellor, Kannur University
5. 5.Dr.K.S.Radhakrishnan, Vice Chancellor, SSUS
6. 6.Dr.Gangan Prathap, Vice Chancellor, CUSAT
7. 7.Prof.T.A.Ushakumari, Member
8. 8.Dr.Fathimathu Zuhara ,K Member
9. 9.Prof.K. Aravindakshan, Member
10. 10.Dr.C.Balan, Member
11. 11.Dr. E.P. Yesodharan Executive Vice President, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment
12. 12.Shri.K.Shashidara IAS, Director of Collegiate Education
13. 13.Shri.B.Mavoji, Director of Technical Education
14. 14.Prof.Thomas Joseph, Member Secretary

The following agenda was transacted by the Council

Item No. 1 – Opening remarks of the Chairman

In his opening remarks, the Chairman congratulated the Higher Education Council for its commendable work in initiating academic reforms in higher education. He said that steps for improving the quality of higher education imparted in the State has to be taken up on a war footing. It is in this context that the main agenda of the meeting ---- **the draft manual for**

grading in undergraduate courses

---- has to be discussed, he opined. He also complemented Kannur University for initiating steps for the introduction of grading from the academic year 2008-09. The Chairman suggested that the Higher Education Council and the Universities should work together to bring about academic reforms that would improve the quality of higher education in the State to levels comparable with the best in the world.

Item No.2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2—1—2008, which were confirmed through circulation, was ratified.

Item No.3 – Report on Action Taken and Proposal for Further Action

The Member Secretary reported on action taken in respect of Restructuring Undergraduate Education, Scheme of Cluster of Colleges, guidelines for starting new colleges/courses from 2008-09, mutual recognition of degrees, National Seminar held on 1st & 2nd February 2008 and preparation of Data Bank on higher education, as per agenda notes circulated.

The following decisions were taken in respect of further action.

1. 1.The scheme of financial assistance for holding seminars/workshops in colleges/clusters of colleges initiated in 2007-08 will continue in 2008-09 with the same conditions for holding seminars/workshops by individual colleges/clusters of colleges.

2. 2.The Council will implement the Scheme of Cluster of Colleges in two locations in the State during the year 2008-09 and set apart two crores for the purpose from out of the funds allotted to the Council for the year 2008-09. A third Cluster would also be set up when the budgetary allocation of Rs.1 crore for the year 2007-08 for setting a cluster at Ernakulam is made available to the Council by the Government.

3. 3.Adequate steps will be taken by the Universities to institutionalize standing committees of Academic Councils, which would act as equivalence committees for recognition of degrees from other Universities. Statutory changes, if required, will be made for the purpose. The Universities in the State will generally accord mutual recognition to courses conducted by each one of them. If exceptions are to be made, reasons will be stated. The minutes of the meetings of the equivalence committees will be made available to all Universities and the Higher

Education Council. Steps will be taken to ensure effective and transparent functioning of the equivalence committees.

4. 4. The papers presented at the National Seminar held on 1st and 2nd February 2008 will be consolidated and published.

5. 5. The names of colleges/institutions which refuse to give information required for the Data Bank shall be communicated to the Universities concerned. The Universities shall take necessary steps for procuring the required information from the colleges/institutions concerned.

Item No.4 – Manual for Grading in Undergraduate Courses

The Vice-Chairman introduced the draft manual. He explained that the grading system proposed for the undergraduate level is qualitatively different from that introduced at the school level, even as it is an extension of the reforms already introduced at the school level. Direct grading system is recommended as it would improve the quality of evaluation. The principles of relative grading will be used as a guideline for bringing about greater credibility in internal evaluation. While a five point scale would be used for evaluation of individual answers, final certification will be made on a seven point scale by making finer distinctions within the top three grades. The Vice-Chairman pointed out that the system recommended now is transitory. Necessary changes will have to be made with the introduction of modified course-credit-semester system in 2009-10. He requested the members to critically evaluate the draft manual, with a view to improving it.

Dr.Chandramohan suggested that absolute grading may be implemented in 2008-09 and the direct grading, as recommended in the draft manual, in 2009-10. He said that the introduction of direct grading would require a lot of preparation which could be undertaken in the course of the next academic year.

Dr.K.S.Radhakrishnan while approving the draft manual expressed his apprehension about the contextual application of the system without adequate training for teachers and sufficient infrastructural support.

Dr.Jancy James said that introduction of the system of direct grading may not be effective without imparting sufficient training for the teachers.

Dr.M.K.Ramachandran said that the Universities are not yet ready for a comprehensive change in the system. He warned that the system is likely to collapse if grading is introduced without adequate preparation.

Dr.Gangan Prathap said that the system of direct grading is not very complex. He said that excessive apprehension about the system is an expression of fear psychosis. He remarked that the system is good, but the State is perhaps not ready for the changes.

Dr. E.P. Yesodharan opined that fears about the introduction of the grading system are exaggerated. Operations involved are very simple. It would not be a difficult task to train the teachers in the system of direct grading. What is required is only an attitudinal change in favour of reforms.

The Vice-Chairman said that the anxieties cannot be wished away. He said that the academic system in the State has stagnated for long. The teachers have not been subjected to changes for a long period of time. Therefore, resistance to change is natural. At the same time teachers in the State are perhaps better than their counter-parts in other states. The failure is not with individual teachers, but with the system. It would be possible to change the individuals only if the system itself is radically restructured. The Council's proposal to introduce course-credit-semester system should be viewed in this context. He said that the Higher Education Council and the Universities should undertake the task of imparting training to the teachers on a big scale. Similarly steps would be taken to allay the apprehensions of the students.

The Chairman said that the Council should arrive at a collective decision on the basis of the discussions already held. The attempt should be to introduce the changes in a fool proof manner. This would require adequate preparation before the changes are introduced.

The following decisions were unanimously taken by the Council on the basis of the above discussion.

1. The draft manual was approved
2. Grading will be introduced in all the Universities from 2009-10.

3. 3.A massive training programme will be organized for teachers during the academic year 2008-09. The task will be undertaken by the Higher Education Council and Universities in the State.

4. 4.Course-Credit-Semester system will also be introduced from 2009-10, as decided at the previous meeting of the Governing Council.

5. 5.Steps will be taken by the Government for appointment of adequate number of teachers and staff and for improving the infrastructure of the Universities in order to introduce the new system without any hassles.

Item No.5 – Determination of Minority Status in respect of Aided and Unaided Institutions in Higher Education

The Council discussed the agenda note on the non discriminatory criteria for determination of Minority Status in respect of Unaided Professional Colleges and Private Aided and Unaided Arts and Science colleges formulated by Justice P.A.Mohammed Committee. The note was approved.

Member Secretary