

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governing Council held on 02-01-2008

The second meeting of the Governing Council was held at the office of the Council at Science and Technology Museum Campus from 11 AM to 2PM on 2-1-2008. 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, Mahatma Gandhi University
4. 4.Dr.P. Chandramohan Vice Chancellor, Kannur University
5. 5.Prof . Anwar Jehan Zuberi Vice Chancellor, Calicut University
6. 6.Dr.Fathimathu Zuhara K Member,Executive Council
7. 7.Dr.Achuth Sankar S Nair Member, Executive Council
8. 8.Prof.K. Aravindakshan Member Executive Council
9. 9.Dr.M.P.Kannan Member, Executive Council
10. 10.Dr.C.Balan Member, Executive Council
11. 11.Dr. K. Mohandas Director, Sree Chithira Thirunal Institute
12. 12.Shri.C.P. Narayanan Member, Planning Board
13. 13.Dr. E.P. Yesodharan Executive Vice President, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment
14. 14.Shri.V.R.Padmanabhan I.A.S Director of Collegiate Education
15. 15.Prof.Thomas Joseph Member Secretary

In addition to the above members, the following also attended the meeting

1. 1.Sri.K.A.Antony Representing Secretary, Higher Education Department
2. 2.Sri.V.Prasenan Representing Secretary, Finance Department

The following agenda was transacted by the Council

Item No.1. Opening Remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed the members to the second meeting of the Governing Council. He said that the meeting has to transact very important agenda including consideration of the reports of the Committees on Restructuring Undergraduate Education and Scheme of Cluster of Colleges and the norms for starting new colleges/ courses from the academic year 2008-09. He congratulated the committees headed by Dr. Vijayan and Dr. Babu Joseph for bringing out comprehensive reports, after undertaking wide-ranging discussions with organizations of students, teachers, principals, managements and other academics. He said that the Higher Education Council would only discuss broad guidelines on reforms applicable to the entire State and the universities will have the freedom to work out schemes and implement them within the broad parameters set out by the Council. He pointed out that the performance of the Council till now has belied apprehensions about the Council intruding into the autonomy of universities.

Item.No.2: Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 3-7-2007 which were confirmed through circulation were ratified

Item No. 3: Report on Action Taken

Report on Action Taken was approved

Item No.4:Report on Restructuring Undergraduate System

The Vice Chairman pointed out that the report dealt with three aspects of reform , namely the structure, content and pedagogy of undergraduate education. Only broad directions of the changes are indicated. Details will have to be worked out by the Higher Education Council and the Universities concerned. Aspects common to all universities may be decided in the Council's forum and aspects specific to the universities, by individual universities.

C.P. Narayanan said that the vision statements in the reports on restructuring undergraduate education and scheme of cluster of colleges would be acceptable to all and that detailed discussions are required only on the implementation of the reforms. He said that the

implementation has to be properly phased. Uniform and simultaneous implementation by all universities need not be insisted upon. The stakeholders will have to be taken into confidence at each stage of implementation by educating them about the rationale of the reforms. Modernization of the infrastructure and proper financial management on the part of the universities would also be required. Universities should be relieved of the burden of distance education by establishing an Open University, which step would also improve the quality of Distance Education, he said.

Dr. Jancy James who stressed the need for reforms as recommended by the committee shared her anxieties about the complexities involved in implementing them. She pointed out that a phased implementation of the reforms would involve the simultaneous existence of two parallel streams in the initial stages. The teachers need to be trained in the new pedagogy on a massive scale, especially in matters relating to internal evaluation and designing of courses. She pointed out that the reservations of students about internal evaluation have a genuine basis and must be properly addressed. Dr. Jancy James wanted adequate number of non-teaching staff to be appointed in the universities for the successful implementation of the reforms. The financial loss of the universities in the event of de-linking distance education streams should be made up, she said.

Dr.M.P. Kannan suggested that Grade Point for each course should be calculated on the basis of the percentage of marks received for that particular course. Grade Point Average (GPA) should be given along with Letter Grade to ensure accuracy in assessment and certification and for making the preparation of rank list for admission to higher courses easier. While letter grades would indicate the broad level of achievement, the GPA would show the exact level of performance.

Dr. E.P. Yesodharan supported the views of Dr. Kannan on grading. He also welcomed the introduction of five year integrated programmes. To be successful, proper criteria will have to be evolved for the selection of students, teachers and institutions which are involved in the conduct of the programme, he added.

Dr.Achuth Sankar S Nair said that the concerns expressed by Dr. Kannan will have to be addressed while framing detailed guidelines on grading .

Dr.P.Chandramohan said that the training programme for teachers of Kannur university would start from the 10th of January. Grading would be introduced from 2008. He suggested that the

switch over to semester pattern could be made at a later stage.

Prof . Anwar Jehan Zuberi said that Calicut University has already initiated the process for the introduction of choice based credit system. She said that there is opposition to internal evaluation from students and that considering ground realities , semester can only be implemented from 2009. She said that the mobility of students could be improved with the introduction of CCS.

The Chairman said that even as the universities have the freedom decide on curriculum reforms on their own, the fact that there is no alternative to radical reforms needs to be appreciated by all universities. He suggested that the universities discuss the problems of implementation in their fora within the next two months and send their responses to Higher Education Council so that the problems of implementation could be sorted out through collaboration and coordination between the Universities and the Council. Meanwhile, he would discuss the anxieties about internal evaluation with organizations of students. He recalled that such apprehensions about internal evaluation at the PG level could be allayed through continuous dialogue with the students. The Chairman stressed the need for evolving proper parameters for evaluation and grievance redressal.

Dr. M. K Ramachandran Nair endorsed the report of the committee on restructuring undergraduate education. He, however, drew attention to the complexities of phased implementation, which would necessitate the simultaneous operation of three streams – existing, annual with grading and CCS – in the initial stages. But the challenges of change will have to be accepted, he said. He added that the Government should liberally assist the universities for improving infrastructure to cope with the additional responsibilities. He wanted the Higher Education Council to take the initiative to evolve common norms for grading. He expressed confidence about the implementation of internal evaluation by overcoming the initial opposition of students. He also said that the provision for student feedback would bring about academic enrichment of teachers. He wanted both the Higher Education Council and the Universities to organize training programmes for teachers.

Dr.K.Mohandas wanted to draw a distinction between genuine and imaginary concerns. Some element of apprehension will always be there in all situations involving change, which could be overcome only in course of time. But the apprehensions about capacity deficiency have to be addressed immediately, he stressed.

Member Secretary suggested that some training could be imparted to teachers through Academic Staff Colleges by reorienting refresher and orientation courses.

The Vice Chairman pointed out that the system of internal evaluation is not new. It is only the opposition to it that is new. In the sixties, students were for scrapping external evaluation and introduction of internal evaluation. The canard that external evaluation is more objective than internal evaluation should be exposed. He preferred the nomenclature Continuous Assessment in place of internal assessment as the former is more descriptive and less offensive than the latter. He pointed out that CCS cannot be introduced without full conversion to Continuous Assessment. Apart from compulsions of quality, the compulsions of national policy are also in operation, as policy decision for implementation of CCS from next year has already been taken at the national level. Dr. Panikkar said that despite the difficulty involved in multiplication of programmes in the initial stages, phased implementation has its merits. The grading and internal evaluation which would be introduced in 2008 would prepare the teachers for the complexities of CCS which would be introduced in 2009. The changes envisaged in 2009 will have to be built upon the changes introduced in 2008. He said that there are a lot of mistaken notions about grading. The cardinal principle that grading should not start with marking is often forgotten. The Council would prepare a manual on an easily manageable system of grading which could be used by the universities for training the teachers in the nuances of grading. He clarified that the integrated courses would be different from the general courses in content and pedagogy. Integrated courses would be oriented towards specialization and research while general courses would combine the possibilities for breadth and depth. He emphasized the need for regular training of teachers. Orientation courses exposing young teachers to the pedagogy of higher education within the first two years of their recruitment and regular refresher courses once in five years for updating content should become the norm. The reforms should be such as would result in bringing about a qualitative leap in higher education, he said.

The Council adopted the Report on Restructuring of Undergraduate Education in full and resolved to request the Government and Universities to implement it while committing itself to further assist the universities in the preparation of manuals for teacher training, conducting teacher training programmes and developing model course material for common courses.

Item No.5 :Report on the Scheme of Cluster of Colleges

The Vice Chairman said that the cluster system is intended to promote the quality of education, apart from expanding the facilities for education by sharing existing infrastructure and human resources. This would imply the starting of new programmes like five year integrated programmes in the clusters. The clusters would be eligible for greater degree of autonomy as compared with individual colleges.

Dr.Panikkar said that a re-conceptualization of the concept of autonomy would be required in the context. Autonomy should be linked up with social accountability and democratization of governance.

Member Secretary suggested that sub clauses (6) & (7) of clause (3) of the report may be modified to reduce the minimum number of colleges required to constitute a cluster to three instead of five and to provide the option for separate clusters of Government and Aided colleges even while retaining the existing provision for combined clusters of Government and Aided colleges.

Dr. E.P. Yesodharan objected to the suggestion of the Member Secretary by pointing out that the rubric of public funded institutions includes categories of Government and Aided colleges and a further distinction between the two would frustrate the efforts for greater social control over aided institutions. The objectives of sharing existing facilities and developing new areas in diverse fields would also suffer. Government colleges are likely to be denied the facilities for participation in the clusters in many places, if there is an option for separate clusters of Government and Aided colleges.

The Vice-Chairman opined that Government and Aided colleges are essentially public funded institutions. It is necessary to narrow down the differences and extend the areas of co-operation between them by allowing them to work under the same cluster.

The report on the Scheme of Cluster of Colleges was adopted by the Council without any modification.

Item No.6 : Starting of New Colleges and Courses

The Council ratified the guidelines framed by the Executive Council with some modification in clause number (3). The revised guidelines are as follows:

Guidelines for starting of new colleges/courses from 2008-09.

1. 1. New colleges/courses may be started in the Government/Aided sector, depending on the financial resources of the Government. The emphasis should be on strengthening the public funded system, diversification of courses and ensuring maximum geographical distribution of colleges/courses within the state. Priority should be given to new professional colleges/new generation courses. Disciplines which have not been fully opened up may be preferred over others. Areas with low density of colleges may be given priority in starting new institutions.

2. 2. Only aided courses should be sanctioned in Govt colleges and Aided Colleges. Courses which are proposed to be run in the self financing mode or on condition that there would be no additional financial commitment on the part of the Government, need not be recommended in Govt/Aided Colleges. The object should be to ensure the separate identity of public and private institutions, so that there would be no private appropriation of public assets. Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode in Government/Aided institutions through self-financing courses need not be permitted.

3. 3. Unaided colleges /courses may be sanctioned selectively. NOC may be given for starting new unaided colleges preferably in areas where there are not adequate number of institutions of the same category.

4. 4. In the unaided sector, preference may be given to institutions under Government control over others. Unaided Colleges/Unaided Courses in Unaided Colleges may be recommended, subject to the following conditions for ensuring adequate social control for the promotion of equity and excellence in higher education.

5. 5. An undertaking in respect of the following from the Managements may insisted on as condition precedent for granting NOC for new unaided colleges/courses:

6. 1. Colleges/Courses would be started only after providing adequate infrastructure, human and physical, as may be certified by the affiliating university.

7. 2. The procedure of admission would be as decided by the Government from time to time.

8. 3. Only fees determined by the Government from time to time would be collected from the students.

9. 4. Adequate number of scholarships on merit-cum means basis would be instituted as determined by the Government from time to time.

10. 5. The appointment and service conditions of teachers and non-teaching staff would be as determined by the Government from time to time.

11. 6.

12. 7. Only courses approved by the affiliating university would be conducted in the institution.

13. 8. Details regarding the establishment and governance of the institution, admission, fees, courses, results, teaching and other staff, and any further information as required by the Government/ University would be published on the website of the institution.

14. 9. The affiliation granted would be temporary and there would be no claim for permanent affiliation.

15. 10. Adequate time should be given for academic preparation after granting NOC. NOC may be given by the Government three months ahead of the new academic year for starting new college/course in 2008-09. Colleges/ courses for which NOC is given afterwards may be permitted to start them only in 2009-10.

16. 11. NOC/Affiliation would be withdrawn by the Government/ universities on violation of the above conditions.

Item No.7 : Mutual Recognition of Degrees

It was decided to request the Universities to set up statutory equivalence committees and to process all applications within a specified time frame so as to avoid inconvenience to migrating students.

Item No.8 : National Seminar

The Council ratified the decision of the Executive Council to hold a national seminar on Higher Education on the 1st and 2nd of February 2008 and to meet the expenses for the same from the Grant-in-aid allotted to the Council.

Item No. 9 : Participatory Data Collection

It was decided to involve the NSS volunteers in Data Collection as part of the mapping of facilities in Higher Education in the State. The training and collection of data would be undertaken in the month January 2008. The Council would provide grant for meeting the expenses incurred by the NSS Units for the purpose, as detailed below:

Name of University

No. of NSS Units

Amount Required

Kerala University

77 Colleges

Rs. 30,000/-

M.G. University

118 Colleges

Rs. 46,020/-

University of Calicut

129 Colleges

Rs. 50,310/-

Kannur University

40 Colleges

Rs. 17,000/-

Agricultural University

9 Centres

Rs. 3,940/-

Sanskrit University

7 Centres

Rs. 2,730/-

Technical Education

33 Colleges

Rs. 25,000/-

Total Rs. 1,75,000/-

It was decided to release the amount for disbursement through the State Liaison Officer, National Service Scheme, Vikas Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram.

Item No.10 : Renovation work : Payment of Purchase tax & Contribution to Construction Workers Welfare Fund

The Council ratified the payment of purchase tax and contribution to construction workers welfare fund made to District Nirmithi Kendra, Trivandrum in connection with the construction of Office and Board room over and above the estimate amount and decided that similar conditions as in G.O.(P) No.218/98/LAD dt 23/10/98 be incorporated in the agreement to be executed for remaining works to be undertaken by District Nirmithi Kendra, Trivandrum.

Member Secretary