

Best Practices for the Session 2021 - 2022

1. Institutional Collaboration with Corporate Houses to facilitate Internship Programme for students of the college.

Objectives:

Keeping in line with the thematic focus of the New Education Policy, 2020, the college has endeavored in right earnest to focus on creating and facilitating a platform to ensure that students are provided with an opportunity to realize and use their academic training to bring tangible changes in their lives as well as contribute to the corporate life of the nation. The primary objective of this program is to allow the students to move beyond the precincts of their classrooms and encounter the comparatively harsher environs premised on the demand to marry skill with theoretical understanding of needs and circumstances. Interning with professionals during their formative years, the students are expected to acquire skill-sets which can best be learnt beyond the simulated structures that classrooms can provide at best. The experiences gathered over the period of their internships can fuel their young and inquisitive minds to comprehend the nuances of the trade and at the same time assimilate the core aspects of their academic training. Apart, from providing them with some economic perks, internship programs are also expected to instill in them a sense of discipline and responsibility, highly valued qualities sought by recruiting institutions across the spectrum. Therefore, intern-training programs facilitated by the college, is also meant as a part of their character-building exercise, apart from the more apparent and immediate objective shaping the students as employable assets for the future.

Context:

The college, being the only higher educational institution expressly meant for women in the district, has the enviable responsibility to provide an enabling platform to the students that would allow them to break the shackles of economic and social impairment, traditionally borne by them, with their challenges being doubly complex owing to the fact that, as inhabitants of a financially backward district, located in a remote territorial region, avenues for their socio-economic development has been sparse if not completely absent. With the majority of the students being first generation learners, belonging from the tribal families from the Tea-Belt, or from landless agricultural families, even daily commute from their places to attend classes in the college takes a financial toll on their families' meager earnings. Moreover, willingly or unwillingly, traditionally, a noted tendency among their parents has been to get their daughters

married at a very young age, to dedicate whatever little resources they possess, to nurture their male off-springs rather. Against such socio-economic handicap, providing a viable financial avenue to students, whereby they can exhibit some tangible benefits of college education can stem the regressive social discrimination practiced against them. Internship opportunities in renowned corporate houses allow the female students to have increased financial elbow room that they can use to empower themselves. Moreover, they get a chance to have a taste of professional environments, and can sharpen their professional networking skills, that might help them to seek a respectable job once they cross the thresholds of their academic life. Therefore, the decision was taken in appropriate level in the college, to encourage as many corporate houses as possible to come and interact with the students and conduct training programs with appropriate logistical support being provided by the college for the same.

The Practice:

According to the decision taken by the Governing Body of the college, to create an environment, welcoming willing corporate houses to interact with students and subsequently select from amongst them candidates whom they deem fit to intern with them, after according appropriate training for the same, several seminars and classroom interaction sessions were organized. Along with these, online platforms were also used to hold meetings with interested students and gauge their aptitude for various programs being offered. Eminent speakers interacted with the students, answering their myriad queries, and trained Human Resource professionals deputed by respective companies also were present to ensure that the programs were conducted as per protocol. Students from various Honors and Program courses were made to undergo aptitude tests and on the basis of their performances, they were asked to appear for the subsequent levels forward. The students desirous of appearing for the tests were initially groomed by the faculty members of the college. The fact that the college organizes regular job training seminars also helped, as students attending them already possessed some knowledge about affairs happening in the national and international arena and therefore were more forthcoming with responses when questions to test their knowledge about current affairs were asked during the aptitude tests.

Evidence of Success:

Success is not always a quantifiable phenomenon and therefore also has an intangible facet associated with it. In terms of absolute numbers, a total of 150 candidates found willing to participate in the endeavor can seem like a meager number, but the college believes that the

positive carry forwards from the programs entail much more than what meets the eyes. The opportunity to interact with professionals from globally acclaimed corporate houses like Tata Consultancy Services, Mahindra Pride etc. and organizations like India Post Payments Bank is of immense importance for students otherwise hemmed in by crippling socio-economic handicaps as residents of remote and backward areas of our nation. Mahindra Pride held classroom interaction sessions with 18 candidates, and 45 students completed the Tata Consultancy Services training schedule. The session held by India Post Payment Banks saw three students being selected for their exclusive internship and training program. The success of the initiative also lies in the overwhelming queries received from the first semester students from various departments regarding the possibility of holding similar sessions in the near future. This shows a welcome shift towards breaking the barrier of hesitance that students are wont to feel when encountering any novel experience. Many have already registered their names with respective department heads to participate in events of similar nature in the upcoming session.

Problems Encountered:

The college did face some challenges while trying to conceptualize and subsequently implement the events. Being located in a remote part of the country, which has traditionally been left out of the industrial map, getting Corporate Houses to come looking for talent has been the primary obstacle. This coupled with the fact that students who are primarily first generation learners from economically and socially challenged sections of the society were initially hesitant to face such professional overtures. Moreover, the students being schooled in vernacular institutions had an unfounded yet innate sense of insufficiency owing to their discomfiture with English communication skills. The fact, that the institution's resource crunch also didn't allow it to hold remedial English communication classes regularly, also proved to be a handicap. But, the college understands the need to strive continuously to act against all odds to turn these ventures into bigger successes for the sake of the students, and with timely financial help from appropriate authorities and local support, believes that challenges can be addressed.

Resources Required:

A dedicated fund, created to finance seminars with trained resource persons from the various corporate houses can go a long way in ensuring a culture of excellence being instilled in the institute's framework. It will allow the liaison officer the required freedom to approach

stalwarts from the industries to come and interact with the students more frequently. Also, regular training sessions in the college can prepare the students to interact more fruitfully with willing recruiters looking for young interns with adequate communication skills. Also, funds are needed to build state-of-the-art audio-visual rooms expressly meant for holding corporate interaction events. This, along with regular subscriptions of magazines related to corporate affairs can provide students with adequate exposure prior to their interactions with corporate leaders and speakers during aptitude testing sessions. The students, the college believes, would benefit immensely, if taken for occasional/regular industry visits to acclimatize them with the climate and demands of a professional set-up.

2. Online Repository of Academic Material and Other Activities of the College

Objective:

The college started with the practice of recording online cases for the students at a time when the world faced unprecedented challenges owing to the onslaught of the COVID – 19 pandemic. To tide over the unenviable condition where physical presence within the precincts of the classroom was restricted, the college, like other educational institutions, looked at online teaching as a panacea. Therefore, meticulous planning was put into action to ensure that students faced as little trouble as possible while shifting to a novel learning paradigm. Accordingly, the faculty members were instructed to provide lecture videos which the students could access anytime as per their convenience. The initiative which started then in right earnest was however considered to be a temporary arrangement meant to address the COVID – 19 induced challenge at hand, with a return to the brick and mortar classrooms after the pandemic ended, as a foregone conclusion. However, the New Education Policy 2020's focus on blended-learning, and the students' enthusiastic response to online resources during and post pandemic period, made the college decide to continue with the practice of providing academic resources online. In fact, it was decided to further enrich the repository with appropriate additions to it. Being aware of the fact that majority of the students in the college belong to economically and socially challenged families, owing to which commuting daily to attend classes become a financial challenge for them, the college authority felt that providing them with the opportunity to access the lectures through online videos could be a viable solution. Therefore, in the academic year 2021-22, a concerted effort was made on the part of all the departments to record their classroom lectures and interaction with students and upload as many recordings as

possible which the students could then access through the dedicated section provided in the college website. This practice was not limited to only academic activities. Gradually, the co – curricular activities carried out in the College, Awareness Programmes and similar programmes were also recorded and made available for the benefit of the students.

Context:

The repository that has been painstakingly built by various faculty members from several departments is aimed at addressing the specific needs of the students as per their cognitive skills. Aided by the fact that the faculty members have a thorough understanding of the socio-cultural-economic challenges faced by the students, the academic resources provided through the online bank has been managed in such a way that it becomes easy for them to navigate through the resources. Classes have been devised in a manner that would allow them to have their fundamentals strengthened, before graduating on to the more complex sections of the syllabus. Mock test sets have been provided accordingly which the students can then download to assess their progress. They have also been informed of the extra classes that happen weekly when they can approach the faculty members to discuss the difficulties which they might have faced while answering the mock-test papers. These classes are expressly meant for this purpose, beyond the usual class hours dedicated for regular classes. Thus, the college wants them to actively integrate the online academic resources with the regular classes. The experience that the faculty members had during the covid era alerted them of the condition whereby a section of the students treated online resources as mere apparatus to aid a mechanical rote learning process. Hence, particular attention is paid in the extra classes to encourage students to discuss and analyse the content provided to them through online modes.

The Practice:

The college decided to continue with the practice of recording class room lectures delivered by the faculty members on several topics related primarily to their curriculum. These lectures were then uploaded in the college website for the students to access. Apart from these, separate topics were chosen to deal with the fundamental aspects of their discipline which are not otherwise dealt with as part of the syllabi. Along with these separate lecture series were uploaded whereby professionals from other institutes shared their domain specific knowledge. Videos on public speaking, ethical research practices, plagiarism, contemporary events from national and international arena were also made available so that the students, desirous of pursuing higher education after graduation and appearing for competitive examinations would have clear idea

about the path forward and the demands of academic rigour expected of them. Separate Whatsapp groups were also created to address academic queries of students if they encountered any, while accessing the online resources at times when they are unable to mark their presence in the classrooms. Even recorded videos of programmes conducted by various local NGOs on several topics of social importance were uploaded occasionally to ensure that the students can have a sense of their responsibilities as social beings. This was done with the belief that empowerment of women can be ensured only when they are allowed to view themselves as part of the 'dynamic collective' rather than training in isolation for economic independence alone. The college believes that the primary purpose of education is to instil a sense of responsibility and freedom in the recipients whereby they can finally learn to navigate as individuals capable of making responsible decisions for themselves and the society.

Evidence of Success:

The success of the initiative can be gauged from the enthusiastic response received from the primary stakeholders-the students themselves. An increased footfall in the dedicated extra classes to get their queries addressed and gradual improvement in classroom participation are areas that can be mentioned as the markers of success of the initiative. Their spontaneous enthusiasm in approaching the faculty members with their mock-test performances and willingness to discuss them in detail to perform better are telltale signs of the initiative's acceptance among the students. The increasing number of views also indicate the popularity of class recordings in the college channel made available through Youtube.

Problems Encountered:

The challenges pertaining to the initiative are primarily owing to the lack of financial resources at the college's disposal, as that has alone restricted the possibility of approaching eminent speakers from several disciplines who could share their domain expertise with the students. The college lacks the fund to pay honorarium to prospective professionals in lieu of their valuable time, experience and knowledge shared through the videos. Moreover, the college lacks adequate number of rooms fitted with audio-visual equipment which could have been used to record dedicated videos more frequently for the benefit of the students. A paucity in the number of faculty members in several disciplines also has proved to be a handicap that the college has been struggling with, as they are unable to assign as many extra classes, dedicated solely for addressing queries over online resources, as they would prefer as the pressure of completing the syllabus on time also looms large. But, the college believes that with time,

challenges can be transformed into opportunities if timely financial aid is received from appropriate sources.

Resources Required:

The college requires more advanced tools for recording activities of the College. This would ensure better quality of the recordings. Therefore, it is essential to allocate funds to procure the required tools. At present, the college does not have sufficient resources, due to which the videos shot on mobile cameras often look a little amateurish. Even though, they solve the purpose, yet they lack the finesse at times.

