

Minutes:

1. Campus Amenities: The Faculty Forum Convener, Anandh Subramaniam presented the results of a survey on campus amenities conducted by the then DRPG about 3 years ago. The results of the survey are posted online at http://home.iitk.ac.in/~anandh/Downloads/SurveySummary_01012012.pdf

With new shopping centers being planned, comments were invited on the way forward. The DOFA, Manindra Agrawal indicated that the survey took views of all faculty, students and staff.

The following points were noted: (i) CEMMC is not addressing the needs of the campus community, (ii) new shopping complexes need to have a proper architectural design taking into account the shops being planned, (iii) Recommendations of survey should be implemented by CEMMC and shops/establishments not catering to the need of the campus should be removed and new shops will have to be established keeping the need of the campus community in view, (iv) A fresh survey may also be conducted.

2. Amit Travels issue: Venkatesh gave updates about how action was taken very rapidly on receipt of complaint. CEMMC meeting was called at a very short notice and the vendor was asked to vacate within a few hours. Investigation team has not yet given its recommendation, but Amit Travels has been asked to vacate. Concern that procedures are not being followed. Concern was also expressed at the administration's apparent attitude that members of the faculty are above the law and are not answerable under the laws of the land, that the filing of an FIR or application of an RTI will be considered prima facie a hostile act, and liable to attract vigorous retaliation. After discussions, it was felt that CEMMC should follow due process and be transparent in its action.

3. HAG and Related matters: Anantharamakrishna presented the issues regarding implementation and implications. The pay order says merit but the purpose is not clear. If there is a selection criteria, is it through board or through council. The 40% cap is against the merit based system of IITs. In 2012, a board decision was taken in which some norms for HAG were suggested. These have not been implemented but some additional criteria have been imposed. A general concern was raised that the administration has avoided discussion with faculty on many issues including but not restricted to HAG like Associate Deans, reviews, etc. After a lot of discussions, it was decided that the earlier recommendations made by the board should be followed. On the more general issue of administration transparency, a document will be prepared by a team of Harish Karnik, JN Moorthy, Anandh Subramaniam and anyone else interested in being part of the team.

4. Environmental Issues: The presentations of Ishan Sharma and Sameer Khandekar are uploaded in the document green.pdf on the website.

(a) Ishan Sharma on behalf of the Green subcommittee of the FF gave an update of environmental concerns in 3 areas as listed below. The message was that IITK should lead the way in efficient use of available land and preserve biodiversity without compromising rapid growth.

- Land usage: The Institute has committed itself to delineating 25% of its area as a contiguous permanent green zone. This is to keep land for future growth, preserve biodiversity, and improve overall quality of life. Actual areal survey prove that only 17% of the campus is currently untouched green land. It is nearly impossible to meet the Institute's above stated commitment, unless immediate steps are taken that include (a) marking green zones before new construction, and (b) providing viaducts to connect isolated green zones.

- Neelgai: Social media and institute personnel are reporting that neelgai are being clandestinely herded out of the campus into neighboring farmland. The Director was apprised of the situation. He has taken serious note of this unsanctioned activity, as it can lead to potential social embarrassment and confrontation with neighbors. The Director orally notified the Professor in charge of Security (Prof. Braj Bhushan) to make sure that this activity is stopped and doesn't recur, He has requested the Green Cell to constitute a committee to formulate a scientific and humane solution to the Neelgai issue.

- Green Cell: This body has been recently created to take care of the campus' environmental goals as per the mandate of IIT Council. The Green Cell recommends that the institute can meet all its academic responsibilities and goals by utilizing only 30% of its land for construction including roads, and keep 25-30% of its area as perennially green, and 50-40% land as maintained open space including parks and lawns. However, its role and say in the construction process is still unclear.

(b) Sameer Khandekar then gave an overview on the steps involved in the present construction processes of new buildings, including the role of all the committees involved. Some shortcomings and lacunae in the processes were highlighted. Suggestions of systemic changes in the construction process flowchart were offered to ensure higher efficiency and greener outcomes. Some possible routes to include the Environmental Advisory Committee (chaired by the Director) and the Green Cell in the whole process of decision making for new constructions were suggested. Some issues that were raised by the audience include: When should a building be conceived and when should it be announced that a building has been approved? Additionally, it was pointed out that there were repeated mistakes with regard to construction and feedback from users committee was not always taken. Another proposal that was suggested was that there should be a lower limit on the construction volume in a given area to ensure maximum use of land. The design of the new research complex was highlighted as an example of a well implemented process.

The faculty forum appreciated the efforts of Ishan Sharma and Sameer Khandekar and others in this regard.

5. FF Accounts and contributions: As it was getting very late, it was decided that the treasurer FF would send these over email to the faculty. The accounts are posted online in the document accounts.pdf. The issue of voluntary contribution would be taken up in the next meeting.