

**Minutes Faculty Forum (FF) GBM – August 27, 2014, 5:30PM, L17**

Number of Faculty Attended: 93

1. Minutes of last meeting – passed.
2. New treasurer - Sovan Das. The service of the outgoing treasurer Madhav Ranganathan has been greatly acknowledged.
3. Monthly Contribution to FF. **Contribution of Rs 25/- contribution per month per faculty has been decided. (modified after Sept 08, GBM)**

FF representative will soon circulate a form requesting permission to deduct the contribution from Salary.

4. Anandh Subramaniam – mentioned the various user committees of FF.
5. A proposal on “Need for consultations in decision making” was presented and discussed.

The proposal mentioned several recent decisions taken by administration, such as appointment of Associate Deans, modification of sabbatical rules, formulation evaluation criteria for HAG. In all these cases, the Institute administration did not consult enough with faculty through well-established feedback seeking routes and the implementation was lacking transparency. In many cases, a proper proposal based, on which discussions should have taken place, were not presented to meeting attendees. These are rare events at IIT Kanpur. Further, such practices if continued will alienate faculty from institute affairs and faculty will lose a sense of belongingness to the institute. The proposal called for immediate action to stop such practice.

The proposal reiterated that the existing channels of consultative processes, such as departmental route, open house should be utilized as best as possible. Further it recommended creation of IRDC (for DORD) like mechanism for DOFA, DOSA, DOAA, ISPAC, and Finance matters. **DORA also has advisory committee with members nominated by each department. (This has been informed by DORA and included in this minutes after Sept 8, GBM).** Also, various proposal for implementation can be uploaded on a website for institute wide feedback before finalization. The document has been included in Annexure-1.

6. A proposal on “Appraisal and Selection” of faculty members was discussed.

The proposal started by identifying several unprecedented events since last selections committee. The procedural norms were not always followed during the selection committee interviews. Although, the DFAC recommendations unanimous, the IFAC recommendations not clear.

A reason for not keeping the minutes of DFAC and IFAC meeting were also sought. So far, no good reason could be identified. It was also mentioned in standard practice DFAC recommendations should be honored and IFAC is supposed to normalize the DFAC recommendation across departments. Also, the need for consultation with stake-holders in decision making has been strongly expressed. The document has been included in Annexure-2.

7. Before conclusion of the GBM, two resolutions on adapting the proposal documents (a) on “Need for consultations in decision making” and (b) on “Self appraisal and selection” has been passed. The resolutions are mentioned below.

**Resolution on Transparency:**

The forum expresses its displeasure at the failure to properly implement the required consultative processes, as well as the lack of transparency in decision making by the current Institute administration. Hence the forum demands unanimously that the document titled “Need for Consultations in Decision Making”, discussed in the forum (Annexure-1), be immediately implemented to bring transparency in the administrative processes.

**Resolution on Selection Committee:**

The forum opines that the Dean of Faculty Affairs (DOFA) has the onus to project the faculty of the Institute in a positive light and keep the morale of the faculty high. The manner in which the selection activities were coordinated by the DOFA have vitiated the working atmosphere, discouraged young faculty, and are not in keeping with the mandate of his office. The forum expresses its deep displeasure at DOFA’s failure to discharge his responsibilities properly.

The forum notes with anguish that in the current selection process, the Director has failed to prevent non-uniform implementation of selection norms across the Institute, as well as, procedural lapses in some cases. In fact, there was a lack of transparency regarding the norms themselves.

Finally, the forum regrets the insensitive manner in which the entire selection process has been carried out by the DOFA and the Director.

In order to prevent recurrence of such incidents, the Forum recommends the immediate adoption of part A of the document on “Appraisal and Selection” (Annexure-2) as presented in the meeting.

FF Executive Committee

**ANNEXURE-1****Need for Consultations in Decision Making****Preamble**

There is a rising concern with decline in consultation in decision making of important matters in the institute. Some recent examples are: manner in which positions of Associate Deans were created; sabbatical rules were modified; review formats of the departments and the Institute were prepared, evaluation criteria for HAG were prepared etc. A damaging consequence of this is a rising sense of alienation amongst the faculty which needs to be immediately arrested.

Participation of faculty in decision making on issues of common interest instills a sense of belongingness and promotes the culture of working together for welfare of the institute.

**Suggestions**

Matters that are discernibly academic (especially teaching related) are already under the mandate of the Academic Senate and hence require no elaboration. For others also, there exist well established mechanisms in the institute. These are reiterated first. Then suggestions are provided to improve them and finally a few additional suggestions are made.

**a) Existing mechanisms**

1. The Departmental Route: A proposal is prepared by the proposer, which may be whetted by the Director, Heads Group, IAC or Deans Group, and sent by the Director or an authority under him to the departments for a feedback. The salient features of the feedback are summarized and appropriate course of action is decided upon in the appropriate forum, e.g. IAC or Heads Group.
2. Open House: Some matters don't lend themselves to departmental route well. For example matters related to major construction in academic area or Green policy etc. This route has been used with some effectiveness, especially to collate views and also to provide an opportunity to an individual know his/her colleagues views in an open house.
3. IRDC: On matters related to Dean R&D's office, the effort made to activate IRDC mechanism in last 4-5 years is to be applauded. This consultative committee to Dean R&D has among its members one nominee of each department. These nominees have taken the important proposals back to the department and represented department's view in IRDC, where the decisions are taken; the final decision may still be taken in another forum. In some sense this is much like the departmental route, but its effectiveness has been better because (a) matters are within a limited domain and (b) departments tend to nominate those faculty members to IRDC who have shown keen interest in R&D activity.

**ANNEXURE-1****b) Improvements required in existing mechanisms**

1. At the heart of a consultative process in any of these routes is a draft proposal (occasionally, such as in an open house, it may not be so concrete). Currently, in a large number of cases, preparing a draft proposal is being avoided. Without it, departmental feedback is not possible. This must be revived.
2. If any proposal is to be put up in an agenda of a meeting, except in cases of urgency (which by definition is a rare occurrence), it must be made sure that draft proposal is circulated well in advance for Heads to discuss in their departments. Better would be to give proposals to the Heads to discuss in their departments and schedule the corresponding agenda in Heads Group or IAC only after giving sufficient time, say, a month.
3. A lacuna in the departmental route for consultations has been that many times the departments have simply responded in negative without providing any reasons. The reasons for these should be analyzed. Some of the possible reasons for this may be: (a) the proposal is ill prepared and does not provide specifics, (b) the proposal document fails to communicate the intent or (c) departments simply have been encouraged in the past only to give a yes or no answer; this may have happened because a sense has gotten perpetuated that ultimately, rather than a reasoned argument, only -yes and -no are counted. This can be reversed. First the proposal should be of better quality; it should be written by giving clear philosophical background, the issue it is trying to address, what the proposal is and how it will address the issues. It could also have what else was considered and why it was rejected. The proposal could also anticipate the questions that may arise in departmental meetings and may provide for a FAQ. If a proposal is of great importance, or complicated, it could even be presented by a person in know of the proposal in faculty meetings. Finally, another option could also be explored, that a proposal is prepared in two stages, by seeking opinions in first stage, then preparing a draft proposal and seeking final views on it.

**c) New suggestions**

1. In line with IRDC, consultative committee with a department representative nominated by the departments may be created for offices of DOFA, DOSA and DOAA and DORA. Just, as IRDC has worked well, these would too. A similar arrangement, a representative from each department nominated by it, is sought in ISPAC as well.
2. In this electronic age, it should be possible to bypass department consultative route by loading proposals on a website which not only allows concerned persons to comment upon it, but also allows a dialogue among them. This method will be transparent, and everyone will know of various views and the prevalent mood.