White Paper on Transparency in Administration, Appraisal and Enablers

IIT Kanpur has achieved academic excellence via a unique system of inclusive administration. This foundation will be the key for further growth and we need to cherish and foster the ethos developed over the decades. In recent times there is a perception of erosion of some of these time tested values.

Keeping the above in view Faculty Forum, IITK, via a series of meetings (GBM, committee meetings) have evolved a comprehensive document (white paper) addressing the following issues:

(i)   Need for consultations and feedback in administrative decision making
- Document-I: Need for consultations in decision making

(ii)   Need for an appraisal and evaluation mechanism which is encouraging to the faculty and fair in its modus operandi
- Document-II: A Proposal on Appraisal and Selection *(with Annexure-1)*

(iii)   Need for providing basic enablers to faculty (especially new ones)
- Document-III: Enablers for Faculty

In the context of the above, the following resolutions were made in the General Body Meeting (GBM) conducted on 27 August 2014.

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 the document on "Appraisal and Selection" (Document-II) as presented in the meeting.

DOCUMENT-I
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.

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 and the DORA advisory committee, consultative committee with a department representative nominated by the departments may be created for offices of DOFA, DOSA and DOAA. 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.

DOCUMENT-II

A Proposal on Appraisal and Selection

1. Preamble

Appraisal and selection are separate and independent. Appraisal is a periodic process supported by data and documents whose main aim is to give feedback to the individual for self improvement. A second outcome can be identification of bottlenecks that impede the individual in his/her academic work.

Selection is an event where multiple candidates are considered for appointment to a position or for some other reward. It is expected that the appraisal history of the individual will be the single most important component of the selection process.

2. Appraisal Process

Appraisal should be periodic (possibly yearly) and should be based on:

a) Raw data: this includes data about all aspects of R&D, teaching, institute contribution, outreach activity or/and any additional heads specifically provided by the person.
   ▪ This aspect is elaborated in *Annexure-1*.

Note: where ever possible this data collection should be automatically captured as part of existing records/processes.

b) Self appraisal: involves self evaluation of the outcomes of previously set goals, goal setting for the next/future period(s), identification of bottlenecks or lack of enablers that impede academic work.

c) Peer feedback: based on a), b) above by a peer group, typically the DFAC (or other peer groups may also be envisaged, which can evaluate the candidate's work better).

d) Any other input specifically given or requested by the individual (for example an independent peer group's feedback).

Note: All the appraisal data should be documented and available to the individual at all times.

3. Selection process

Selections happen at various points in time (AP→AsP→P→HAG, chairs, other rewards). An individual can choose to apply or be otherwise considered (nominated for a chair). The selection process envisaged is:

a) The DFAC-IFAC uses the complete appraisal record and any other input given by the candidate to form a justified recommendation. It should take into account bottlenecks/lack of enablers that may have had an adverse effect on the individual's performance.

b) For internal candidates the recommendation should be shared with the candidate and if it contains any negative elements the candidate should be given the opportunity to present a clarification. The DFAC-IFAC can then prepare a final justified recommendation which is also shared with the candidate.

c) The statutory selection committee is given the departmental-institutional recommendations along with the candidate's CV.

d) Irrespective of the selection committee's decision the selection committee should be requested to give feedback on each candidate and this should be passed on to the candidates so that they can act on it in future.

e) For any selection the minimum necessary norms should be clearly announced well in advance. Whenever norms are changed there should be enough adapation time before the new norms are implemented (e.g. threshold values for number of graduated PhDs).

f) All the above should be part of the individual's appraisal record. For HAG: a department can give a justified recommendation as to why an individual qualifies and where relevant highlight any outstanding contributions or performance. At the institute level all qualified candidates should be ordered by seniority and the HAG vacancies filled in order of seniority using a reasonable and fair tie-breaking rule.

Annexure-1

Multi-point Evaluation of Faculty Activities

It is well recognized that the faculty of IIT Kanpur are engaged in multitudinous activities and that focus on very few or a single set of few skills for evaluation would not be fair to many faculty members with diverse activities. It is also recognized that attainment of excellence in a few of the activities should also be favourably acknowledged.

This proposal recognizes that scientific and academic activities should have tangible outputs in certain recognizable forms. Yet, the issue is that excellence or satisfactory performance in scientific and academic activities on the basis of output can only be gauged against the average output in that particular field or department. Hence, this document makes a proposal for two levels of gradation – one minimum level satisfactory grade that benchmarks a given individual faculty member against the average outputs of his/her department/branch at IITK, and another desired level for excellence that benchmarks the individual against global norms.

One convenient classification and evaluation of the activities of a faculty member is listed below.

1. Teaching:

It is clear from experience that student feedback alone cannot form a good, unprejudiced and dependable input for evaluation of teaching activities. Hence it is suggested that student feedback should not be used (this is consistent with the senate ruling).

Essential qualifiers for UG teaching should be

    a) Teaching of UG core courses with large class rooms
    b) Departmental core (mainstream) courses
    c) Development and teaching of new electives
    d) Development of new teaching laboratories

    Any faculty that has performed three of the four above activities in the past 5 years should be recognized as satisfactory in UG teaching

Teaching and training Ph.D. students should be recognized as an important part of PG education and not research (for the faculty it is indeed teaching, while for the student it can be perceived as research). Thus, essential qualifiers for PG teaching should be:

e) Ph.D. students graduated
f) M.Tech students graduated OR M.S. / M.Sc. Projects supervised (for science departments)
g) PG electives developed and taught.

Any faculty that has performed two of the above three activities should be regarded as being satisfactory in PG teaching

2. Research:

Research activities have tangible outputs such as research publications, patents, technology or technical products developed, project reports (industrial consultancy).

a) Research papers: The minimum level for satisfactory performance expected from a faculty member at IIT K should be based on publications in refereed journals of good repute. Refereed conference proceedings of repute can be considered as equivalent depending on the area. Citations to the paper from the community can be considered as important pointer to the quality of the work and it is expected that the papers should pick up a few citations.

Any faculty member publishing papers at more than the average rate of the field/department in good global universities should be considered excellent with a similar criterion for citations.

b) Patents: The average expectation from a faculty member in reputed US Institutions is about one international patent granted in three to five years. Any patent (international/ national) should be viewed favorably. There can be no minimum level prescribed for this activity.

c) Technology / product development: Any technology / product development that has been marketed and adopted by industry / society, or demonstration of working prototype in the past ten years should be considered as an excellent contribution.

d) Industrial research: Feedback may be sought from the consulting industry about the value of the Faculty member's contribution.

Attainment of excellence in any of the above four levels should be counted as excellence under this head of activities. Development of spin-off companies is a

3. Fund and resource generation

The amount of project funding that is possible is inseparably tied to the field of research or work. Hence the quantum of funding itself cannot be a guide, but rather must be seen in the perspective of the funding at the particular time for a given field. Further, individuals should not be penalized for not generating funding: for example, no amount of funding can make an integral converge for a mathematician. Hence the following norms envisaged:

a) For theoreticians: No minimum requirement
b) For experimentalists: funds generated should be viewed favorably
c) For faculty involved in computational research: funds generated should be viewed favorably

Any faculty member generating funds above departmental/field average should be

considered excellent.

Note: Internal IITK funding such as CARE scheme/ Internal PGFIST grants/ grants from alumni funds and initiation grants should not be considered. Special grants involving collective efforts like the DST-FIST or MHRD funds for development of a centre cannot be considered for the evaluation of individual faculty members.

4. **Research facility or Infra-structure development**

Faculty members invest large amounts of efforts and time for the development of research facilities and infrastructure. Hence contribution in these activities should be considered for the satisfactory levels of performance. Yet these cannot be considered towards excellence as it is the output of these facilities or infrastructure that is really important.

a) Creation and maintenance of central and departmental research infrastructure as well as teaching laboratories
b) Contributions to library or computer center development may also be given due credit after taking inputs from the centers.

5. **Books and technical reviews:**

This activity set is peculiar in that not all individuals can undertake these activities due to temperament and so on. Hence it is suggested that this activity set be counted towards excellence only and not for the minimum satisfactory level grades.

a) Books to include research monographs. Books published (preferably with good recognized publishers) should be given important value. Research monographs should be included under this head.
b) Reviews in good peer-reviewed journals, accepted by the community as leading in that field.
c) Popular Science articles in Bulletins of professional societies and reputed institutions, Newspapers and magazines should also be given credit.

6. **Outreach activities:**

This is recognized as an activity that the Indian society expects from faculty members. Hence conducting or organizing the following should be given credit. We may list some possibilities

a) Conferences, technical sessions or symposia within larger conferences
b) QIP / CDTE courses
c) INSPIRE camps or lectures in schools / colleges
d) Scientific / technical training courses for teachers, industrial workers, etc.

Due to its very nature, an exhaustive list of the activities is not possible in this case. Each will have to be evaluated on its own merit.

The participation of a faculty member in any of the above activities as the prime organizer should be counted as a satisfactory performance. *It is stressed that the evaluation should be based on department/field averages instead of considering "one size that fits all" approach.*

If one excels in two or more such activities, he/she should be recognized. A faculty member should not be penalized for not performing in all the activities mentioned in the proposal. Or, non-performance in any particular activity should not be looked at as failure as long as the faculty

member is performing satisfactorily in certain minimum number of activities or excelling in a couple of them.

Finally, it is re-emphasized that non performance under any single head should NOT be taken as a disqualification for the promotion / appointment. This acts against individuals who may be otherwise excellent performers and discourages 'risk-taking' in pursuit of excellence.

DOCUMENT-III

ENABLERS FOR FACULTY

A faculty member joins IITK and thanks to a system in place he is efforts are strengthened by many enables. However, many remain unspecified, leading often to loss of productive efforts. Keeping this in view, the following is a listing of important enablers, which can help the faculty to achieve her/his potential. These represent minimum required figures.

- Office space: 25 m^2 (33 m^2 according to Swamy's handbook for PB-4 and above) *(allotted within a week of joining).*
- Lab space (Experimentalist): 120 m^2
  Lab space (Computational): 25 m^2
- Student/project staff Sitting space (adjacent with lab): 50 m^2
  (5 phd, 2 MTech, 3 staff, 5 m^2/member)
- Yearly consumable grant: Rs.80 thousand per faculty (directly- not via department)
- Yearly Non-consumable grant: Rs.1 lakh per faculty (directly- not via department)
- Active help in getting first 2 PhD students (or at least allow new faculty to take PhD students as per the faculty's choice)
- Initiation grant: as applicable (the amount can be increased based on the need, with proper justification) granted as soon as possible (after joining) and definitely within 2 months of joining. The usage of the amount should be under flexible heads (including manpower).
- Lab space allotted within 1 month of joining and maintenance plans executed within 6 months of submission of plans.
- Preference to new faculty in allotment of Institute Post-doctoral positions.

Other possible considerations:
- Seed amount in PDA of Rs.50,000.
- 1 secretarial help (time sharing) between a few faculty members (no more than five).
- Ease for joining interdisciplinary programmes and being joint faculty between two departments.