

Aide Memoire of the **1st Meeting of SCDMC** held on July 10, 2017 at QIP Conf. Room

(jointly with Student Course Feedback Form Committee appointed in 2014)

Members Present: S K Chaudhury (ME), A K Sharma(HSS), Jayant K Singh(ADUG), Rajeev Gupta (ADPG), G. Santhanam(MTH), Md. Furquan, Abhibhav Garg (in place of Partha Sharma);

M K Harbola(SUGC), Neeraj Misra (DOAA), Dheeraj Sanghi (CS)

1. There was a brief discussion on the functions of SCDMC. It was pointed out that the main task till the end of September 2017 for this Committee would be to put in place systems and instruments for achieving these aims. The broader idea is to carry out changes in curriculum and conduct of courses incrementally taking continuous feedback from various implementations.

The summary of discussion and suggestions are itemized function-wise in the following Table.

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| <p>(i) To collect information, collate feedback, and report major observations on content and conduct of the courses to the Senate on a semester/annual basis;</p> <p><i>Feedback forms to be designed for Students, Faculty and Tutors of each type of courses, both PG & UG (excluding Theses).</i></p> <p><i>Review and Report of Conclusions to be carried out and reported</i></p> <p><i>(a) every semester for core course,</i></p> <p><i>(b) every year for departmental compulsory course, and</i></p> <p><i>(c) every three years for elective courses.</i></p> <p><i>Forms must be designed keeping in mind strictly what summary data is required by whom for actionable items such as modifications of content or suggestion of new norms or rules.</i></p> <p><i>How do nudge students</i></p> <p><i>Course Files to be maintained for all courses digitally in a central server, and the cooperation of the Departments/IDPs be sought through HoD/DUGC/DPGC in achieving this.</i></p> <p><i>The First Course Handout (to be given in the first class/week, or uploaded on the website) announcing contents, lecture plan and evaluation policies will be a mandatory component of the course file. It will also contain Question Papers, the Instructor's End-of-Sem Feedback Forms. The inclusion of Lecture Notes or links to them will be optional depending on the Instructor. The Course File will record the performance of students only in summary form. Different parts of Course Files will have different authorization access as to be decided and recommended to the Senate.</i></p> |
| <p>(ii) To carry out discussion on teaching and learning methods adopted in various courses, and make a summary of conclusions available in actionable form;</p> <p><i>SCDMC will invite instructors to share their pedagogical or instructional innovations with others, and will collate the discussions for wider circulation, and recommend possible experimentation systematically on a larger scale.</i></p> |
| <p>(iii) To carry out review of content or implementation of any specific course referred to it by the Senate;</p> <p><i>SCDMC will take help of special committees as required for reviewing specific courses as instructed by the Senate. SCDMC can recommend to the Senate the courses or features that be so reviewed.</i></p> |
| <p>(iv) To provide feedback to Academic Review Committees.</p> <p><i>The accumulated data and conclusions over several years will be provided to ARC when they are formed by the Senate.</i></p> |

2. The Chairman pointed out that these tasks would need intensive back-office digital support for collecting data and providing summary statistics. DOAA promised all help in the matter.
3. It was decided that SCDMC can now take up modification of the Student Course Feedback Form from the Harbola Committee of 2014. However, SCDMC will be in touch with them for clarifications and suggestions as they proceed. A summary of the recommendations as per the terms of reference are listed below. The Report submitted to the Senate earlier explains the rationale for the modifications suggested.

| No | Terms of Reference Office Order March 5, 2014 | Harbola Comm 2015 Recommendations | Possible SCDMC Position, 2017 |
|----|---|--|---|
| 1 | Designing a new 'Student Feedback Form' so that questions asked are relevant in today's pedagogy and provide better feedback to instructors and tutors, | Two part feedback form mostly based on binary answers. The Short form covers minimum adherence to norms. | The questions need be reviewed item wise keeping in mind the statistics we want, and would help instructor as feedback. Senate feels the form should be simplified (Item 30, 496 Meeting April 07, 2017) |
| 2 | Consider and give recommendation on whether a feedback be taken for non-classroom/lab courses like (sic) thesis, projects, seminars, independent study etc. | Restricted to Classroom and Labs right now | Eventually different forms for different types of courses, but not theses. |
| 3 | Consider whether the feedback form be automated and students are asked to fill them online instead of paper forms. | Detailed form online. The short form in the transit period be hardcopy eventually becoming online. | All online? |
| 4 | Consider and give recommendation on whether the feedback form be anonymous, or student can be identified by the instructor, or student can be identified only by the system, or the student can be either identify or be anonymous. | Anonymous without any reservations | Anonymous but with nudging or mild coercive features so that most of them 'volunteer' to fill it. |
| 5 | Consider and give recommendation on whether the feedback be used to identify top performers, and if yes, how should that be determined. | Should not be used for the performance of the Instructor, either identifying top performers or comparing different instructors | Not in the scope of SCDMC. If required need be decided and handled separately. |
| 6 | Any other aspect of taking course feedback which committee may consider important. | Summary of each course feedback be made public on DOAA website. To be analyzed by CDMC for necessary action. | What parts, and to what extent it must be made public? |

4. During the discussion several issues were raised for further consideration during subsequent meetings:

- i) There seem to be widespread differences in opinion about what are standard operating norms. Even experienced faculty members seem to be flouting what were once considered standard norms, and hence it has become difficult to even advise younger faculty members. Though some norms need codification, there will always be many which depends on the prevailing culture. Hence, one of the tasks of SCDMC would be to identify such issues and recommend to the Senate any codification or rules that may be needed from time without infringing on the academic freedom of the Instructors. Often DOAA issues advisory on various aspects of conduct of courses, but it is not known to what extent they are being complied with.
- ii) How does one incentivize students to fill the feedback form? Often, they feel the process is pointless since not much is done as a follow-up.
- iii) Would it be wise to drop providing top performers the feedback that inspires them and eggs them on to innovate? While SCDMC will not deal with individual instructors, but feedback on innovations, and the degree to which course objectives were successfully achieved should be provided.
- iv) The faculty should view our efforts as help in streamlining the system and aiding them in the conduct of the courses.
- v) Prof. Dheeraj Sanghi pointed out several interesting features that have been implemented in IIIT Delhi based on knowledge of some of the problems in our system.
 - a) The first handout for the course is discussed among three faculty members to appraise of the policies and methodology and any changes in content (to the extent of 10%) that is being planned. Typically, such meetings take less than 30 minutes, but ensures that each course has definite plan right in the beginning.
 - b) Three weeks into the course, the students are required to send 3-4 lines feedback to the instructor pointing out what changes they would like or problems they face. The instructor responds to them in a common email to students. The central office need be only informed that the process has taken place without any details of the feedback or response given by the instructor. This small step helps iron out many minor problems at the outset of the course.
 - c) To incentivize students to fill up the feedback form, a mild penalty for not doing so is imposed. Students not filling up the form get their grades announced a week later than the usual announcement.

5. The meeting ended by deciding to meet for the second time on **Thursday, July 13 at 4:00PM** in QIP Conference Room.

Please suggest modifications, or additions if I have missed anything.

-ynm