

Ahmedabad University

Minutes of the Meeting of Board of Management held on 11st February 2022 through Hybrid mode

- Members Present:
1. Professor Pankaj Chandra, Chairperson (*from the Conference Room*)
 2. Professor Patrick French (*through zoom*)
 3. Professor Sunil Kale (*through zoom*)
 4. Mr Kiran Karnik (*through zoom*)
 5. Mr Naishadh Parikh (*through zoom*)
 6. Professor Raghavan Rangarajan (*from the Conference Room*)
 7. Mr BM Shah (*through zoom*)
 8. Dr Balaji Srinivasan (*through zoom*)
 9. Professor Mita Suthar (*from the Conference Room*)
 10. Professor Devanath Tirupati (*from the Conference Room*)

Professor Pankaj Chandra welcomed the members to the meeting of the Board of Management of the University.

1. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of Joint Meeting of the Board of Management and Board of Governors held on December 4, 2021, were approved.

2. Updates on the University

Professor Pankaj Chandra presented the Update on the University since the last meeting.

- **Introduction of New Faculty** - Professor Chandra gave a brief introduction of 17 new faculty who joined the University in last few months. The 17 new faculty includes 2 foreign faculty. He was pleased to share that about 40 new faculty were appointed in calendar year of 2021.

He also updated the board that advertisements for hiring of more faculty are being put out to invite applications in the coming season. The target is to achieve 30-40 faculty hiring in calendar year of 2022. The Chairman also mentioned that some specific areas have been identified for hiring some senior faculty.

There was a brief discussion on departure of some faculty also.

- **Activities at the University**

Professor Chandra updated the Board about opening of the Campus from February 14, 2022. He explained how learning was adversely affected by online classes. The University had decided to slow down pace in order to help students cope up learning online. This also resulted in the semester getting extended by a week.

3. Recognition as Centre of Excellence: Implications

Professor Chandra updated the members that Ahmedabad University was formally awarded the Certificate of Centre of Excellence during Vibrant Gujarat 2022. However, there is ambiguity about the notification date and autonomy with respect to MBA, BTech and MTech. This may have implication on admissions this year. The government is non-committal as to when they would notify the decision officially. This has created uncertainty about admission through ACPC as well as the fees to be charged.

4. Update on NAAC

Professor Chandra updated members that the University is ready for a NAAC visit. Our documents have been filed and reviewed. We have given three possible dates from mid of March to mid of April 2022. The final date is yet to be confirmed by NAAC.

Professor Chandra also updated about the University getting 12B certification successfully, which will allow us to apply for grants from UGC etc.

5. Inauguration of AMSOM Building, University Center and University Residences

Professor Chandra was pleased to update the members that construction of hostel has started and expected to complete around August 2023.

The University Centre and AMSOM building would be opened for all on March 5th when we will also be organizing the Foundation Day.

The members also discussed the initiatives that could be taken to make the campus entirely walkable and greener, with good bio-diversity of plants, trees and shrubs from all over Gujarat on the campus.

6. Admissions 2022

Professor Devanath Tirupati gave an update on Plan for Admissions for the year 2022.

He updated that the focus of in 2022 would be to increase graduate admission numbers, with emphasis on the PhD programme. Professor Chandra highlighted the need to make more efforts for graduate admissions and expressed his desire to review the plan with the Admissions team.

Professor Tirupati also shared the update on early-round of Undergraduate admissions that started from January 20th. The number of applications received so far has surpassed last year's applications at this time.

7. Concerns over Students Engagement

Professor Chandra flagged the issue of engaging with students.

A brief survey on a small group of 50 students who demonstrated high level of engagement and secured good grades provided a different view than the group of few hundred students who showed low level of engagement at all levels and had a GPA below 2.5. Learning and academics for these students was a low priority and many did not engage at all with all the facilities that the University offers.

Planning for a larger student survey in the summers is underway for getting to the root of this issue. This would be helpful in building a strong student engagement program. It was suggested that this be done after semester got over.

Professor Chandra also invited suggestions from all the members on the ways to engage more with the students. Members agreed that the involvement of several faculty members could be low as they do not take it as part of their responsibility. Members discussed how the pandemic had affected social skills of young students as well as their interests.

8. Discussion on Governance Structure

Professor Chandra mentioned that the University had grown both in size and activities and there was a need to work on the next phase of governance structure and processes at the University. He opened discussion on Governance 3.0 and invited all members to give their suggestions. Members agreed that with the pace Ahmedabad University is growing, we need to have a full-time Provost (i.e., chief academic officer) and a decentralised decision making to optimise the Vice Chancellor's involvement in building the next round of projects and initiatives.

The Chairman mentioned that we had developed a fifteen year plan and we now need to develop an outcome oriented plan of activities to meet the targets setup in the plan for the next five years.. Members felt there was a need to add some strategic resources in the VC's Office for carrying out activities in a more process driven manner.

9. Deepening Experiential Education: Early Ideas on Establishing a Learning Factory

Professor Sunil Kale presented the ideas behind setting up of a Learning Factory along with a Centre for Manufacturing and Mobility. The Learning Factory would comprise several manufacturing process and industrial equipment to help our students train in a real factory setting. The location has been identified and effort is now underway to interest manufacturing firms to provide the faculty with state-of-art machines and other equipment.

10. Any Other Matter

- With respect to the inventors and startups incubating at VentreStudio, the members agreed to extend the University's intellectual property policy, to not claim patent rights from researchers and inventors for another 5 years. This amendment was aimed at encouraging growth in patenting and to commercialize patent of the inventors.
- Professor Chandra briefed the members about appointment of Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, Mr Parth Sarwate who joined in February 2022 and about Senior Associate Director, Office of International Affairs, Dr Monika Setia who is joining us in April 2022.

He also updated the members about the achievements of our faculty and students since the last meeting:

- Professor Tejaswini Niranjana won the American Literary Translators Association 2021 National Translation Awards.

- Four of our faculty are amongst Stanford's top 2% Scientists globally based on research impact.
- Bhavita Madhu, a student won the National Roller-Skating Championship third time in a row and set to represent India in the World Championship.
- One Startup of VentureStudio got selected by Shark Tank India for support.
- Two students, Avneet Kaur Bagga and Aditi Jain comprising the University Debating Team won the CII National Debate, defeating BITS Pilani in the finals.
- The eighty-year-old HLCC Debating Championship was won by our students – Aditi Jain and Mana Shah.
- Doctoral student, Dhanalakshmi Manyala, won the 'Young Researcher Aware for the Best Presentation' during the International Conference on Chemical Sciences in Sustainable Technology and Development.
- JCB Literature Foundation has signed an MOU to fund a Translation Certification Programme at the University.

With this the members thanked the Chairperson and the meeting was concluded.



Signature of the Chairman