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26 December 2017

Subject: Comments and Note of Dissent on the Minutes of
Part A and Part B of 144th Meeting of the Academic Council

Dear Dr Kumar:

Thank you for letter dated 12 December 2017 and for forwarding the Minutes of the 144th A and B meetings of the Academic Council held on 1 December 2017.

May I remind you that I wrote to you on 5 December, expressing my disagreement with the way the Chairperson conducted the proceedings of the Academic Council and prevented discussion on several important matters. In my letter, I had requested you to record my dissent at the approval of Agenda Items 1 and 2 of the 144th Academic Council. I am seriously concerned by several inaccuracies and misrepresentations in the Minutes that you have sent me. I am of the view that many items in the Minutes fail to provide a truthful and accurate account of the discussions and decisions in the Academic Council meeting. I would like to place on record my comments on the following items, and urge you to record my dissent.

1. Item 1 of Part A and Part B meetings: The minutes of the 143rd Part A and Part B Meetings do not record the fact that I have orally and in writing, sought to record my objections and dissent regarding the decisions taken therein. I wrote to you through e-office regarding this in detail on 12 July 2017 and you did not agree to recording my individual dissent by name. As a consequence, I wish to inform you that I do not agree to the confirmation of the minutes presented before the 144th AC meeting. Kindly record my individual dissent.
2. Item 1 of Part A and Part B meetings: Following from my comments above, I do not approve Agenda Item no. 2 of both Part A and Part B meetings of the Academic Council. Kindly record my individual dissent.

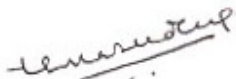
3. Item 3 (i) of Part A meeting: Several members attempted to point out that the intake to the MPhil/PhD programmes in 2017-18 announced in the prospectus was not fulfilled. The number of students admitted under SC, ST and OBC categories have been far below the quotas specified, and there has been a reduction in regional diversity. Members tried to point out that this was the result of the several changes introduced to the admission process without approval by the Academic Council, but the Chairperson did not allow free discussion on this item. Therefore, I cannot agree to approving the minutes on this item as it stands now. Kindly record my dissent on this.
4. Items 3 (vi) and 3 (vii) of Part A: I do not approve the Minutes of the Standing Committee of Admissions. On Note no ii of Item 4. 1, I am of the view that it is important keep both the MPhil/PhD and direct PhD programmes and calculate their intake separately, as has been the practice in the University. Several features of the admission policy, including 50 per cent cut off for written exam and 100 per cent weightage for the viva, will once again have a huge negative impact on the intake. I also disagree with the Admission Schedule given on page 23. The time given for evaluating answer scripts is seriously inadequate, and in the case of a Centre like mine which receive a very large number of applications, it is impossible to complete the evaluation within the time specified, especially since this will be during teaching time. Once again, no discussion was allowed on this item. Therefore, I would like to record my dissent on items 3 (vi) and 3 (vii) of Part A.
5. Item 4 of Part A: Once again, adequate discussion was not allowed on this item (the creation of a School of Engineering) by the Chairperson. There were serious errors in the representation of the views of Centres presented before the AC. No serious discussion was allowed on the merits of the proposed programmes. Therefore, I am unable to approve the decision recorded under this item. Kindly record my dissent.
6. Item 5 of Part A: The treatment of this item (the creation of a School of Management and Entrepreneurship) in the AC meeting was an even worse example of the propensity of the Chair to declare things passed without any discussion. I cannot approve the decision recorded. Please record my dissent against this item.
7. Item 7 of Part A: No papers were circulated regarding the upgradation of the Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies to a School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies, and no views on this matter were sought from the Centres and Schools. Several members tried to point this out and request that the matter be considered by the AC after these steps are completed. The Chairperson curtailed discussion on this and declared the item passed. I do not approve of this decision. The matter needs to be considered again by the AC after a fully developed proposal is circulated to all Centres and their views compiled and presented before the AC. Please record my dissent on the decision recorded under this item.
8. Item 8 of Part A: There are several inaccuracies and errors in the way this item has been recorded in the Minutes. There was no decision to make attendance compulsory

for all regular registered students. A committee was meant to look into issues of attendance. Similarly, no decision was taken on dispensing with lateral entry into the BA (Hons.)/BA (Pass) programmes. As regards dropout, it was agreed that data will be provided on students who did not complete the BA and MA programmes. It was agreed that the suggestion to delink BA and MA is a matter for the BoS of SLL&CS to consider. In that context, Rector I made the suggestion that the question of delinking MPhil and PhD also may be considered, and the Chair stated that a committee may look into this too. This brief mention was the only reference made in the 144th AC to the delinking of MPhil and PhD. This has been wrongly recorded as a decision in the Part B minutes. Please record my dissent to the decisions recorded.

9. Any other matter, Part A: Despite strong demands from many of the AC members to take up the issue of the introduction of MSc in Mathematics, the Chair refused to do so, in stark contrast to the way he dealt with items 5, 6 and 7. I am of the view that the course should have been taken up and most of the members appeared to be in strong agreement with its approval. Therefore, I am unable to approve the recording of this item in the Minutes. Please record my dissent on this.
10. Item No. 7 of Part B: The draft MPhil/PhD ordinances have not been circulated to the Centres and cannot be approved by the AC without obtaining their comments. The decision recorded in the Minutes to delink MPhil and PhD is totally at variance with what transpired in the meeting. The only reference to delinking during the entire meeting of the AC was in Part A, item no. 8. There was no decision on this, except the Chair's statement that a committee may look into this. Since the Minutes are contrary to the facts of the meeting, I cannot approve this item. Please record my dissent.
11. Any other item, Part B: I strongly disagree with the decision recorded here that all MPhil vivas be conducted over Skype. While Skype may be used in situations where the examiner is unable to travel to JNU and be physically present, its compulsory use in all vivas prevents detailed interaction and informal exchange between the student and the examiner. Please record my dissent on this item.

Lastly, I reiterate my strong disagreement with the way the 144th Academic Council meeting was conducted. The Chairperson disallowed several members from speaking on many agenda items, often interrupted them, placed conditions on their interventions, and cut short their comments. Meetings of the Academic Council – the highest academic body of the University – ought to be conducted with dignity and professionalism and in a spirit of mutual respect and fairness. I wish to place on record my view that the Chairperson's way of conducting the meeting violated these essential principles.

Many thanks and warm regards


(Udaya Kumar)