

Minutes of the General Body Meeting of the Centre for Linguistics

A General Body Meeting of the Centre for Linguistics (SLL & CS) was held in Room 004 (Old SL Building) on 19th January 2018 at 3:20 PM.

Attending

Please see the Quorum sheet (Enclosure 1) for the list of attendees.

3:20 PM: The SFC student members open the GBM and place the agenda of the meeting on the floor.

Discussions

Meeting Agenda 1

Discussion and resolution of the students of the Centre for Linguistics on stance regarding the recent circulars on Attendance and formulation of a written representation based on the resolution

Raised by

Agenda raised by MA Fourth Semester, MPhil and PhD student SFCs of the centre

Summary of discussion

- Brief regarding letter to the VC by the International Students' Association (ISA) in full support of attendance boycott. Research scholars agree with the ISA regarding lack of infrastructure to accommodate all students in the centre.
- Discussion of practical problems for MA and Research Scholars of marking attendance (No infrastructure, field work issues, issues with attending talks and lectures in other departments in the city)
- Emphasis that MA and Research Scholars be united and that the attendance rules not be applied to either.

- The centre must clarify its position on attendance.
- Students point out that the mass absenteeism is not a problem faced by the centre. In fact, students attend classes such that there is often not enough space to accommodate them in the classroom.
- Draft of official letter to the centre chairperson on stance of the students on attendance read out. Discussion of above letter.
- Discussion on whether to bargain for infrastructure in exchange for attendance. Suggestions to include a principled stance on attendance and that the idea of attendance of self should be opposed.
- No ad-hoc solutions to be accepted.
- Other suggestions for improving the letter.
- Motion “The Centre students are for Boycotting Attendance” raised.
- Vote on the above motion. Motion passed unanimously by the floor.

Outcome

- Issue to be raised in upcoming SFC meeting
- Official letter informing the centre regarding GBM resolution and regarding students’ stance on attendance to be finalised, approved by students and submitted at forthcoming SFC meeting. Please see Enclosure 2 for copy of the letter.

Meeting Agenda 2

Discussion of issues related to courses offered to students of the MA Linguistics programme.

Raised by

Agenda raised by MA student SFCs of the centre on behalf of MA students

Summary of Discussion

- Discussion on feedback forms: Need for Anonymous feedback from students on the quality of their respective courses raised. Feedback must go to centre, not individual faculty. Feedback could be electronic in nature
- Demand made that Feedback on students’ term papers/assignments must be fair, on time, and elaborated on by course instructors.
- Request made for inviting guest faculty for special lectures for certain subjects. Matter to be raised in forthcoming SFC meeting.

- Demand that MA students be offered all the courses that are considered core in linguistics.
- Request made for students to have a say in the courses offered.
- Discussion on whether credits of computational linguistics course offered in previous semester would be considered as credits from the Centre of Linguistics. Request made to verify at centre office.
- Need expressed for increasing communication with the students. The inability to understand and be on the same page as the teachers leads to poor results. In dire need of some senior expertise in terms of handling the subjects and the classroom teaching.

Outcomes

- Issues to be raised in SFC meeting

4:30 PM: Floor opened for discussion of any other issue

Other Agenda Raised by the Floor

1. Status of Phonetics Lab (Room 223)

Raised by

Agenda raised by MA and PhD students

Summary of Discussion

- Demand that the lab be cleaned, non-functional PCs be repaired so that MA students can benefit from practical classes.
- Demand that the server of the lab restored so that it can be used by the students of the centre for data processing.

Outcome

- Demand to be raised in forthcoming SFC meeting

2. Discussion on fieldwork funding

Raised by

Agenda raised by PhD scholars

Summary of discussion

- Field work grant given for only 15 days
- Demand raised that grant period be increased.
- Proposal that centre needs to brief the administration regarding various funding agencies for field work.
- Discussion of issues such as lab maintenance, scheduling of conferences and workshops, and allocation of funds for scholars

Outcome

- Demand to raised and discussed in forthcoming SFC meeting

3. Demand for larger classrooms

Raised by

Agenda raised by MA students

Summary of discussion

- Combined MA courses (offered to students of two different semesters) have a large class strength. 004 and 001 are insufficient to accommodate all. Request for a larger classroom.

Outcome

- Demand to raised and discussed in forthcoming SFC meeting

4. Demand for repair of projector

Raised by

Agenda raised by MA students

Summary of discussion

- The projector of the linguistics classroom 004 has been nonfunctional for long. Need for them to be repaired at the earliest to facilitate classes, which are being hampered.

Outcome

- Demand to raised and discussed in forthcoming SFC meeting

4:57 PM: SFC student members close the GBM

Meeting Facilitators

Rani Rai (SFC student member, M.A. Second Semester)

Utpal Pandey (SFC student member, M.A. Fourth Semester)

Sannati More (SFC student member, M.Phil.)

Yangchen Roy (SFC student member, Ph.D.)

- Enclosures:
1. Quorum sheet of Attendees
 2. Letter to the Chairperson from the students of the Centre for Linguistics

(ENCLOSURE 1)

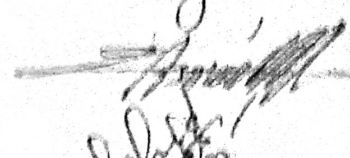
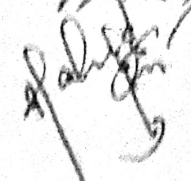

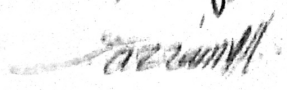
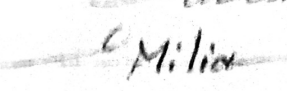
GENERAL BODY MEETING OF THE CENTRE FOR LINGUISTICS
(SLLB CS)

DATE: 19/01/18

ATTENDEES LIST

Sl. No.	Name	Programme	Signature
1	Priya Rani	MA IV th Sem	Priya Rani
2	GARGI BINJU	MA IV th Sem	Gargi Binju
3	Sreekar Rajhotham	MA IV Sem.	M. Rajhotham
4	Ravi YADAV	MPhil. IV th sem	Ravi
5	ANSALI NAIR	MPhil IV th Sem	Ansali
6	Nupur Acher	MPhil IV SEM	Nupur
7	Manas Biswas	M.A. IV th Sem	Manas
8	Zoya Khalid	Phd (Prov.)	Zoya Khalid
9	Anayeeina Sainia	Phd (Prov.)	Anayeeina
10	DARI LEON	MA IV SEM	Dari Leon
11	SALMYA RATAN	MA IV SEM	Salmya Ratan
12	SNEHA SURABHI	MA IV Sem	Sneha Surabhi
13	Nayantika Bhardway	MA II Sem.	Nayantika
14	Aseema Karandikar	MA II Sem	Aseema
15	Sakshi Singh	MA II Sem	Sakshi
16	Anunya Nayak	MPhil III Sem	Anunya
17	Madhurima Chakraborty	M.A. IV sem	Madhurima
18	Naseera Theoni. K.	M.A. IV Sem	Naseera
19	ARYA NAVYA A.V	MA. IV SEM	Arya Navya
20	ojaswi Bhalla	Ph.D. (IV th Sem)	Ojaswi Bhalla
21	Nikita Suthar	Prov. Ph.D (II nd sem)	Nikita Suthar
22	Chandni Datta	Rev Ph.D (II nd Sem)	Chandni Datta
23	Senali Mahanta	PSTD Ph.D (IV Sem)	Senali Mahanta
24	Nisha Anand	Pro. Ph.D. (II sem)	Nisha Anand
25	NIKITA AMAR JNA	M.A (IV sem)	Nikita Amar Jna

Sl No.	Name	Programme	Signature
26	SARI HAMOUD	PhD Provisional	
27	Peshma Jacob	Prov. PhD	
28	Benka Tinkari	Prov. PhD	Benka Maunda
29	Kumari Manita	Prov. PhD	
30	K. Susie	Prov. Ph.D	
31	SALONI PRIYA	Prov. Ph.D	Saloni Priya
32	Nishant Dehagan	PhD	
33	R. Karthick Narayanan	PhD	Karthick
34	Sannati More	MPhil	Sannati
35	Yangehu Raj	PhD	
36	Hindolee Datta	MA (I st Sem)	Hindolee
37	Malay Bera	MA (I st Sem)	Asmita Sabra
38	Asmita Saha	"	
39	Opala Rajaya	MA (I st Sem)	Opala Rajaya
40	Shachi Shambhavi	MA (II Sem)	Shachi
41	Kanishka Kanishka	MA (II Sem)	Kanishka
42	LAXIT KUMAR	MA (II nd Sem)	Laxit
43	V. Lakshmi	MA IV Sem	Lakshmi
44	Pooja Sharmajam	MA II Sem	Pooja
45	Manita Bhramik	MA II Sem	Manita Bhramik
46	Subhash	MA II Sem	Subhash
47	MEENGE V. SETHI	MA II Sem	Meenge
48	TESHANGRAM TONTANG	MA II Sem	Teshangram Tontang
49	Deviashan Nark	MPhil IV Sem	Deviashan
50	ASMA MANNAN		

Sl. No.	Name	Programme	Signature
51.	Asmaa Al-Haj Radwan	Ph.D (Prov.)	
52.	Habung Dunga	M.A. (Tud ya)	
53.	Upul Pandey	CMA (U year)	
54.	Azzam Obaid	Prov PhD	
55.	Milia Suliman	Prov. PhD	

To
The Chairperson
The Centre for Linguistics
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi – 110067

22nd January 2018

Subject: GBM of Centre for Linguistics Resolves to Boycott Implementation of Compulsory Attendance in Toto.

Sir

This is in reference to circular No. IV/Eval II/28/AS/2018 dated 10.01.2018 and No. IV/Eval II/28/AS/2018 dated 18.01.2018 requiring students to mark their attendance in classes (for course work students) and at the centre office (for non-coursework research scholars). The General Body Meeting of the students of the Centre for Linguistics, held on 19th January 2018 has unanimously resolved to reject these circulars and boycott the implementation of the attendance system in toto.

We would like to attest that we are a centre that has never suffered from massive absenteeism. In fact, often our MA class strength exceeds the space in our classrooms. We attend classes with the sincere belief that we will learn something new each day and will thus enrich our inventory of knowledge about our discipline in particular and academics in general. The argument that compulsory attendance improves quality of learning and research is totally baseless and infantilizes students and scholars who are adults and who participate in higher learning voluntarily. Imposing attendance will help no learner in attaining knowledge and rather may in many occasions, as listed below, prove to be highly detrimental in the quest for knowledge.

The Centre for Linguistics already has a rigorous and regular assessment system in place in the form of class participation, assignments, group works, exams, term papers and presentations for its MA, MPhil and PhD students. Therefore, we do not see the merit in introducing attendance as a yardstick to measure our academic excellence. In fact, the centre for linguistics has produced some of the best linguists in the country and has maintained a high quality of research without ever resorting to adopting such a measure. Further, the decision to bar students from taking end-semester exams for lack of minimum attendance is against the basic premise of teaching and learning practices. By doing so this circular is merely rewarding non-academic achievements and is discouraging freedom in pursuit of knowledge. Therefore,

we see no merit in encouraging the attendance system, which hinders freedom in our academic pursuits and goes against the ethos of learning and research that is unique to JNU. In fact, we believe that the attendance system will adversely affect the quality of our learning rather than better it. Moreover we are also convinced that the attendance system is antithetical to the kind of research that the discipline of linguistics demands of us.

The Centre for Linguistics at JNU has close associations with other linguistics departments across the city. Students often attend talks, lecture series, seminars and conferences at these departments. The intimation for such events often arrive at the eleventh hour. Further, as you know, linguistics is a highly interdisciplinary field, which also requires us to be at academic events at other departments and research centres across Delhi. In this context, compulsory daily attendance is a serious hindrance to our academic pursuits and restricts our participation in such valuable events.

It must be noted that empirical studies that the students of the centre conduct are not based in JNU. Many of us conduct extensive field work in remote locations across the country. Sometimes even MA students visit such fields multiple times to collect data. Data collection is seasonal and dependent on the convenience of our informants/participants. The circular dated 10.01.2018 states that with the implementation of the attendance systems, students will be required to procure prior permission of “ the competent authority”, apart from their supervisor/centre chairperson, in order to proceed to their field. We are unable to understand who exactly this “competent authority” is, that decides the time and period of our fieldwork. Currently, we follow an ethical principle in this regard; indigenous and tribal communities, minor language speakers, speech and hearing impaired participants and children with whom we often work are our only competent authorities who have the power to define our fieldwork period. Therefore, enforcing the administrative barrier of compulsory daily attendance will not just hamper quality of the empirical research, but also demand that we go against the ethics of empirical research. Moreover, our centre lacks the infrastructure and research tools required to engage our diverse participants at the university. Additionally, non-NET scholarship holders have no financial support from the university that would allow them to pay for the travel expenses of these participants.

As is well attested, JNU has a massive infrastructural crisis. Outstation students do not get residence for months on end after admission and are forced to stay outside campus. Scholars from every part of NCR are considered day scholars and are ineligible for hostel residence. Some of our research scholars live as far as a four hour commute away and to expect them to come to the university everyday and mark their attendance is absurd. It is disrespectful of their time, which would otherwise be used to do good research. Moreover, neither the central library, nor the school library have seating space adequate enough to accomodate all the

research scholars of the university. Our centre too does not have sufficient infrastructure to accommodate us at the centre. It is highly insensitive to expect students to spend their time and money to come to the centre to merely sign and then just leave. If the whole point of the exercise of marking attendance is to foster world class research and foment an academic community we fail to understand how we are to achieve this when we will be forced to travel to and from the university for the better part of the day and yet not even have a place to sit except for lobby floors and steps of staircases.

With a steadfast allegiance to continued healthy learning and research in our university and our commitment towards world-class linguistics we strongly condemn any attempts to impose a system of compulsory attendance on us and hereby resolve to refuse to sign on any attendance sheets.

Thanking you

With Regards

MA, MPhil and PhD Students of the Centre for Linguistics