

Minutes of the JNUTA General Body Meeting dated 16-02-2018

A General Body Meeting of JNUTA was held on February 16, 2018. The meeting was attended by 152 faculty members. JNUTA President, Prof Sonajharia Minz began with thanking the members for having shown faith in the institution of JNUTA and having participated in such large numbers in the recently completed elections for the year 2018. She also emphasized that while there can be differences of opinion or approach, the collective stand of teachers is crucial in all respects. She encouraged members to express constructive and actionable inputs on all matters under discussion.

There were four major agenda items in the GBM, which were discussed as follows:

1. The matter of the inclusion of two AIRF colleagues in the group of special centres for their representation in the teachers' association was discussed. Members supported their right to be represented at the school level through the special centres.
2. It was highlighted that the issue of working conditions of the teachers needs to be addressed by the administration immediately. For this purpose it was decided that the school representatives be asked to collect specific issues related to work conditions in various school and centre buildings. After collating school level concerns the matter can be discussed with the administration.
3. In case of the issues related to the Career Advancement Scheme, it was decided to take them up with the administration. Besides, a committee was set up to look into the new UGC guidelines. Some members highlighted that the M.Phil. Ph.D Intake has a bearing on the CAS.
4. A committee was set up under the chairpersonship of Prof. Surajit Majumdar to discuss the 7th Pay Commission related issues with the Finance Officer. Prof Majumdar briefed the house about his discussion and recommendations and that the report of the meeting was already shared with all the faculty members via email. He also mentioned that there is no clarity from the UGC on the question of 70:30 ratio for implementation of the pay commission.
5. The House also discussed the issue of 'Skype' Viva. Many members brought up the issue of the financial logic behind this kind of decision. Members also discussed the previous GBM decision on this question and reiterated the same position. The question of procedural violation in taking up such major decisions was also raised since any change in the mode of evaluation is a major academic change. Members insisted that the TA should raise the question of due process and also question the feasibility of such decisions.
6. The question of attendance was discussed at length in the meeting. The president informed the house about the TA's failed efforts to meet the administration and their appeal to the administration to initiate a dialogue with the students.

Some members raised the question of violation of established legal due process. Members also mentioned that the centre and school boards along with the Academic Council are the decision making bodies as per the JNU Act and Statutes. Hence any such decision should have been discussed and approved in the AC. Members expressed their anguish over how the university's decision making bodies were being sidelined in such major decisions. Some members also said that the issue of attendance could be a school or centre level problem hence there needs to be a decentralized mechanism to develop a common policy. One member said that the teachers have also been instigating students. However, members opposed any such statement. Some members also raised the question of students' behavior during the sit-in at the administrative block. They also demanded that a resolution should be passed by the TA condemning the students' behavior. This was, however, opposed by a majority of members. One member suggested that in case the House wants to issue condemnation, it should also condemn the administration as it is the policies of the administration that has led to the present situation. Some members also highlighted the decision of the previous General Body Meeting wherein a call was given for the complete roll back of mandatory attendance. Several members questioned the very logic of a mandatory attendance system.

Overall, the General Body expressed deep concern and dismay at the continued refusal of the JNU administration to engage and dialogue with the teachers and the students of the university on matters of grave concern. This is in addition to the continuing subversion of the institutional processes and norms through usurping of powers of decision making from the academic schools and centres and other statutory bodies in the university. Members asserted that this is in contravention of the JNU Act and therefore, not only unacceptable but also illegal.

The JNUTA GBM noted the vexatious and concerted campaign of the administration to malign the JNUTA with spurious allegations despite JNUTA's repeated appeals for dialogue and requests for meeting with the Vice Chancellor and other administrative functionaries of the university which have received no response.

Thirteen members gave their dissent note without specifying any resolution. However, the resolutions passed by majority are following:

Issue of Attendance and Skype Viva

1. The formulation of policy on mandatory attendance is yet another example of the subversion of due process. The GBM demands that all circulars related to the decision to make attendance mandatory should be immediately withdrawn. All other decisions (including viva over video conference/Skype) and changes to Clause M18 of the JNU rules and regulation (which are in violation of the JNU Act and ordinances) should also be rolled back immediately.
2. This GBM demands that the democratic process of academic decision-making in the university should be restored. All academic decisions concerning the university

should be taken in statutory bodies like Centre faculty committees, Board of Studies of Schools and the Academic Council. Members also raised concerns about the circumvention of democratic processes in conducting the Academic Council and about gross inaccuracies in recording of minutes.

3. The JNUTA General Body demands that the Academic Council should be convened on February 23, 2018 as scheduled originally and conducted in a democratic manner.
4. The GBM calls upon all the teachers to join for a sit-in on Monday to register their protest against the prevailing situation in the university. The time and venue of the sit-in will be announced shortly.

A majority of the members favored the resolution.

Prof C S R Murthy gave his dissent note against usage of the word “withdrawn” in point 1 of the above resolution. He said that it should be replaced with “put on hold.”

Career Advancement Related Issues:

JNUTA will study the UGC's new draft rules and regulations on service conditions and respond to the same by 28th February, 2018, including the matters related to CAS.

A majority of the members favored the resolution.

Better Working Conditions for Teachers:

The JNUTA EC will document all issues around working conditions and take the matters up with the relevant departments of the administration.

A majority of the members favored the resolution.

Any other Item: Request from faculty members of AIRF

It was recommended that the Advanced Instrumentation Research Facility (AIRF) be clubbed with Special Centres for JNUTA School-level representation. The faculty members in AIRF will henceforth be represented in the JNUTA by the representative of Special Centres.

A majority of the members favored the resolution.

Sonajharia Minz, President
Sudhir K Suthar, Secretary