



## Open season on JNU faculty: The 267th Executive Council and the attacks on JNU teachers

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The 268th Executive Council meeting on the 30th of June represents perhaps the most sustained attack on the employment, career advancement, and professional development rights of JNU teachers in JNU's history. Although this attack was met with fierce opposition from JNU teacher representatives, the decisions that appear to have been finalised in this last Executive Council spell out the highly condemnable intent of the JNU administration to harass JNU teachers and to hack away at the rights that the teachers' movement has won.

The JNUTA will be bringing out detailed releases with regards to many of the 'decisions' taken in the EC on 30th June, but as even a summary list shows, there is an impunity borne of scant respect for rules and norms that is relentlessly targeting the JNU faculty and their rights and collective decisions. Shamefully, the JNU Registrar has failed to perform the duties prescribed by the Statutes once again. The letter written by 50 AC/EC members to the members of the EC about the M.Phil./PhD ordinances was not tabled, and once again, the minutes of the 143rd AC were placed before the EC without giving time to member's of the AC to record their opinions. In fact, the Registrar admitted that the

minutes of the 143rd AC were circulated just half an hour prior to the 268th EC meeting!

Some of the decisions taken in the 268th EC are as as below.

- Even as the EC **did not approve of the relieving of Prof. Rajeev Kumar**, SC&SS, there was a decision that the order would not be withdrawn; rather legal opinion would be sought. **The JNUTA has already demanded the colleague's reinstatement**, because lien is the right of the employee and it is his choice which institution he wishes to pursue his career in.
- **The confirmation of two colleagues has been withheld on spurious grounds.** In one case, a re-verification of a caste certificate is the pretext, when there is no valid ground for any suspicion. In the second case, **the decisions of a Selection Committee and previous EC decisions from over four years ago is sought to be overturned**, and the terms of the employee's contract violated with impunity. The JNUTA takes a very serious view of both these decisions, not only for the torture and mental harassment they cause the individual colleagues, but of the scandalous precedent they set. Equally alarming is the **subterfuge employed in bringing up the second case** in the EC– there was not one hint in the agenda papers or in the papers tabled at the meeting that the intent was to attempt to terminate a colleague without any intimation to her. The JNUTA rejects the need for any enquiry on the matter.

- **Promotions of three colleagues have been withheld**, all three from one of the intellectually most vibrant Centres of the university, on grounds that have remained formally unspecified. As per the recommendations made to the EC, and the letters the three colleagues received, **were told to re-apply again in three months**. As expected, this spurious ‘recommendation’ was not upheld in the EC as it is against the CAS rules; **the three colleagues will now lose a year of seniority**. JNU teachers representatives’ **demand for the Selection Committee minutes were turned down**, despite the fact that it is the statutory right of EC members to access these documents. Breaking from past norms whereby notes of dissent given in Selection Committees are tabled if requested, EC members were advised that one or two differing opinions cannot be accorded any weight. JNUTA rejects this majoritarian reasoning completely, as the import of a dissent note lies in the substantive point it raises, which may be strong enough in law/rule/propriety to inform the EC of corruption, discrimination, wrongful application of rules in a Selection Committee. **Since neither the VC nor the Selection Committee is the appointing authority, all facts pertaining to an appointment must be placed before the body that is empowered to do so.**
- **The VC’s tampering with the database of experts continues**, despite the fact that the matter is *sub judice*. From what JNUTA has been able to glean, **the VC has “finalised” (i.e. made illegal additions to the**

**Panel of Experts for the following Centres/Schools over the past six months, based on what has been reported to the AC and/or EC: *School of Arts & Aesthetics, School of Computer & Systems Sciences, Centre for Linguistics (twice), Centre for Political Studies, Special Centre for Nanoscience, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Centre for Philosophy, Centre for Studies in Science Policy, School of Environmental Sciences.* Despite requests to reveal the names of such additions were not acceded to, and instead a decision has purportedly been taken to add whatever names the VC dreams up to the database of experts *permanently*. The JNUTA rejects this blatant violation of the Statutes, Ordinances, and the UGC Regulations 2010. It wishes to flag the seriousness of this new EC decision very seriously, as this decision ensures that the VC can henceforth nominate only ‘his’ experts to Selection Committees.**

- To satisfy an external member’s inordinate interest in the names shortlisted for a position in a Centre in SSS, the EC has agreed to make available to him the three Screening Committees’ recommendations and CVs of all candidates who were called for interview. It has also decided to invite external ‘experts’ to enquire into this matter. This brazen vitiation of the screening process by rendering it open to manipulation by vested interests is not only condemnable, it also ignores the fact that each Centre’s shortlist is in fact already screened by the university IQAC. On the one hand, the minutes of Selection Committees are denied to EC members; but on the other hand, individual members are being allowed a free hand**

**to pervert due process at will.**

- **Archives managed and developed by the Centre's/Schools, such as the Archives on Contemporary History of India, the P.C. Joshi Archives, are to be wrested away from Centres and handed over to the University Librarian.** The JNUTA finds this move extremely regressive, as the construction and categorisation of these archives is the intellectual property of faculty and Centres who have built them, and it is under their guidance and control that these archives can continue to grow.
- **Unbeknownst to colleagues in the Centre of the Study of Social Systems, an 'enquiry' was conducted into clerical errors committed by the staff in entering marks into the award blank for the JNU EE 2016.** Although the Vibha Tandon Committee that was designated by the VC to conduct the error has categorically stated that these errors are nothing beyond "human error", the EC was actively misled, through the furnishing of falsified documents that a dismissed teacher was involved in correcting the scripts, that there needs to be a further action of "fixing responsibility". JNUTA has **already** sharply condemned the reports in the media on this matter, and demands the JNU administration issue an official rejoinder forthwith and an enquiry into the leak ordered at once.

- **The JNUTA is shocked to learn that the University administration is contemplating setting up a VC-nominated committee to function as the Internal Complaints Committee under the anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2013, effectively derecognising the GSCASH.** Aside from the fact that the GSCASH is unequivocally and unambiguously designated at the JNU EC and the Court as the ICC for JNU, the JNUTA would like the EC to pause and reflect upon whether it would really like to take this openly confrontational line with the JNU community. The GSCASH was won by collective action by the JNU community after two years of intense struggle, and all attempts to undermine this unique institution have been thwarted by the university community over the last 19 years.
- **The EC has once again gifted away JNU's autonomy by resolving that henceforth only UGC rules for the counting of past service will be employed in JNU.** If the information that there will be no retrospective application of these rules and that the JNU Ordinances in existence at the time will govern past cases, JNUTA fails to understand why one case will be referred to the UGC for "clarification" at all.
- **The witchhunt of JNU faculty for their exercise of the right of freedom of speech and expression also continues.** The Bidyut

Chakrabarty headed committee (that JNUTA had objected to [earlier](#)) has already met five times. The JNUTA condemns this travesty of an enquiry and cautions the JNU administration that these moves to deny teachers their rights under the law of the land will be met with an appropriate response.

In other news, EC also appears to have accepted the JNU administration's proposal to erect "a statue of suitable height and size" on a "proper elevated platform" of Swami Vivek ananda. JNUTA would be delighted if this would bring about a spiritual commitment in the current JNU administration's towards building a society in which truth prevails. But if the series of decisions that the 268th EC has taken, marked by libel, discrimination, illegality, and injustice against the teaching community, are any indication, it is unlikely that this statue will have the desired effect.

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