

## **Executive Summary of Department Review – Humanities & Social Sciences**

The departmental review was scheduled on April 09, 2014. Members of the review committee were Dr. T.C.A. Anant (Chief Statistician, Government of India), Prof. Akeel Bilgrami (Chair Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University, New York), Prof. Alok Rai (Retd. Professor Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Delhi), Prof. P. Satishchandra (Vice Chancellor, NIMHANS, Bangalore), and Dr. R.B. Barman (An Alumnus of the Department and Retd. Executive Director, RBI).

The head presented the status of the department on various aspects such as faculty strength and their research areas, growth in student numbers and academic programmes. The department has on rolls 37 faculty, 1 post-doctoral candidate, 183 post graduate students (151 Ph.D. & 32 M.Phil.). The committee commended the curriculum taught at UG and PG levels and the impressive growth in the intake of students at the Ph.D. level. The large numbers of Ph.D. students indicate the increased focus on research. Several new courses, numbering 36, have been introduced in emerging areas. In a typical academic year the department offers 82 courses, 34 at the UG and 48 at the PG level. The uniqueness of the department is in its ability to offer about 47 courses every year as Core/Elective component to the UG and PG students of the Engineering and Technology disciplines. The department faculty offer 6 Core courses to the UG students every year [sometimes in both the Semesters], one Core course on Communication and Presentation Skills to all the PG students of the Institute. The teaching evaluations by students indicate that the courses have good acceptance. 5 NTPEL courses have been taught in the review period. The department has couple of visiting faculty regularly present to enhance the academic ambiance. The student placement records have been good with 75% of the students placed through the placement office of the institute for the first time that we participated in the last year.

The committee recommended that the course work for M.Phil and Ph.D. students needs to be augmented further. It is suggested particularly to address the needs of the increasing number of non-social sciences [Engineering and Technology] background students in the MPhil programme during the last 4 years. The department currently offers a research methodology course at the M.Phil. and Ph.D. levels. However the committee felt that it should be expanded further to formulate separate Research Methodology course in each discipline [Economics, English, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, etc.]. Further the committee also recommends that more focussed research oriented courses be introduced in the form of self-study under the guidance of a faculty member. Introduction of Research Scholars seminar series like the faculty seminar series is yet another suggestion made by the committee. Space for PhD students need to be addressed (as they are too crowded now) for better working space for research and interaction. “It is felt that an integrated course in Economics with focus on applied analytics and big data may prove very useful for synergy in research on R&D, competitiveness etc. bordering various disciplines” needs to be noted.

The research activity in the department is grouped into 6 core research areas, namely, Economics, English, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology and a Cell for Indian Science and Technology in Sanskrit. Several faculty are working in emerging areas of all these disciplinary groups mentioned above. The department has a healthy publication [journal papers + book chapters + peer reviewed conference proceedings] record of 3.09 per year per faculty. Research infrastructure has been upgraded through funding from sponsored projects from number of ministries of the Government of India, RBI, National Stock Exchange and international organisations like World Bank, OECD, UNDP, UNEP, and USAID. Faculty have won several accolades during the last five years. The committee commended on the excellent research ambiance in the department. In particular, the committee has appreciated the healthy interdisciplinary practices in research contribution in the field of environmental studies, technology, organizational psychology, cognitive sciences. To take the research to the next level, the committee felt that the department should expand and introduce faculty in other social sciences like history and political science. It strongly recommends that some of the disciplinary groups could be developed to the next level of forming a separate department, although this could be applicable to all the existing fields in the long run. The committee has appreciated the ability of the department to attract good quality of students into the M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs. Department has high quality and volume of research with focus in core as well as interdisciplinary area. High quality research performance is uniform across all 6 research groups. Given the diversity, the department should undertake large interdisciplinary projects of national importance, especially from a public policy perspective.

Action plan is being worked out to address some of the comments suggested by the committee members. To cater to increased faculty and student strengths, we need to have much bigger space than at present. We will be requesting the Institute to give us more space, probably in the form of a separate building. Department has already initiated preparation of publicity material about the new academic programmes to attract faculty candidates. Faculty members have also been visiting various institutes in the country and overseas in connection with Seminars/Conferences and they do highlight the research in the department. The emerging research foci of the department would be in all the core areas of Economics, English, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Sanskrit and Indian languages, and the ancient Indian contribution to Science and Mathematics with a variety of themes. We intend to brainstorm with various groups among faculty to tackle one or two large scale problem of National importance. Consolidate the areas by hiring future faculty applicants from the core research areas already present in the department, as well as explore the possibilities of hiring faculty members in other social sciences like history, geography, political sciences and international relations. Although interaction with industry and policy makers is on the rise, further impetus will be initiated. The department looks forward to growth through new academic programmes, research in emerging areas, industry interaction and to create an ambiance of academic excellence.