

Institutional Best Practices

Best Practices: I

Effective leadership as reflected in decentralization and participative management:

Objectives of the Practice

To decentralize the decision making process with participation of faculty, staff and students, so that effective implementation of schemes is achievable, with least obstacles and constraints.

The Context

The existing practice in HEIs is that decisions are taken at the higher level and passed on to the lower level for implementation. To have an effective mechanism, the established procedures and norms have to be modified. There is no sense of participation and contribution, which is required for the success of any initiative in HEIs. The challenge is to overcome these constraints and to evolve a suitable mechanism.

The Practice

Effective leadership of a university fully depends on team work under the auspices of the Vice Chancellor to promote development in areas like programmes development, aligned to the Vision and Mission of the university, programme implementation strategy and setting targets to achieve as per the timelines set. With that objective, the present Vice - Chancellor of SRIHER (DU) has evolved a unique two-tier system of **University Development Committee (UDC) and University Advisory Council (UAC) (which was later renamed as University Advisory and Implementation Committee (UAIC))**

The UDC, a consultative body, has members from all the constituent colleges/faculties (Deans/Principals), along with the Registrar, the Director (Finance), the General Manager (HR), etc. This has subsequently been expanded to include Vice-Principals and others. The UDC was later converted to have only academic members since 2019 and the administrative members were invitees for the UAIC. The UAIC consisting of only the top-tier senior officials to facilitate coherence, approves after due review.

This system got instituted from 2017. So far 34 UDC meetings and 33 UAC meetings were held since May 2019. The meetings are held on alternate Fridays. A total of 240 proposals covering academic, administrative, resource generation and institutional expansion proposals were presented and discussed. Out of the UDC approved proposals, approximately 87% have been implemented with clear timelines.

Some of the schemes and proposals include, strengthening of skills and simulation laboratory, expansion of Allied Health Sciences educational programmes with simultaneous infrastructure and manpower strengthening, establishment of Sri Ramachandra Innovation Incubation Centre and Sri Ramachandra Centre for International Collaboration with trained manpower; strengthening the Faculty of Management administrative and examination reforms, NABH/ NAAC accreditation requirements etc.,

Evidence of Success

The formation of such consultative and implementation bodies is an innovative approach as issues and decision making based on 'bottom up' approach and all the principal stake holders are involved in it who present their proposal(s) in the UDC. After due diligence, the proposal is technically approved and submitted for final approval, including financial approval and allocations with due justification at UAIC.

As a result, many innovative programmes/ proposals are now being implemented at a faster pace within a time line. Since its inception in 2017, 34 UDC meetings and 33 UAC meetings were held and a total of 240 proposals covering academic, administrative, resource generation and institutional expansion proposals were presented and discussed. The success of this best practice is also evidenced by the fact that no less than 38 innovative programmes that are socially relevant and which meet industry needs have been started during the last two years. In line with policy of GOI, to provide a holistic approach in health care delivery, to implement Integrative Medicine/Integrated Medicine, the high power committee constituted by the DU under the Chairmanship of Dr. Patwardhan, Vice Chairman, UGC was convened. The committee after deliberation suggested several measures including academic programmes. One of the programs was M.Sc in Mind Body Medicine & Lifestyle Sciences. Subsequently it was placed in UDC meeting dated 14th June 2019 and UAC 28th June 2019, and after approval before BOS & Academic council It was introduced in December 2019. All the students got internship in well reputed wellness special schools and rehab centres with assurance of placement.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Some of the proposals which are incomplete had to be presented after modification in subsequent meetings. Some of the proposals could not be accepted due to non-conformity with the statutory regulations while some had to be deferred because of huge cost involved. Finding resources, both human and financial have posed major challenges during implementation. Sometimes targets and timelines had to be extended or altered for implementation. To overcome this, later the UAC has been expanded to include the Purchase and Project administrators also.

Best Practices: II

Alumni Association with a Difference:

1. Objectives of the Practice:

- Creating a worldwide community among the alumni body of Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to be University) and facilitating opportunities for lifelong engagement with the university.
- Representing the interests of the alumni body by gathering a voice for alumni and facilitating communication with the university.
- Creating a culture of philanthropy among the alumni body, to ensure to contribute their time, talent and financial resources for the betterment of the university
- To increase alumni participation and involvement in university and fund raising activities
- To promote pride, tradition and loyalty among both current students and former

students

- To strengthen bonds and build relationships between alumni, students and university and provide opportunities for them to contribute to its welfare.

2. The Context

The Alumni Association comprises of nine chapters of the constituent colleges and organizes the events under the guidance of the officials of the university and the office bearers of the association.

Every graduate enroll in the respective chapter of their constituent college.

The association organizes guest lectures, medical camps, creation of endowments and donation of books and e- resources. The office bearers meet periodically to discuss and update the various activities organized by each chapter.

3. The Practice:

Alumni Association of SRIHER was formed in the year 2016 to create a life-long relationship between the Institute and its alumni. Initially the alumni association functioned as individual chapters. Currently it is registered as the “Alumni Association of Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research” - Tamil Nadu, Society Registration Act 27 of 1975, November 2018 (Sl. No 511/2018).

The alumni chapters of the institute have contributed greatly to the welfare of the institute, faculty and students. The association have played a pivotal role in providing encouragement through best alumni awards for distinguished alumni. The association encourage students through career guidance and programmes/ workshops, supervisors in research including clinical trials and publications. The association has actively initiated organizing, funding and also involving alumni as resource persons for various CME, CNE, CRE, conferences and workshops. The alumni have contributed to society through both sponsoring and participating in screening and health camps, providing instruments in the form of test equipment and physical support for students, clinicians and patients. The alumni also has rich fund of entrepreneurs (Dr.Rajaramanan, Dr.Rajesh, Dr.Sasikumar Muthu and Dr.Malaraj), which was also greatly appreciated by the MEDGATE award in March 2018.

The association currently consist of 16728 members both nationally and internationally. Alumni are connected through the Alum Book application and promotes connectively between fellow alumni helping each other for social initiatives, opportunities for higher education and jobs.

The alumni have donated books amounting to about 1, 55,304. The institute is also proud of its esteemed alumnus; Dr. Shamsheer Vayalil, Chairman and Managing Director of VPS Healthcare (Chain of Hospitals in Dubai, India and Europe), Dr. Kannan Gireesh, consultant and Founder and CEO of Live Life Education Pvt. Ltd, Dr S Gurushankar, Chairman of Meenakshi mission Hospital and Research Centre to name a few.

The alumni chapters have also been instrumental in providing career and competitive exams guidance programmes/ workshops annually. Each alumnus provides feedback to curriculum revision which greatly enabled us to improve our teaching methods.

4. Evidence of Success:

The alumni have helped to provide first-hand information to their designated chapters relating to job and placement opportunities through the Alum Book platform. The alumni role during the pandemic is commendable. They provided COVID safety kits to the students and parents. It was appreciated in the form of an award, “Best Work Ethics Award” on 17/10/2020 by the World Tamil Chamber Of Commerce and received from Dr J Radhakrishnan, Principal Secretary to TamilNadu Government.

The feedback from the graduands and their families were overwhelming and encouraged the initiative to distribute instant photos, alumni ID cards and privileges booklet. The staff, students and faculty found the workshop on awareness of sexual harassment to be very useful.

5. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Integrating all the individual Alumni Chapters of the constituent colleges of SRIHER was challenging. The centralization of funds was another challenging task. The members of all the chapters were co- operative and understood the need of the central body for smooth conduct of alumni association. The entire process was time consuming but it was well planned and coordinated by the SRAA team and carried out successfully.