

## **MINUTES of 3rd MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOPHIA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.**

### Members present:

- Members of SHEWI (the Governing Trust of the College): Sr. Teresa Pereira, Sr. Patricia D'Souza
- Members of teaching staff of the College: Dr. Hemalatha Ramachandran. Dr. Perpetua Miranda;
- UGC nominee: Dr. Kumud Sharma;
- Eminent educationist: Dr. (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas
- Principal of the College: Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amrimitahal

Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese, chairperson of SHEWI, could not attend as she was out of town, and had asked Sr Ananda to chair the meeting in her place. Dr. Rashmi Oza the University of Mumbai nominee was unable to be present as she was a member in CAS selection committee meetings in another college. Dr Rohidas Kale (nominee of the State Government), Sr. Pratibha Pinto and Sr. Charlotte Bastion (members of SHEWI) could not attend the meeting due to other commitments.

Sr Ananda Amritmahal welcomed all the members to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Governing Body. She mentioned that extension to the Principal's post had finally come through in the month of July 2019 (31<sup>st</sup> July 2019). The members expressed satisfaction at the news.

The minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Governing Body were read and the motion to accept them was proposed by Fr. Frazer Mascarenhas, seconded by Dr. P. Miranda and passed unanimously.

### Matters arising out of the Minutes:

Dr. Sharma enquired about the relaxation about the attendance requirement to 50% being allowed at the UG level. Sr. Ananda mentioned that in exceptional cases (illness, death of a parent or a sibling, etc.) such considerations are given depending on each student's level of difficulty. She pointed out that as a women's college, we have to be aware that often, in cases of family difficulties or problems like the serious illness of a family member, girl students are forced to miss college due to responsibilities they are expected to shoulder at home. We try to find creative ways of helping such students make up the work they have missed.

#### 1. Brief report of events since 2<sup>nd</sup> GB meeting:

- It was mentioned that the online admissions to SY and TY classes went smoothly although some glitches had occurred during the FY due to Computer related matters. The college will be in the process of streamlining all online admissions during next academic year.

- The online payment of fees was also conducted, after consultation with the auditors and compliance with their recommendations. The incorporation of these helped to make the process a success.
- The examinations were conducted smoothly: all the necessary inputs recommended by the Academic Council were incorporated and the examination sessions concluded successfully.
- About the College events Sr. Ananda mentioned that Peace week and Kaleidoscope 2019 were conducted with enthusiastic participation from the students. She pointed out that the latter in particular was an event in which the student's leadership qualities and team spirit come into prominence. Extra-curricular activities included an active Sports department which participated in a number of matches at the University level, as well as a recently conducted event of MahaWalkathon (organised in collaboration with the government and the police department). The NSS unit of the college, too, is extremely active, working with the University and also collaborating with the BMC in preparing and presenting street plays at Grant Road station and other localities to heighten public awareness about health issues.
- The college had a student exchange programme (academic and cultural immersion experience) with students from Kohima Science College, Nagaland, which drew an excellent response from our faculty and students. Later in the academic year, as the second part of the programme a group of our students would visit KSC in Nagaland. Dr. Sharma asked about the time duration of this exchange program and brief details of the same was shared by Sr. Ananda.
- Sr. Ananda mentioned that under RUSA, beneficiary colleges are expected to participate in the EK Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme. In this, our students are meant to be exposed to information and awareness about Odisha through a variety of activities, and there would be an exchange programme, with students from a designated college in Odisha would be visiting our campus, and our students would visit theirs. A minimum of 50 students from each college are expected to participate.
- Sr. Ananda informed the members that the 3<sup>rd</sup> BOS and 3<sup>rd</sup> Academic Council had been held and many departments have revised their syllabus course work. Most departments have retained the basic format of the university for the time being, whereas the BMM department has completely changed the course work to make it more professional, and their faculty has done commendable work which had been appreciated by the Academic Council
- Fr. Fraser enquired about student representation in the syllabus committee. Sr. Ananda replied there is a Sophia College alumna in every BOS.
- Sr. Ananda spoke about the one-credit courses which have been introduced by many of the departments with sizeable student participation in large numbers.
- A workshop on Framing Learning Outcomes was held in the college for the faculty, in order to enable them to incorporate these outcomes in syllabus framing. Dr. Hema mentioned that the session had been conducted by in-house faculty members from the Department of Education. Sr. Ananda added this was, in fact, helpful since the resource persons were aware of the ground realities of the college as well as the student profile and needs, and thus, the workshop could be thoroughly contextualised while suggesting improvements and best practices.

- A staff induction programme had been designed for new faculty members to make them aware of the ethos and mentality of this College, and help them with pedagogical skills, conduct of examination and preparing question papers. The design included a series of sessions spread out over several months. The first session had been conducted, and the remaining ones scheduled.
- Sr. Ananda mentioned the difficulties encountered due to the fact that NOCs were not being issued by the Government to fill vacant posts at our institution. Dr. Sharma mentioned that a similar situation is prevailing in Delhi University.
- Sr. Ananda mentioned the difficulties of paying the salary by the management with the limited revenue at their disposal. The basic salary that we can offer to temporary faculty is comparatively low, while the cost of living, including travel expenses, is high. Thus it is difficult to retain the temporary staff and meet their expectations. Dr. Sharma mentioned that this would affect their commitment and participation in student development.
- RUSA: Sr. Ananda mentioned that with the repeated changes in the directives from the sanctioning authorities, the fund utilisation is becoming increasingly difficult. Clear indication of regulations for fund utilisation is therefore awaited. Fr. Fraser added that changing the norms for funding utilisation makes it very difficult for colleges.
- Dr. Kumud Sharma asked about the revenue generated from film shooting. Sr. Ananda replied that these earnings are utilized for management salaries and maintenance expenditure.
- Sr. Ananda drew the attention of the members to some serious student issues and the need to conduct awareness workshops for health as well as mental health issues. Some of the issues are too serious to be dealt with by counsellors at the college level.
- Dr. Sharma suggested inviting motivational speakers to deal with some of these issues. She also expressed concern about the impact of digital technology and the effect of digital and global world imprints on the minds of our students.
- Sr. Ananda spoke about the government's requirement that aided colleges should conduct various government-initiated programs, for example Marathi Bhasha Pandhrawda and Marathi Bhasha Diwas. Colleges are sent instructions at short notice, with little time to plan. The rescheduling of lectures also affects the number of teaching days and the completion of the syllabus. This, in addition to election duties assigned to faculty and to non-teaching staff, affected the academic calendar. Dr. Hema R mentioned that we may soon have to plan for additional buffer days to tide over such cancellation of classes.
- The proposal to be sent to UGC(WRO) for the UGC grant for Autonomous Colleges amounting to 20 lakhs, was then shared with the Governing Body. With reference to the Rs 3 lakhs funds requested for preparation of learning materials, Dr. Sharma enquired if these learning materials would be published. Sr. Ananda replied this includes publication as well. Fr. Fraser suggested that Rs 1 lakh should be reserved from the grant for payment of examination requirements. Sr. Pratibha then proposed that the application for the grant be passed, Dr. P. Miranda seconded the proposal, and the motion was passed unanimously.
- The meeting then ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

## **MINUTES of 4<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOPHIA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

Platform : Zoom

Link : Time: May 28, 2021 11:00 AM India

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/7542702225?pwd=cVowNkhEWmFkZXdLVzFVMk5aNUxvdz09>

Meeting ID: 754 270 2225

Passcode: sophia

### Members present:

- Members of SHEWI (the Governing Trust of the College): Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese, Sr. Teresa Pereira and Sr. Pratibha Pinto
- Members of teaching staff of the College: Dr. Hemalatha Ramachandran, Ms Swarupa Kamat;
- UGC nominee: Dr Kumud Sharma
- Nominee of the State Government: Dr Rohidas Kale
- University of Mumbai nominee: Dr. Rashmi Oza
- Eminent educationist: Dr. (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas
- Principal of the College: Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal

Sr Charlotte Bastion and Sr. Patricia D'Souza were unable to attend.

The vice-principals, Dr Yasmin Khan, Ms Gilda Pereira and Dr Anagha Tendulkar were present as invited guests.

- Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese welcomed all the members to the 4th meeting of the Governing Body and Dr. Kale to his first meeting. She extended condolences to Dr Kumud Sharma who had very recently lost her husband due to Covid, and thanked her for attending the meeting in spite of that. Mention was made of the losses suffered by Sophia staff like Dr. Yasmin Khan who had been similarly bereaved a year back. Ms.Kamat was welcomed as the seniormost Arts faculty member, following the retirement of Dr. Perpetua Miranda. Dr. Kumud Sharma thanked the Chair for the condolences.
- Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal mentioned that in view of her imminent retirement in March 2022, she had invited the three Vice-Principals: Dr. Yasmin Khan (VP Science), Gilda Pereira, (VP Arts), Dr. Anagha Tendulkar (VP Admin) as guests for this meeting. This was in interest of continuity. The pandemic has disrupted schedules and Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal apologized for the long delay in holding the meeting, that had been originally scheduled for April 2020. It was suggested that the UGC be given a written

explanation/letter to explain the delay, and that since this meeting would cover a great deal of material, it be counted as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> meeting combined into one. Dr. (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas supported this suggestion, and it was accepted by all the members.

The minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Governing Body were read and the motion to accept them was proposed by Dr. Hemalatha Ramachandran, seconded by Dr. Kumud Sharma and passed unanimously.

1. **Report of events since the 3<sup>rd</sup> GB meeting:**

Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal, through screen-sharing of a PowerPoint presentation, gave brief explanations of and highlighted the following events and developments.

Some prominent features of the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020 :

- Extracurricular activities – Events like Munsophical, the activities and festivals organized by the various clubs, the newly-instituted Rotaract festival – Phoenix, all gave the students the opportunity to develop, hone and showcase their talents, leadership potential and organizational skills
- Exchange programme – In continuation of a project which had involved hosting students from Kohima Science College, Nagaland, at Sophia for a week during the first semester, some of our students and staff went to Kohima Science College, Nagaland for the second half of the project. This was greatly appreciated and proved to be a valuable learning experience for all involved.
- An International conference on Mythology – funded by the Luigi and Laura Dallapiccola Foundation and organized by the Departments of English and History – had been very well received by the participants. Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese added that the Seminar on *Of Offence and Defence – Weapons and Forts in India*, (April 2020) hosted by the Department of History had also been appreciated by Dr. Anna Dallapiccola.
- The Degree Conferring Ceremony and Prize Distribution for the year 2019-2020 would be held in the first half of 2021.
- Academic and Examination Audits had been successfully conducted. Dr. Rashmi Oza asked if a Gender Audit had been done. Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal explained that as a women's college, we had not felt the need to conduct a gender audit. However, since it was now a requirement, henceforth it would be done.

Semester End of 2019-20

- The College and the Hostel closed by 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, as per government regulations, at the onset of the pandemic.
- Examinations - TY/MSc (II) of 2019-20 were conducted in October 2020. This was done online, in line with the regulations issued by the state government and the University. Mock exams were held and Question Banks were given as per University rules and regulations. There had been a number of challenges related to connectivity, but with the perseverance and commitment of our staff, it was possible to surmount these hurdles, and all the students were able to appear for their exams.

- All other students were promoted automatically, as per the government and University regulations.

#### Academic year 2020-2021

- Online teaching – A small committee of teachers who were skilled in the area was appointed to study the possibilities. Zoom and G Suite were selected after examining various platforms and LMS. Several training sessions were conducted to familiarize staff with these, and develop their skills and proficiency in employing them.
- Internal Assessment – It had been decided that we should move to increasing the internal and ongoing assessment to 50 %. This would make the process of assessment more real, more reflective of the students' ability. A variety of assessment tools were employed. In the odd semester, each department was left free to decide on its own pattern of assessment. The process was more streamlined in the even semester, with the mandatory inclusion of at least one subjective type exercise. Based on student feedback, it was decided to restrict the number of IA exercises per course to a minimum of three and a maximum of four in the even semester.
- Semester End examinations – These were conducted through the online mode, and the weightage for these was reduced to 50%. The type of questions employed was mainly MCQs. In the odd semester we experimented with the inclusion of some subjective type answers at the TY level, but in the even semester we decided to remain with MCQs.
- Skills development/enhancement sessions for faculty were organised by the IQAC, with the support of the management and through the RUSA grant.
- The CUC was particularly creative and innovative in adapting the extra-curricular activities that were part of the College calendar in normal times to the online mode. Almost all the events that formed a part of the college year were conducted online, except for Kaleidoscope.
- The college was awarded Star College Status in July. This was a well-deserved recognition of the efforts of our Science faculty to provide excellent undergraduate education in the sciences.
- Over the last year, our social media presence has been considerably developed, and the website has been upgraded.

#### Major Challenges that had to be Met

- There were a number of psychological and health issues affecting staff and students. These were both
  - Covid-related
  - Lockdown related
- Students also faced considerable financial difficulties, as a number of the parents either lost their jobs or had their salaries cut, because of the lockdown. The college was determined to ensure that no student dropped out due to this reason. An appeal was issued and staff, students and other well-wishers responded generously. This was disbursed to the students and we were able to support our needy students in this time of need.
- There were some serious difficulties in the pedagogical process in the online mode, especially regarding practical work

- It had been difficult keeping the college operational in the absence of admin and support staff, especially during the strict lockdown period.
- Arrangements had to be made for transport and accommodation of non-teaching staff during the early days of opening up after the lockdown.  
Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese spoke appreciatively of the efforts made by Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal in offering support to all during this crisis. The goodwill generated by gestures like free food and accommodation highlighted the importance given by the Principal to the human aspect.
- Meeting expenses presented its own challenge, when the income from the usual sources had been unavailable, because of the pandemic and the lockdown. This was particularly difficult in the following areas:
  - Management salaries
  - Infrastructural expenses – electricity, water, maintenance

## 2. **Changes in Syllabi**

Changes in the syllabi had been proposed and passed by the respective Boards of Studies of the following departments and by the Academic Council:

- BMM / BA (SCJ)
- BScIT
- Economics
- Education
- English
- Foundation Course
- French
- History
- Life Sciences
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Microbiology
- Zoology

### Resolutions: for 2020-2021

- ***Resolved that the proposed changes in the syllabi of the BMM/BA(SCJ), BScIT, Chemistry, Economics, Education, English, Foundation Course, History, Life Sciences, Microbiology, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Zoology be and hereby are accepted and passed, with the revised syllabi to be implemented from the academic year 2020-2021.***
- ***Resolved that the proposal to change the ratio of SEE to IA from 75:25 to 50:50 be and hereby is adopted on an experimental basis, because of the pandemic, for the academic year 2020-2021. The assessment may be either offline or online depending on the circumstances of the pandemic and on the notifications issued by the Government of Maharashtra and the University of Mumbai from time to time.***

Both were proposed by Dr. (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas, seconded by Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese and passed unanimously.

### **3. Tentative Plans for 2021-2022**

- We will continue with online classes through Zoom and G Suite; The practicals too would be taken online, but it was hoped that it would be possible sometime in the course of the year to have the students actually perform the practicals in the labs.
- The Biochemistry Department was likely to be closed.

Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese and Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal spoke about the difficulties of keeping this department operational in view of the government not granting NOCs for new appointments, the financial challenges created by the pandemic and the decline in student intake in the science stream. Dr. Kale asked for further details about the course, and was informed that this was an optional course in the third year with only 3 papers. Dr. Kumud Sharma asked for how long this department had been in existence, and was informed by Sr Anila that it had begun as a PG department in the late 70s, with 5 students, and only later had they taken on UG work as well. With the fall in admissions in science, other full-fledged, big departments would benefit if this department was to be closed. Dr. Yasmin Khan said that instead of Biochemistry, more industry linked courses could be started at the PG level. Dr. Hema Ramachandran agreed that the closure of the department would help create space for such courses. The financial difficulties were again stressed by the Chair and the Principal. It was also pointed out that the department no longer had senior faculty, only contractual staff. So this raised the issue of monitoring the work, especially at the PG level. Keeping this department running was neither financially nor administratively viable. A query was raised about keeping it temporarily shut. This was a possibility that would need to be explored.

Dr. Hema Ramachandran mentioned that the government had asked for a list of vacancies; perhaps this meant that some NOCs would be released. It was stated that the college now had 18 vacancies in teaching posts and so far the government was not granting NOCs.

Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese said that given the current financial distress in the state, it was unlikely that the NOCs would be granted in the near future. Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal said usually only a few were granted and the college decided which departments would be given these.

- This led to the next point which was that with the many retirements in the years 2020-21 and 2021-22, and with no NOCs forthcoming soon, sustaining the academic standard of the college was going to prove to be difficult. Further, an entire cadre of senior, experienced and dedicated staff were retiring, and this left many anxieties about maintaining the ethos and commitment to excellence that has been one of the USPs of the College.
- Proposed new courses
  - A Certificate course in Food and Nutrition
  - A Diploma course in Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults
  - An MA in Women's Studies and Gender StudiesIn response to her query, Dr.Oza was informed that this was a two-year course with four semesters. The third would be internship and the fourth would be research



based. Dr. Oza suggested that the term ‘women’ be dropped from the title as the understanding of ‘gender’ is more broad-based as an academic subject.

- Add-on one-credit certificate courses to be floated by each department
- The system of awarding non-academic credits that had been planned would be implemented while declaring the results of the TY students of the year 2020-2021. However, it would still not be a mandatory component, as the pandemic and the lockdown had imposed their own constraints.
- The college would continue to explore ways of safeguarding the integrity of the assessment while we continue to function in the online mode.

#### Resolutions for the Academic Year 2021-2022

The following resolutions were proposed by Sr Pratibha, seconded by Sr Ananda, and passed unanimously.

***Resolved that the proposed programme of MA in Gender Studies, proposed by the Board of Studies (Sociology) and accepted by the Academic Council, be and hereby is ratified and is to be launched in the academic year 2021-2022.***

***Resolved that the proposed diploma course in Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, proposed by the Board of Studies (Psychology) and accepted by the Academic Council, be and hereby is ratified and is to be launched in the academic year 2021-2022***

***Resolved that the proposed add-on one-credit certificate courses be and hereby are accepted and passed. The courses will be conducted in the academic year 2021-2022.***

***Resolved that the proposal to continue with the ratio of SEE to IA, viz. 50:50 be and hereby is adopted, for the academic year 2021-2022.***

***Resolved that students be awarded non-academic credits, according to the hours of work involved, for their engagement with add-on courses, extracurricular activities, and social work and outreach.***

#### **4. Proposal for UGC autonomy grant for 2020-2021**

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| • Upgradation of syllabus, redesigning courses,<br>Development of learning material | 3 lakhs         |
| • Examination reforms   | 3 lakhs         |
| • Furniture for office, classrooms, library and laboratories                        | 2 lakhs         |
| • Renovation and repair   | 5 lakhs         |
| • Office equipment, lab equipment, AMCs   | 2.5 lakhs       |
| • Capacity building for staff   | 0.5 lakhs       |
| • Library equipment, books, journals  | 2 lakhs         |
| • Honoraria for guest/visiting faculty, teaching assistants                         | 2 lakhs         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>20 lakhs</b> |

In response to a query from the Chair, Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal said that the grant had not been received so far. In response to a query from Dr. Hema Ramachandran, Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal stated that none of the autonomous institutions had received the grant in the previous year.

In response to a query about the maintenance and upkeep of lab equipment and computers, Dr. (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal stated that the equipment was being used and it was creditable that efforts were being made to ensure that it remained operational, despite there being no classes. Dr. Yasmin Khan said that the aquarium that was being used for experimental work had to be eventually shut down as the lockdown restrictions continued.

Sr. Pratibha Pinto congratulated the Principal and the staff for the work done during the pandemic. Dr. (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas complimented the college and congratulated it for continuing to work despite the extremely difficult circumstances. Dr. (Sr) Anila Verghese was also laudatory about the efforts of the College. She especially mentioned the Short term FDP course conducted by the SCWSD. It was stated that Dr Shanti, the Director of the UGC-HRD Centre at Mumbai University, who had asked us to conduct the course, had said that Sophia was the “only college I can rely on for quality”. Dr. Anagha Tendulkar was thanked for co-ordinating this course, together with the staff of the Women’s Centre. It was mentioned that the college had a social media presence on Instagram, YouTube. The recordings of the Principal’s addresses to the student body were looked forward to by students and had many ‘views’ and ‘likes’. Ms S. Kamat thanked the Chair for her welcome.

- The meeting then ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.