

MINUTES of 4th MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOPHIA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) – 28th May 2021.

Platform : Zoom

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

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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 4th and 5th meeting combined into one. Dr. (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas supported this suggestion, and it was accepted by all the members.

The minutes of the 3rd 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 3rd 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 17th 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, 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
TOTAL	20 lakhs

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.

Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Governing Body of Sophia College (Autonomous)
Held on 6th September 2021

Members present: Dr (Sr) Anila Verghese, Dr Rohidas Kale, Prof. Dr Kumud Sharma, Prof. Dr Rashmi Oza, Dr (Fr) Frazer Mascarenhas, Sr Teresa Pereira, Sr Pratibha Pinto, Sr Patricia D'Souza, Sr Annie Peter, Dr Hemalatha Ramachandran, Ms Swarupa Kamat, Dr (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal

The vice-principals of the College, Ms Gilda Pereira, Dr Rajbinder Kaur Dehiya, Dr Anagha Tendulkar, and the Controller of Examinations, Dr Yasmin Khan, were also present by invitation.

1. The meeting began with Dr (Sr) Anila Verghese welcoming the members.
2. Sr Ananda then presented the minutes of the last meeting. These were scrutinised by the members, and Sr Ananda reminded the members that it had been decided at the last meeting, that the matter dealt with at that meeting would be taken to cover the matter that would normally have been dealt with in two meetings, and so, the last meeting would be a composite of the fourth and fifth meetings. The minutes were found to be correct and the following resolution, proposed by Sr Pratibha Pinto, seconded by Ms Swarupa Kamat, was passed unanimously:

“Resolved that the minutes of the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Governing Body of Sophia College (Autonomous) be and hereby are accepted.”

3. Sr Ananda then presented a brief report of the events of the first few months of the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022. Some of the salient points included:
 - Since the mode of teaching continued to be Online, the College continued with Zoom and G Suite. A total of 51 Zoom licenses have been purchased in this academic year.
 - The weightage accorded to Internal Assessment continued to be 50 %, with 50% being allotted to the Semester End Examinations. A variety of tools were being employed for the IA. A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 IA exercises would be conducted in each course for each semester; at least one in each course was to be a subjective-type exercise.
 - Add-on Courses – each department had been asked to organise at least one; and three orientation sessions were conducted to familiarise students with the concept, rationale and process of tracking. The add-on courses were doing well, and had proved to be beneficial to the students, with a number of the courses being inter-disciplinary. It was envisaged that some would also offer students the option of exploring cross-faculty topics.
 - Skills development/enhancement sessions for faculty had been organized by IQAC:
 - a session on Assessment based on Bloom's Taxonomy

- a session on Designing add-on courses and MOOCs
- a three day workshop, sponsored by RUSA, on ‘Autonomy: the Way Forward’ – a national level workshop
- A new, upgraded and updated website has been launched – and after some initial hiccups has proved to be especially effective during admissions

She also gave the members information about the admissions to each of the courses being offered by the college. As in previous years, the process was conducted online.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Paid Fees</u>	<u>Cut-off</u>
• FYBA	1256	494	95% - 91%
• FYBA (SCJ)	373	70	97.5%- 91.7
• FYBSc	252	82	243 PCB
• FYBSc(IT)	94	42	all admitted

To date, the admissions to the First Year of the four courses, as well as to the First Year of the PG courses were still open. An additional piece of information was that the MA programme in Gender Studies had been launched, applications had been received and interviews had been conducted. Orientation programmes were scheduled for the First Years – with the principal on the 8th and with the vice-principals/co-ordinators on the 9th. Lectures would start for these students from the 15th of September.

Sr Ananda then shared some of the extracurricular events that had taken place during this period:

- Rotaract Club conducted its installation ceremony online
- NSS blood donation drives were held in collaboration with the BMC and KEM Hospital – at prominent railway stations in Mumbai
- Independence Day – mass and flag-hoisting on campus, a talent competition arranged later in the day
- Teachers Day programme was arranged for the staff by the CUC
- A new initiative – Peerpal – has been launched by the CUC, with the guidance of the Counselling Centre: the purpose is to set up informal mentoring connections between senior students and new entrants to help the latter to cope with stresses imposed due to both academic and other constraints imposed by the pandemic.
- The PRISM group (the cultural wing of the CUC) has designed and launched a yearbook to give the graduating TY students a platform to express their thoughts and feelings at this rite of passage as they stand on the threshold of adult life.

4. The next item on the agenda was the syllabi of the courses. Sr Ananda shared that

- Most of the departments are continuing with the syllabi that were put in place over the last three years – and have been passed by the Academic Council.
- The Department of History has revised the SYBA syllabus – Papers II and III have been redesigned, and these changes have been passed by the Board of Studies and the Academic Council.
- The following departments have made some minor changes in the programmes, but these have not been significant alterations in the direction of the course.
 - French
 - Microbiology
- The syllabus of the recently introduced MA programme in Gender Studies was shared in some detail.
- With regard to the assessment pattern, the College continues with the 50% IA, 50% SEE pattern. The IAs would be spread out through the semester and would employ a range of techniques, including some subjective type activities. Students would also 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.
- The following add-on courses were being conducted by various departments during the present academic year (after being passed by the respective BoSs):
 - Economics - a Certificate Course on: "Introduction to R Programming"
 - English - a Certificate Course in 'Memory Studies'
 - Hindi – a certificate course in 'Basic Spoken Japanese'
 - Foundation Course - a certificate course in 'Understanding Diversity'
 - Life Sciences & Microbiology – a certificate course in 'Scientific Writing'
 - Philosophy - a certificate course in 'Peace and Conflict Resolution'
 - Psychology - a certificate course on 'Changing Frames'
 - History – a certificate course on 'Hamara Mumbai – Urbs Prima in Indis'
 - Physics - a certificate course in 'Python for Beginners'
 - Sociology - a certificate course in 'Social Research Methodology'
 - BScIT - a certificate course on 'Ethical Hacking and IT Security'
 - BA (SCJ) - A certificate course in 'Screen-writing' (2 credits – 200 hours)
 - A certificate course in 'Advanced Film Appreciation'
 - A certificate course in 'Advanced Computer Skills'
 - A certificate courses in Media Literacy

The following resolutions, proposed by Fr Frazer and seconded by Sr Patricia, were then passed unanimously:

- Resolved that the proposed add-on 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.
5. The proposal for the autonomy grant to be submitted to the UGC WRO was then scrutinized and passed. The following resolution, proposed by Prof Rashmi Oza and seconded by Ms Swarupa Kamat, was passed unanimously:
 - Resolved that the proposal for the UGC Autonomy grant be and hereby is accepted and that it be forwarded to the UGC WRO office in Pune.
 6. Sr Ananda then shared some of the plans and concerns for the rest of the academic year 2021-2022. These included:
 - Continuing with online classes and practicals – Zoom and G Suite;
 - Challenges with many retirements, no NOCs for making fresh appointments. This places a great burden on the management, since by the end of the year, 18 of our 51 sanctioned posts will be vacant. Fund-raising will be an important element on our agenda
 - System of non-academic credits to be implemented but still on an optional basis – will only be mandatory once the pandemic situation has lifted and College begins functioning offline
 - Examination systems – continue to explore ways of safeguarding the integrity of the assessment
 - The process of preparing for the transition, the change of leadership, after March 31, 2022, is underway and will be continued. One reason for including the vice-principals and controller of examinations in the meeting as observer-participants was to ensure continuity and a smooth transition.
 7. On behalf of the management and the College, Sr Ananda expressed gratitude to the members of the Governing Body who had served in this capacity for the last three years. For some, the tenure was now over, and their contribution, support and guidance was much appreciated.
 8. The meeting then closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.