

## **Best Practices 2019-2020**

### **Best Practice-I**

Reorienting Teaching-Learning and Administrative Processes during COVID-19 Lockdown

#### *Objective*

Meeting the challenges posed by Work from Home practice.

#### *Context*

The College, along with the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad was shut down by Government order in the face of pandemic. The College had to rediscover its identity, practices and operations while maintaining its ethos, values, and vision and mission.

#### *Practice*

1. Pursuant to the University notice, a Staff Council meeting was convened for strategizing how best the process of teaching learning would continue during lockdown. The Council discussed and explored all possible aspects of online teaching and their viability. Paper-wise meetings of the faculty members were held immediately to take into account the peculiar requirements of the teaching-learning in different papers and to maintain uniformity across different Class sections. It was decided that :
  - a. Faculty Members shall ensure their availability for their students through WhatsApp/email and Microsoft Team.
  - b. Class/subject wise WhatsApp groups shall be created to address the specific needs of the students.
  - c. Faculty Members may upload the study material on the website of the College and may even upload lecture videos on YouTube and their links may be shared with the students in the larger interest.
  - d. Faculty Members may take online classes through Zoom, Google Meet, or any other suitable platform in consultation with the class representatives.

These immediate steps helped gain grip over the disruption caused by the pandemic.

2. To take care of the psychological and emotional well-being during lockdown *Online face to face*, and online based professional mentoring services to students, teaching and non-teaching staff were provided. *Nodal officers* were appointed for formally mentoring and addressing student queries, along with the designated *days* and *timings* of their availability. These were duly communicated to the students, faculty members and non-teaching staff.

3. Administrative Strategies were developed to meet the challenges during lockdown so that Financial and Administrative work flow remains smooth.

### *Evidence of Success*

- a. *Effective Second-Best Pedagogy and Timely Course Completion:* The teaching – Learning process of Courses were completed well in time. Online interaction successfully replaced the Face to Face interaction. Faculty members and students learnt to advance the teaching-learning process through online mode on diverse platforms. WhatsApp groups became live forums of discussion and problem solving. Google forms, Google class room, MS Teams, Google Meet and etc. were used as platforms for class discussions, conducting webinars and other activities. Assessments were carried out to the satisfaction of Faculty Members as well as students.
- b. *Mentoring Services well-utilized:* A number of students availed the *Mentoring* services to get over their disturbed psychological mind-sets. In fact, the effort played instrumental role in handling even the red-flag cases appropriately.
- c. *Effective Governance Strategies:* On Administrative and Governance front payment of salaries, contractual, payments, updating of account books, liaison with regulatory and rating bodies, maintenance, security and cleanliness of the campus and its gardens continued unhindered. Bottlenecks and hiccups, if they arose, were addressed on a case-to-case basis, as per requirement.

The problem though appeared to be of gargantuan proportions initially; however, proved only ephemeral. The College demonstrated phoenix like resilience and adapted to the new situation with great aplomb, ensuring continuity of operations at the College, and well-being of Faculty Members, Students and staff by re-orienting methods, processes and strategies across diverse domains, primarily including the following:

1. Management of Teaching-Learning during lockdown
2. Psychological and emotional well-being during lockdown through mentoring and addressing student queries, along with the designated *days* and *timings* of their availability
3. Administrative Strategies during lockdown

### **1. Management of Teaching-Learning during the Lockdown:**

Anticipating the forthcoming crisis, a Staff Council meeting was convened for strategizing

how best the process of teaching learning would continue during lockdown. It was decided in the meeting that Faculty, in addition to providing E-Resources through the institutional website, would explore and adopt other methods such as taking online classes through Google or Zoom apps, create class/subject wise WhatsApp groups to address the specific needs of the students. In addition to being available during their stipulated academic hours, faculty members ensured teaching-learning by adopting multi-modal channels to deliver the curriculum to the students. Consequently, a mail was sent to students (with Faculty on copy) informing them of the modalities for accessing E- Resources through the Institutional website.

Students from North eastern part of the country were facing difficulty in accessing reading material and books. The College took it upon itself to make the study material available to them to address this problem.

Additionally, two separate *Google Surveys* were conducted (one each for Faculty and Students) enquiring participation, perception, effectiveness, and satisfaction due to paradigm shift in teaching learning modalities because of lockdown.

- i. *Faculty Survey Findings*: Findings indicated that most *Faculty members* were adopting multiple mediums of teaching learning, with the most preferred channel being uploading of E-content (presentations, study materials, notes, question banks, assignments), followed by instant messaging (WhatsApp, Telegram), and online platforms/classes (Zoom/Hangouts). On their perception towards student participation, it was found that about 35% of the times, it was higher than 80%. Further, about 60% of the faculty was satisfied with the current modes of teaching learning continuity process during COVID times while about 35% felt somewhat satisfied. 5% of Faculty was though not satisfied with the system of Online Teaching. Common faculty issues included lack of internet connectivity; inherent nature of the subject taught which necessitated „chalk and talk“ classroom teaching style; inadequate student response rate; and lack of access by students to online facilities.
- ii. *Student Survey Findings*: Based on Students Survey, findings indicated that students too preferred a multi-modal approach for learning. Amongst the most preferred medium was online classes (51%), followed by instant messaging platforms (24%) and E-Resources (19%). In addition, about 86% of the students had gone through the online resources provided by faculty members. Further, while about 80% of students faced no issues, remaining 20% faced issues, amongst which the most important concern pertained to network connectivity, especially for those living in rural areas or far-off places.

Further, **Students Society activities** continued, though the platforms had switched to Virtual Space. Though the spirit of Physical interactions had dampened, nonetheless, on account of blurring (if not complete disappearing) of geographical boundaries, our students were able to attract several speakers spread across geography.

## **2. Psychological and Emotional Well-being during Lockdown:**

The College proactively took steps prior to and during the current COVID-19 situation towards commitment of emotional and psychological well-being of its stakeholders, especially the students. For understandable reasons students were not too comfortable in the new scenario of uncertainty and ambiguity.

## **3. Administrative Strategies during Lockdown:**

Necessary adaptations were made to carry out regular and routine college administrative work, despite work from home scenario, and sometimes even Lockdown.

- i. *Routine Office Tasks:* Principal, Office of the Principal, PRO, and Accounts office continued to handle routine matters and also communication with students, Faculty Members, the University and the UGC. Computer Centre (CC) too took over the additional burden of uploading E Resources competently by cobbling up the layers of administrative levels and routines.
- ii. *Security and Safety:* For managing security, security guards continued to be on duty.
- iii. Guards, were granted in-house services of staying within campus during lockdown and provided necessary logistic support.
- iv. *Cleanliness of Premises:* For cleanliness of premises, including watering of plants and garbage disposal, minimal staff was asked to report for duty while maintaining necessary protocols.
- v. *Official Passes for Commuting during Lockdown:* Permission was sought for 20 Employees, including the Principal, PRO and office staff.
- vi. *Principal-Student Instant Connectivity:* WhatsApp Groups were created wherein the Members were the Principal and various Year-wise and Subject-wise Class Representatives. Correspondingly, six such Groups existed, three each for Commerce and Economics stream.

### **1. Title of the Best Practice**

Engaging Students in Quality Enhancement Processes

### **2. The Context**

Higher Education Institutions in India has been playing a crucial role in evolving the knowledge communities and societies dedicated to the advancement of knowledge education system. To this end, the participation of all stakeholders including the involvement of students'

participation in the Institutional quality enhancement processes is important. Students' participation in quality enhancement, at St. Joseph's College of Commerce, is an ongoing and continual practice. Students' participation becomes inevitable in the process quality enhancement in higher education due to below listed reasons:

- Students are seen as qualified human resources who will participate and contribute to the overall growth and development of business and industry. They are the major forces who would continuously strive to develop the frontiers of knowledge. Students' participation in the quality enhancement is viewed as an opportunity where they can participate in its continual development process. This also generates a sense of belongingness towards the Institution and a sense of responsibility for maintaining and protecting the performance excellence of the establishment.
- Teaching is the core area of an educational sector. In an educational institution efficient handling of the teaching-learning practices enable a conducive to meaningfully engage the student voice. Student-friendly teaching learning environment can be created to foster a better learning among students.

### **3. Objectives of the Practice**

Objectives of this practice are

- To develop the institutional culture to engage students and strengthen the student- teacher relationship further.
- To help revisit the 'old paradigm of student-teacher relationship in the wake of changing nature of education across the globe' (V S Prasad, 2007).
- To help teachers benefit from the student feedback and evaluation on teaching methodology and classroom learning process.
- To help the institution in getting the students' insight on key institutional – academic and administrative – aspects.
- To identify any deficiencies in the academic and physical infrastructure and in student services from the perspective of the students can be gained for the purpose of quality enhancement and development.
- To strengthen the student-teacher synergy in the process of quality enhancement in higher education.

### **4. The Practice**

- The Internal Quality Assessment Cell (IQAC) of SPEC from time to time organises student participation programmes.
- Student Council / Governing Body are consulted on various matters of student welfare and other policy matters.

- SPEC Alumni representatives are a part of Board of Studies.
- Events such as Open House for students and also exclusively for Girl Students is organized.

#### **5. Advantages**

- This practice has enabled SJCC in adopting a Student-Centric approach not only in learning process but also in institutional quality enhancement.
- It has created a platform for students to share their ideas and views.
- Students' involvement has brought about newer and dynamic ideas into quality enhancement of higher education.
- Teachers, by way of this practice, stand to gain in terms of much valuable feedback from the students on quality enhancement in classroom teaching and innovative practices in teaching.
- This practice has enabled the institution to offer programs and courses that are well accepted. Also, has help create a student-centric environment in the institution.

#### **6. Challenges**

The challenges to adoption and implementation of this practice are in the form of understanding and definition of quality among the students. Students come with varied interests and understanding on quality in academic and administrative practices making it difficult to arrive at a consensus on quality standards. A certain amount of rigidity exists in the classroom teaching and examination processes and students perception of these aspects may act as alimitation in adopting some suggestions.

#### **7. Evidences of Success**

It has been observed that the students have shown keen interest in understanding the quality initiatives of the college. Many of the students have willingly participated in such activities which have given them an opportunity to envision actions embossed with quality. Regular feedback has enabled the institution to add value to the existing academic and administrative practices and make it student –centric.

#### **8. Resources Required**

Resources would be required in terms of time spent on these exercises. A comprehensive and updated list of alumni profiles tracking their career growth is also an essential resource. This would help the institution invite those that may be instrumental in giving important inputs in the process of quality enhancement. A comprehensive feedback system where students can voice their concerns and rate various academic and administrative aspects of the institution is another requirement for earmarking areas for quality improvement. The ERP tool KnowledgePro was

integrated with this feedback system making it less time consuming and automated in feedback collection, processing and analysis of results.