

MINUTES
of the
THIRTY SIXTH MEETING
of the
ACADEMIC COUNCIL
held on
October 23, 2006



INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110 068

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MINUTES OF THE THIRTY SIXTH MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2006 AT 11.00 A.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, BLOCK-8, IGNOU CAMPUS, MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI – 110 068.

The list of members present and those who could not attend the meeting is given in **Appendix-1**.

At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the members to the 36th meeting of the Academic Council and offered his greetings for Deepawali and Id-ul-Fitr. He also stated that he was very happy to have the meeting of the Academic Council of the University as his very first official engagement in the University. He observed that the Indira Gandhi National Open University had provided yeoman services to the society by imparting higher education through distance mode and reaching the un-reached. It is a great honour to be the Vice-Chancellor of this premier institution. He further observed that the teachers and academics are the backbone of every institution and that he looked forward to their full co-operation in achieving its goal, development and new heights in the area of higher education. Before starting the formal proceedings, Prof. S.C.Garg, former Pro Vice-Chancellor, welcomed the Vice-Chancellor and assured him full co-operation for steps towards further growth of the University. Following this, Prof. B.S.Saraswat, the Member-Secretary, observed that Prof. V.N.R.Pillai is a distinguished scholar of chemical sciences and is an elected fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Bangalore. In addition, Prof. Pillai had held positions in the field of academic administration such as the Vice-Chancellor of M.G. University, Kottayam, Director, NAAC, Vice-Chairman and Acting Chairman, University Grants Commission, apart from serving on many high powered Committees. The University had been greatly honoured by his appointment as the Vice-Chancellor.

The Member- Secretary then presented the items on the agenda. The decisions concerned are recorded below:

ITEM NO.1 To confirm the Minutes of the 35th meeting of the Academic Council held on May 15, 2006, and to note the action taken thereon.

AC 36.1.1 The Member-Secretary informed the members that the Minutes of the 35th meeting of the Academic Council held on May 15, 2006 were circulated to the members. The following comments were received:

1. Dr. C.K.Ghosh, Director, RSD

- (i) Recording of the number of study centres under RC-Port-Blair as four instead of five on Page 2.

AC 36.1.2 The Academic Council decided that the number of study centres be corrected to five.

- (ii) The observation on Item no. 10, regarding the proposed rates for theory counseling for a two hour session in the Phase-3 Form for B.Tech. in Mechanical Engineering (Computer Integrated Manufacturing). The Director, RSD, informed that a Committee constituted for the purpose of revision of payment norms for theory/practical counseling across the disciplines and also for different activities undertaken by the University had proposed such changes and the same have not yet been approved by the Competent Authority. Thus, approval of Payment Norms of theory counseling for Engineering Programmes in isolation will create operational problems. However, Prof. Gayatri Kansal, Director, SOET informed the Council that while proposing the rates, the matter was discussed with Director, RSD, and since it was a new programme no rates for counseling were available at that stage. Hence, the rates proposed by the School of Engg. & Technology in Phase-3 Form were approved by the Academic Council, and there is no discrepancy in the recording of the Minutes.

AC 36.1.3

The Council decided that the counseling rates for B.Tech. Mechanical Engineering approved by the Academic Council, along with the recommendations of the Committee constituted for revision of payment norms for theory and practical counseling across disciplines and also for different activities undertaken by the University, may be placed before the Finance Committee for approval. However, till such time the recommendations are approved by the Finance Committee, the old payment norms would continue.

2. Prof. Gayatri Kansal, Director, SOET on Item No. AC.35.16.2.

“The Academic Council approved the Phase-3 Form (Appendix-14) for the revised programme structure of B.Tech. Civil (Construction Management)”

instead it should be read as under:

“The Academic Council considered and approved the Phase-3 Form for B.Tech. Civil (Construction Management) (Appendix-14), along with the Payment Norms for Counsellors”.

AC 36.1.4

The Council accepted the proposed modifications in the Minutes. However, till such time the recommendations of the Committee are approved by the Finance Committee, the old payment norms will continue.

3. Prof. Parvin Sinclair, Director, SOS, on Item No. AC 35.6.2:

Prof. Parvin Sinclair had pointed out that the following sentence may be added to AC 35.6.2:

“The Council also recommended that the time taken to complete PGDRD and MA (RD) would be reduced depending upon the amount of Credit Transfer”.

AC 36.1.5

The Council accepted the proposed modifications.

4. Prof. Santosh Panda, Director, STRIDE

The observations made by Prof. Santosh Panda, Director, STRIDE on Item no. 3 were placed before the Academic Council.

AC 36.1.6

The Chairman observed that the issue required careful examination and would be looked into, which was agreed to.

5. Dr. Srikant Mohapatra, Director, SRE &D

The following observations have been made by the Registrar, Students Registration and Evaluation Division (SRE&D) on Items no. 5 and 7, respectively:

Item No. 5

- (i) The Sub-Committee appointed by the Academic Council's Standing Committee (ACSC) at its 16th meeting held on 19.09.2005, pertaining to '**Credit Transfer**' from the MCA pre-revised syllabus to the **MCA revised syllabus**, seems to have not considered the suggestion put forth by SRED on the '**draft**' minutes, regarding **remittance of the 2nd year fee** to facilitate the students for **simultaneous registration of 1st & 3rd semesters** and **2nd & 4th semesters**.
- (ii) Apart from the Programme fee indicated at (i) above, the credit transfer fee as per rules of the University, i.e. **@Rs.100/- per course**, be payable by the students.
- (iii) Since a maximum of **52 credits** of credit transfer is envisaged in the scheme, it may be possible that a student may be able to complete the **MCA revised** programme in **1½ year duration** at the earliest, i.e. before the expiry of the minimum duration of 3 years. A similar decision has been taken by the Academic Council while considering the case of '**credit transfer**' from **BCA old syllabus to BCA revised syllabus (AC 35.13.2)**.

The Member-Secretary clarified that the issues raised by the Registrar, SR&ED were not part of the recommendations of the sub-committee, which were approved by the Academic Council. Therefore, there is no discrepancy in the recording of the Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council. These can, at best, be treated as matters arising out of the Minutes.

As the then Vice-Chancellor had approved the action to be taken in the matter, the Academic Council may ratify the action taken by the Vice-Chancellor.

AC 36.1.7 The Academic Council ratified the action taken by the Vice-Chancellor in the matter related to credit transfer from the MCA (old syllabus) to the MCA (revised syllabus) programmes.

Item no. 7

The date '17.04.2005' in Line 13 of Page 9 of the minutes be replaced with '17.04.2006', as indicated rightly in the agenda note.

Similarly, the words 'credit transfer' in Line 14 of Page 9 may be replaced with the words 'change of course'.

AC 36.1.8 The Council agreed to correct the date from 17.4.2005 to 17.4.2006.

AC 36.1.9 The Academic Council confirmed the Minutes (**Annexure-1 without appendices**) of the 35th Meeting with the modifications above, and noted the action taken thereon.

ITEM NO.2 **To consider co-option of Members under Clause (1) (viii) of Statute 9.**

AC 36.2.1 The Member-Secretary informed the Council that the term of members co-opted by the Academic Council under Statute 9 (1) (viii) will be expiring on 11.12.2006. He informed them that as per the practice the members of the Academic Council suggest the names for co-option from different areas to the Chairman. Thereafter the Chairman co-opts the member(s) on behalf of the Academic Council, and the same are reported to the Academic Council for ratification.

AC 36.2.2 The Vice-Chancellor requested the members to suggest names of persons (with their curriculum vitae) within 10 days for consideration of co-option by the Academic Council. The members authorized the Chairman to co-opt the new members on behalf of the Academic Council and report the same for ratification at the next meeting of the Academic Council as per the past practice.

ITEM NO. 3 To consider and approve the Minutes of the 19th Meeting of the Academic Council's Standing Committee held on June 19, 2006.

AC 36.3.1 The Member-Secretary informed the Council that the 19th Meeting of the Academic Council's Standing Committee was held on 19.6.2006, and the minutes of the meeting had been placed before the members. The ACSC considered and approved the following major items:

1. Credit Transfer Scheme for BLIS and MLIS (Old Programmes) to BLIS and MLIS (New Programmes), respectively.
2. Payment Norms, Counseling Schedule and Rate of Remuneration for Course Writers for the practical activities of M.Sc. (DFSM).
3. Conversion of GPA to Percentage across the programmes of the University.
4. Weightage granted for courses in pre-revised and revised B.A./B.Com courses.
5. Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Equivalence Committee.
6. Revised evaluation methodology for CPE and DPE Programmes.
7. Award of MBA degree with specialization streams.

AC 36.3.2 The Academic Council considered and approved the Minutes of the 19th Meeting (**Annexure-2 without appendices**) of the Academic Council's Standing Committee, incorporating the changes approved in the 20th meeting of the ACSC.

ITEM NO. 4 To consider and approve the Minutes of the 20th Meeting of the Academic Council's Standing Committee held on August 10, 2006.

AC 36.4.1 The Member-Secretary informed the members that the 20th meeting of the Academic Council's Standing Committee was held on August 10, 2006, and the minutes of the meeting had been placed before the members. The ACSC considered and approved the following major items:

1. Phase-3 Forms for PG Certificate in Sericulture, Diploma in Production of Value Added Products from Cereals, Pulses and Oilseeds, Advanced Diploma in Nautical Science and Advanced Certificate in Power Distribution Management.

2. Fixing of maximum duration for Management Programmes.
3. Recommendations of the Sub-Committee constituted to look into the Phase Zero Form for the Certificate Programme in Information Technology.
4. Nomenclature of Degrees of BTM and BTWRE Programmes.
5. Semester wise collection of fees in BCA and MCA programmes.
6. Ratification of the action taken by the Vice-Chancellor for withdrawal of “MHI-07: Religious Thought and Belief in India” offered as an elective course in M.A. Programme.

AC 36.4.2 Prof. Pardeep Sahni, Director, SOSS, pointed out that while ratifying the action taken by the Vice-Chancellor for withdrawal of the course “MHI-07: Religious Thought and Belief in India”, no mention had been made of the date when the Term-End Examination of MHI-07 course be held by the University. It was pointed out that a separate agenda item dealing with the whole issue had been placed before the Council and an appropriate decision would be taken in the matter.

AC 36.4.3 The Academic Council approved the Minutes of the 20th Meeting (**Annexure-3 without appendices**) of the Academic Council’s Standing Committee.

ITEM NO. 5 **To consider and approve the Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the Academic Council's Standing Committee held on October 18, 2006.**

AC 36.5.1 The Member-Secretary informed the members that due to shortage of time it had not been possible to finalize and table the minutes of the 21st meeting of the ACSC, held on 18.10.2006, for consideration of the Academic Council. He proposed that the item may, therefore, be deferred.

AC 36.5.2 The Academic Council deferred the item.

ITEM NO.6 To consider the Award of *D.Litt/D.Sc (Honoris Causa)* at the 18th Convocation of the University.

AC 36.6.1 The Member-Secretary informed the members that, as per the Section 5 (iv) of the Act of the University, the University may confer Honorary Degrees or other distinctions in the manner laid down by the Statutes. The Statute 22 on Conferment of *Honorary Degrees* envisages that “**All proposals for the conferment of Honorary Degrees shall be initiated by the Vice-Chancellor who, after consultation with the Academic Council and the Board of Management, shall submit the same to the Visitor for confirmation**”.

He further informed that the University had received a communication from a Partner Institution in Saudi Arabia regarding award of *Honorary Degree* to the Minister of Higher Education, Saudi Arabia.

AC 36.6.2 The Academic Council was of the view that it may require more names for consideration for the award of *D.Litt/D.Sc. (Honoris Causa)* at the 18th Convocation of the University, and hence, the item was deferred.

ITEM NO.7 To consider the matters relating to MHI-07, an Elective Course in the Master of Arts Degree Programme.

AC 36.7.1 Prof Pardeep Sahni, Director, SOSS was requested to present the item. He informed the members that on October 03, 2006 a Notice of Visitorial Inquiry, under Section 8 (2) of the IGNOU Act, 1985, in the matter of some objectionable portions contained in the study material of M.A.(History) programme, had been received vide MHRD’s letter no. F.No. 13-23/2006-DL, dated September 29, 2006. The University is required to submit an explanation to the Hon’ble Visitor why such an inquiry should not be held and furnish clarifications, if any, within a period of one month. He submitted a para-wise response as given below:

1. In Paragraph 2 of the letter, a reference has been made to some objectionable portions in the study material of MA History course, ‘*Religious Thought & Belief in India*’. It is assumed that this is with

particular reference to the following:

- (i) Block 3, Unit 11, p. 22 in both Hindi and English: "...deity is not without ambiguity – he creates heretics [*Sandigdha Charitra* in Hindi].
- (ii) Block 3, Unit 12, p. 27 in both Hindi and English: "His [Lord Krishna's] advice is not just shrewd, it sometimes seems unscrupulous."
- (iii) Block 3, Unit 12, p. 29 in both English and Hindi: References to Lord Shiva's association with "sexual desire", Lord Shiva as the "provocatively naked holy man who attempts to seduce the wives of sages and the god who made love to his wife for a thousand years."
- (iv) Block 3, Unit 12, p. 29 in both English & Hindi: Reference to conflict between Lord Shiva and Ganesha.
- (v) Block 3, Unit 12, pp. 31-2 in English and 32 in Hindi: References to Goddess Durga's taste for alcohol and to her male opponents being enamoured of her.
- (vi) Block 3, Unit 12, p. 34 in both English & Hindi: Descriptions of *Shivling* and *yonis*.
- (vii) Block 5, Unit 19, p. 19 in both English & Hindi: A poem by Ramprasad Sen referring to Goddess Kali's nudity.

It is worth mentioning that the course 'Religious Thought & Belief in India' was developed for our learners at the PG level, who otherwise are mature and have capability to critically analyze the treatment dispassionately. This course was developed with the following objectives:

- to trace the evolution of religious thoughts and institutions in India, through the centuries,
- to spell out the distinctive features of all the major religious traditions in India,
- to demonstrate the common features among the major religious traditions in India, by focusing on the composite and syncretic areas,
- to establish the linkages between rituals and philosophy and to trace the philosophical roots of many existing religious rituals today, and
- to establish the relationship between the religious traditions as codified in the texts, and religious practices and observances on the ground; in other words to highlight the similarities and differences between the 'text view' and the 'field view' of different religious traditions.

It may be pointed out that no historian has till date raised any objection to the material of 'Religious Thought and Belief in India' developed by IGNOU. It is also submitted that such a course requires scholarly treatment and there is always scope for different interpretations. For the portions referred to in points (i) to (vii) above, the material has been developed on the basis of the writings of established scholars. This is amply reflected through the references point wise quoted below:

- (i) & (ii) References of this kind are not very unusual in scholarly treatment of religious traditions. For instance, leading philosopher B.K. Matilal writes in his article "Krishna: In Defence of a Devious Divinity" : "He [Krishna] was the supreme manipulator, who did not shoot a single arrow or use a single weapon to kill anyone but all the main characters were killed by his superior strategy through behind the door manipulation." (Jonardon Ganeri (ed.), *The Collected Essays of Bimal Krishna Matilal, Vol. 2, Ethics and Epics*, Oxford, 2002, p. 93.).
- (iii) & (iv) Again references like these are fairly common in standard academic and semi-academic works. Wendy Doniger, in her pioneering work *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva* (Oxford, 1975) has a whole section on "Siva, the False Ascetic, Seducer of Sages' Wives" (Chapter VI: Siva in the Pine Forest) in which there are references to Shiva seducing the Sages' wives. She has based her study on a reading of the Puranas (Skanda Purana and Padma Purana among others) as well as other classics all of which are mentioned in the endnotes and the bibliography. *The Skanda Purana* (Part I, Chapter Six, translated and annotated by Dr. G.V. Tagare, published by Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, pp. 42-44) also has references to this effect. Nirad C. Chaudhuri's famous *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By* (New Delhi, 1979) has references from Kalidas's *Kumar Sambhava* in which the sexual relationship of Shiva and Parvati is described in detail (Chapter on Some Special Features of Hinduism, pp. 223-44. *Brahmavaivarta Purana* too makes a reference to Shiva having made love to Paravati for a thousand years.
- (v) Goddesses Durga and Kali: These references are available in *Markandeya Purana* (Canto LXXXV: Devi-mahatmya) translated by F. Eden Pargiter, BA and published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. See specially nos. 42-56, 67-70, and Canto LXXXVII, nos. 4-7 and 18. No. 18 says: "There sat Kali, who was roaring

frightfully, laughed terribly with excessive fury, showing the gleam of her unsightly teeth within her dreadful mouth.” (18, Devi-mahatmya, Canto LXXXVII, *Markandeya Purana*). For examples of her male opponents being enamoured of her, see nos. 42-56 of Canto LXXXV; for the response of the goddess nos. 67-70. Also see Sukumari Bhattacharji, *The Indian Theogony: A Comparative Study of Indian Mythology from the Vedas to the Puranas*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 166-68 for a reinforcement of the same argument.

- (vi) These references are specifically in relation to the types of images and iconography that developed as part of the Puranic tradition. These aspects of the Puranic tradition (temples, pilgrimage and special centres of pilgrimage, the images and iconography within the temples) have continued through centuries and still constitute an important part of Hinduism as lived and practised today. The Shivling is an inseparable part of Shiva temples and this section of the Unit (12.5) traces its roots to the Puranic tradition.

After receiving Block-3 from the course writer and completing the in-house editing, Prof. Kunal Chakraborty whom we had initially requested to write this Block was consulted. Prof. Chakraborty is considered an authority in this specialized area of historical studies. He went through the entire Block and gave his valuable suggestions. Subsequently after the in-house language editing the Block was sent to the press for printing.

- (vii) Ramprasad Sen is a famous 18th Century Bengali poet who considered himself a great devotee of Goddess Kali. References to him have also been made by Nirad C. Choudhari in his classic *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By* (pp. 246-47. This intimate and personal manner of addressing the deity may superficially seem irreverential and therefore offensive, but is very much a part of Bhakti tradition. In this tradition the deity is not seen as something distant, transcendental and external but very close to the devotee and very much a part of his world. Devotees then complain to the deity as they would to their own mother and speak to the deity with love and affection rather than distant reverence.

2. With regard to paragraph 3 of the letter, whether there is any laid down procedure in IGNOU for preparation of course material and its approval etc., it is submitted that IGNOU follows a very

rigorous process of material development as laid down in its Act and Statutes. The various steps are sequenced below:

- (i) Brainstorming Session between in-house faculty and external experts to conceive a programme.
- (ii) Need assessment survey, wherever required, in collaboration with Planning & Development Division.
- (iii) Development of a concept paper through discussion in IGNOU in-house faculty and approval by the School Board. (Statute 10 A (4) (ii).
- (iv) Discussion of concept paper in Academic Programme Committee, a Standing Committee of the Planning Board of IGNOU for approval.
- (v) Development of detailed syllabus in consultation with Expert Committee. It is processed for approval by the School Board and Academic Counsel. (required under Statute 10A (4) (iii) (iv) and 9A (a).
- (vi) Identification of course writers by the faculty with the help of expert committee. Approval of the course writers by the VC, on the recommendations of the School Board.
- (vii) Orientation of course writers by the faculty, if necessary.
- (viii) Coordination for material development by course teams comprising outside subject experts as well as in-house faculty. (10A (4) (viii) & (ix).
- (ix) Writing the materials by in-house as well as outside experts.
- (x) Transformation of material received from outside experts in self-instructional format by in-house faculty.
- (xi) Content and language editing, which are done jointly by the in-house faculty and outside experts.
- (xii) Identification and preparation of art work and work related to final preparation of manuscript and printing through identified printers.
- (xiii) Translation/vetting in Hindi and regional languages by the outside experts. In case of faculty from non-Hindi speaking states, the University provides outside experts or consultants to vet the materials.

In view of small core faculty and diverse expertise required, the University, since inception has practiced the collaborative developmental model wherein experts from all over the country provide academic inputs on best practices and a vast pool of wisdom as course writers, editors, etc. This has enabled the University to emerge as the leading institution in the world of Open and Distance Learning. Our association with peers in the conventional system helps us to have confidence in the correctness of content. We have been able to build

rich experiences in our materials from very acknowledge experts. This also helps to ensure authenticity of facts, quality of material and their suitability for the learners. This essentially implies that the responsibility of the correctness of materials is of the course writers and editor, wherever appointed.

The course under discussion *MHI-07: Religious Thought and Belief in India* was developed by the faculty of History as part of the M.A. in History in accordance with the laid down procedures and practices. The list of courses to be developed emerged from workshop organized for M.A. programme in March, 1999. Approval for Expert Committee and names of experts was accorded by Prof. V.S. Prasad (**Annexure-4**), the then Vice-Chancellor (Actg.) in 2001, on the recommendations of Director, School of Social Sciences (SOSS). The Expert Committee for the course MHI-07 consisted of distinguished scholars (list of expert committee members enclosed in **Annexure-5**). The Expert Committee in its meeting held on 27th February, 2001 suggested the syllabi. The units were assigned but a few course writers could not meet their commitment and declined the offer. The new names of course writers proposed by the Course Coordinator were approved by the Director (SOSS). When the English version was fully developed, translators and vettors were approved by Director (SOSS). It may be mentioned here that the responsibility of editing the course was taken by in-house faculty, though he ensured that the material in Unit 12 was vetted by a senior Professor of JNU.

The Course structure as suggested by the Expert Committee was presented to School Board in its 27th Meeting held in April 2001. The names of resource persons to develop this course were also approved by the same School Board. (**Annexure-6**) for the powers of the School Board in development of course material).

The course structure was approved by the Academic Council in its 26th Meeting held in September 3, 2001. The Academic Council as per clause 9(a) is empowered “to exercise general supervision over the academic policies of the University and to give directions regarding methods of instruction, evaluation or research or improvement in academic standards.”

The Course coordinator approached the new experts and scholars, whose names were approved by Director (SOSS) to write remaining units. The Units received from the outside experts were edited from the content, format and language point of view by the course team

(Coordinator and other faculty members). Once this task was accomplished, the material was sent for printing (2003).

After the English version was finalized the material was sent for Hindi translators. The translation was done by one of the senior freelance translators who have been translating materials of the School of Social Sciences for more than a decade. The translated material was sent for vetting to a consultant who had a Ph.D. degree in History from JNU and had published in Hindi as well. That is, the effort was to ensure that the consultant was good in subject and sound in language. After this the Hindi version of the course was also printed (2004-05).

Launch of Course

The Academic Programmes Committee of the Planning Board in its meeting held in February 2004 approved the launch of the M.A. Programme in History in July 2004. The course MHI-07 was part of the course offering of 1st year of the Master's Programme. (A chronological sequence of the development of the course is given in **Annexure-7**).

The above discussion makes it clear that the University has well laid down procedures for the development of its course materials. There is academic supervision by various statutory (School Board, Planning Board and Academic Council) and academic units like Discipline Group and Course Teams.

There are administrative supervision and checks through the Director of the School.

The procedures have proved quite effective in ensuring standards and academic excellence. It is submitted that the University's course material (which number around 1100 courses and around 5000 Blocks) have received wide acclaim and approval from scholars, teachers, and professionals from a large number of national and international organizations. Our course material is in great demand from students of other universities. We would like to place on record that the courses on history are one of the largest selling materials. This is a testimony of its quality. The faculty of History has produced more than 300 blocks in English and Hindi for its Bachelor's and Master's degrees. It may be mentioned here that in spite of History being in public gaze, there has been general praise of its materials from the scholars and teachers of History.

It may also be submitted that so far no historian has questioned the authenticity of the so-called “objectionable material”. Even in the Hon’ble High Court of Delhi where a PIL was filed to this effect the petitioner could not produce evidence to support his argument when directed by the Court and withdrew the case on the next hearing (**Annexure-8**). Even a revision petition was dismissed on 19.10.2006 by the bench of two Hon’ble judges, presided over by Acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court. It is indicative of the quality and authenticity of our materials.

The University is proactive to the needs and views of its learners. As soon as it was pointed out by one of our students (April 2006) that he felt offended by ‘some’ expressions, the faculty took immediate note (April 10, 2006) and decided to undertake necessary editing before the materials were sent to new students. The student was accordingly informed vide letter dated 2.5.2006 (copy enclosed as **Annexure-9**). After three months, the issue was politicized and the matter was raised in the media (18th July 2006) and the Parliament. Though there was not intention to hurt religious sentiments of any one, yet to assuage the feelings, on 19th July, 2006 itself, the University decided to withdraw the course and get a comprehensive review done by a committee of seven eminent historians. A press release was also issued to this effect and was well received by the general public. The Review Committee comprises of the following:

- Prof. Bhairavi P.Sahu, Head, Department of History, University of Delhi
- Prof. David Syiemlieh, Professor of History, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong
- Prof. Dilbagh Singh, Centre for Historical studies, JNU, New Delhi
- Prof. Kesavan Veluthat, Professor of History, Mangalore University, Mangalore
- Prof. R.A.Khan, Formerly Professor of History, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
- Prof. S.P.Gupta, Formerly Professor of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Professor Emeritus, UGC, New Delhi
- Prof. T.K.Mathur, Department of History, MD University, Ajmer
- Prof. Pardeep Sahni, Director, SOSS, IGNOU (Convenor)

The Committee has submitted its report (**Annexure-10**). All information asked for by MHRD was sent by the University from time to time. Besides, the Hon’ble Minister, MHRD and Hon’ble Minister of State were briefed before the calling attention motion and questions

were to be taken up in the Parliament. We understand that on the basis of this information, questions were answered both in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha by Hon'ble Minister.

3. In view of the above explanation it is submitted that the Visitorial enquiry is not warranted in view of the following:
 1. The material is based on well-documented literature.
 2. Well laid down procedures of the University for preparation of course material and its approval have been followed.

It may be pertinent to mention here that this issue was placed before the School Board, School of Social Sciences, in its 39th Meeting held on October 13, 2006. It resolved as under:

- (i) While it is important to be sensitive to the societal concerns, the academic profession too demands adherence to the methods and principles developed and practised professionally.
- (ii) The University already has in place a corrective mechanism and the objectionable material has already been subjected to this mechanism.
- iii) The sources in history like in all social science disciplines provide divergent views, interpretations and methodological treatment on the same subject. Therefore, there does always exist the possibility that such views be at variance. However, the Faculty should assess the impact of sensitive statements in a pluralist society.
- iv) The University has already withdrawn the course as some portions inadvertently contained in the course material were considered objectionable by a cross section of people. However, the Faculty in its reply should place on record the academic argument that the text has been developed by the author on the basis of writings of eminent historians and scholars.
- v) The University has already taken the initiative of constituting a Review Committee comprising seven eminent historians to review the entire course and the review work is under progress.
- vi) There was no intention at all to hurt the feelings of any religious segments and deciding the quantum of responsibility of each individual involved in the preparation of the said study material would cause long term harm to the ethos of collaboration practiced successfully by the University and demoralize the faculty.

- vii) The course development is an academic exercise involving approval of the course structure by an Expert Committee, School Board, Academic Council etc., comprising eminent experts and is undertaken on the basis of laid down procedures.
- viii) Since the material is based on well-documented literature, it does not warrant any Visitorial Inquiry.

In view of the above, it is submitted that any Visitorial Inquiry on issues of academic nature pertaining to the contents of a course will demoralize the Faculty, as highlighted by the School Board since built-in mechanism and procedures are available within the University to correct any aberration. IGNOU has a policy to involve teachers, experts and scholars from other universities and institutions in course development. Eminent resource persons are open to academic scrutiny but they definitely may not like their works to be subjected to administrative scrutiny. As a result, the University may not receive their generous help and co-operation. It may have long term adverse repercussions for over all course development process and hard earned reputation of IGNOU. The School Board and the Academic Council, the highest statutory academic bodies of the University be allowed to look into these matters and resolve them as per laid down provisions in the Act and Statutes. As already submitted that study material of IGNOU has been rated highly by peers and scholars and a Visitorial Inquiry which is provided for administrative and financial matters, may not serve useful academic purpose and compromise academic autonomy of the University. We have grown and gained in stature through adherence to these laid down procedures.

Since the University has already withdrawn the course and ordered a review by eminent scholars of History. The whole issue may be allowed to be resolved in the academic interest of the learners at the University level. It is submitted that the explanation and submissions are to the satisfaction of the Hon'ble Visitor. It is, therefore, requested that the Hon'ble Visitor may like to kindly treat the issue as closed.

AC 36.7.2

The Academic Council considered the matter in detail and approved the explanation offered by the School of Social Sciences based on the recommendations made by the School Board. The Academic Council

further directed that:

- i) non-recurrence of such inadvertent omissions be ensured;
- ii) the editorial changes indicated by the review committee be incorporated expeditiously and the revised material be sent to all the learners enrolled in the course before its withdrawal;
- iii) term-end examination of the course be held in June, 2007 for the learners already enrolled in the course, not in December 2006.

ITEM NO. 8 **To consider Grade ‘D’ in TEE/assignments and an overall average ‘C’ grade, to complete the course of CEMBA/CEMPA Programme.**

AC 36.8.1 The Member-Secretary informed the Council that the evaluation methodology for the CEMBA/CEMPA programmes, provided by the Schools concerned to Student Registration & Evaluation Division is as given below:

“minimum grade required to complete assignments and TE Exam components separately is ‘C’ and overall grade required to complete a course is also ‘C’.

But the Programme Guide of CEMBA/CEMPA (printed in 2004) states that ‘in case a student fails to get ‘D’ Grade in the Term End examination, he/she will be eligible to reappear in the next Term End Examination for the course. In case the student has secured Grade ‘D’ in average of assignments and term end examination of a course, but failed to secure overall qualifying grade ‘C’, he/she has an option either to re-do minimum required number of assignments not exceeding two for a course or re-appear in term end examination”.

This discrepancy between methodology and information printed in the prospectus was brought to the notice of the Schools concerned. The Programme Coordinator(s) recommended that the methodology as per the information provided through the prospectus be followed, and the evaluation methodology be modified accordingly.

AC 36.8.2 Prof. Pardeep Sahni, one of the Programme Coordinators, informed the members that there are few students for this programme as on dates and both the programmes had been closed down for now. He proposed that the University follow the evaluation methodology which was printed in the Programme Guide in 2004 instead of the evaluation methodology approved earlier by the Academic Council to avoid any hardship/litigation by the students concerned. Prof. S.C.Garg also stated

that since the mistake had occurred on the part of the University, it should follow the evaluation methodology which had been conveyed to the students through the Programme Guide.

AC 36.8.3 The Academic Council considered and resolved that the University should follow the same evaluation methodology which had been printed in the Programme Guide for the year 2004 for the students admitted to the programme during the period. Further, while publishing any Programme Guides or other University documents, due care must be taken to avoid recurrence of such mistakes.

ITEM NO.9 To consider and approve the Additional/Optional Course M.A. (English) for the 2001-2002 Batches.

AC 36.9.1 The Member-Secretary informed the members that **MEG-01: British Poetry** was not on offer to the M.A. English Batches of 2001 and 2002 because the course was not ready at that time. In **September/October 2003**, the School of Humanities advised the students that MEG-01 is meant to be a compulsory course for them and that they were to opt for MEG-01 in lieu of any other optional course from the ones they had already selected/successfully completed. The Academic Council's Standing Committee, at its 15th meeting held on 29.6.2005 took a decision that those learners who had thus, completed 9 courses in all were to be given a "Certificate of Completion" for the fifth optional course if they so desired.

The problem now arisen is that of learners with 72 credits worth of courses (an excess of 8 credits). The School Board concerned had submitted the following recommendations for the consideration of the Academic Council:

1. **MEG-01: British Poetry** should be treated as a compulsory course for all learners of Batches 2001 and 2002 that may have already completed the M.A. English Programme, as was decided in the 15th meeting of the Academic Council held on 29.6.2005.
2. **Since MEG-01 is a compulsory course, along with MEG-02, 03, 04 and 05, the marks of all these courses should be reflected in the Grade Card.**
3. In case of learners who may have completed 9 courses (a total of 5 compulsory courses and 4 optional courses), the option to drop an elective course may be exercised by the learners themselves.

In case a learner desires a Certificate of Completion for the extra/additional/optional/9th course of the M.A. English Programme, s/he may be advised to apply for it separately, and a Certificate of Completion may be issued by the University as per University norms.

AC 36.9.2 The Academic Council approved the proposal made by the School, subject to the condition that there will be no change in the degrees already awarded to the students. However, if possible, a mention of the marks scored by a candidate should be made in the revised grade card.

After dealing with the formal agenda, the Academic Council placed on record its appreciation of the contributions made by Prof. H.P.Dikshit, the former Vice-Chancellor and Prof. S.C.Garg, the former Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University, in conducting the proceedings of the Academic Council.

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

(V.N.R. Pillai)
Chairman

Appendix-1

List of Members who attended/could not attend the 36th Meeting of the Academic Council held on Monday, the 23rd October, 2006.

Members who attended the Meeting:

1. Prof. V.N.Rajasekharan Pillai, VC - **Chairman**
2. Prof. S.C.Garg
3. Prof. Pardeep Sahni
4. Prof. N.V.Narasimham
5. Prof. Parvin Sinclair
6. Prof. J.M.Parakh
7. Prof. M.C.Sharma
8. Prof. S.B.Arora
9. Prof. Gayatri Kansal
10. Prof. Anu Aneja
11. Prof. B.S.Hansra
12. Prof. A.S.Narang
13. Prof. Renu Bhardwaj
14. Sh. Shashi Bhushan
15. Dr. T.K.Jena
16. Dr. Anu J.Thomas
17. Shri S.K.Arora
18. Dr. C.K.Ghosh
19. Prof. S.K.Panda
20. Sh. V.K.Arora
21. Dr. S.K.Mohapatra
22. Prof. P.K.Jain
23. Prof. Asghar Wajahat
24. Prof. J.S.Yadav
25. Dr. T.R.Srinivasan
26. Dr. O.P.Dewal
27. Prof. B.S.Saraswat, Director, ACD - **Member-Secretary**

Members who could not attend:

1. Prof. S.M.Paul Khurana
2. Prof. N.R.Madhava Menon
3. Prof. J. Ramachandran
4. Prof. Kuldeep Mathur
5. Prof. Sanjeev Bhargava
6. Dr. Shardindu
7. Sh. G.S.Sahni
8. Prof. Vijayshri
9. Dr. N.Venkateshwarlu
10. Dr. Kamal Vagarecha
11. Dr. Eisha Kannadi

Sh. K.D.Sharma, Section Officer, Academic Coordination Division was present to assist the Member-Secretary.

