

Minutes of the 2020-1/9th Meeting of the Senate held on March 16, 2020 at IISER Berhampur

The meeting (2020-1/9th) of the Senate, IISER Berhampur was held in the Board Room of IISER Berhampur Transit Campus at 11:00 AM on March 16, 2020 and the following members were present:

1. Prof. K V R Chary, Director, Chairperson, Senate
2. Prof. Yogendra Sharma, Deputy Director
3. Prof. Surendra Nath Mishra, Dean, Academic Affairs
4. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Pathak, FIC, Dept. of Chemical Sciences
5. Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee, FIC, Dept. of Physical Sciences
6. Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta, FIC, Dept. of Mathematical Sciences
7. Dr. Rohit Soni, Coordinator, Student Affairs
8. Prof. Radhakrishnan J, TIFR Mumbai (through skype)
9. Brig PC Vyas, Registrar & Secretary, Senate (ex-officio)

The following members could not attend the meeting in view of the movement restriction due to COVID-19 pandemic and were granted leave of absence:

10. Sri B Venu Gopala Reddy, Ex-Visiting Professor, NIBM, Pune
11. Prof. Pasla Dinakar, Associate Professor, IIT Bhubaneswar
12. Prof. Harapriya Mohapatra, NISER Bhubaneswar
13. Prof. Bedangadas Mohanty, NISER Bhubaneswar
14. Prof. Chebrolu Pulla Rao, IIT Tirupati
15. Prof. Achanta Venugopal, TIFR Mumbai
16. Prof. Saroj Kumar Nayak, IIT Bhubaneswar
17. Prof. Srinivas V, TIFR Mumbai
18. Dr. Bodhisatta Nandy, FIC, Dept. of Biological Sciences
19. Dr. Md. Nasim, Asst. Professor, Warden, Boys' Hostel

Special Invitees:

1. Dr. Thirupathi Barla, Convener, DUGC Chemical Sciences
2. Dr. Santanu Bhattacharya, Convener, DPGC, Chemical Sciences
3. Dr. Jose Sebastian, Convener, DPGC, Biological Sciences
4. Dr. Kasi Viswanadham G, Convener, DUGC, Mathematical Sciences
5. Dr. Senthil Raani K S, Convener, DPGC, Mathematical Sciences
6. Mr. Iwin K Joseph, 16029, BS-MS Senate Student representative
7. Mr. Tribhuban Parida, 1820502, PhD Senate Student representative

Registrar welcomed the members and requested the Chairperson, Senate for further proceedings.

1. Overview Report by the Chairperson, Senate, IISER Berhampur

The Chairperson, Senate welcomed the members present at the 9th Meeting of the Senate, IISER Berhampur. He briefed the Senate on the activities of IISER Berhampur (Appendix 1) in the recent past, which included a short movie on the Master Plan of the permanent campus of IISER Berhampur under construction. The Chairperson reported that the piling work is under progress and with the rate of work being carried out by the contractor, he expressed his anticipation that the BS-MS 2021 batch may start their academic session at the permanent campus and the same was taken on record with a note of appreciation. The Chairperson then requested Prof. S N Mishra, Dean Academic Affairs to conduct further proceedings.

2. Confirmation of the minutes of 2019-3/8th Meeting of the Senate

The Senate resolved to confirm Minutes of the 2019-3/8th Meeting of the Senate held on November 08, 2019 as circulated and placed on the table for confirmation, in absence of any comments from members.

3. **Action Taken Report on the decisions of 2019-3/8th Meeting of the Senate**

The Senate resolved to take on record, the Action Taken Report on the decisions of the 2019-3/8th Meeting of the Senate held on November 08, 2019, with a note of appreciation.

4. **To report the number of students admitted in Ph.D. programme during December-2019 session**

The Senate noted the number of students admitted in Ph.D. programme during December-2019 session.

5. **To report the number of students withdrawn from BS-MS & Ph.D. programmes since the last Senate meeting**

The Senate noted the number of BS-MS and PhD students withdrawn from respective programmes since the last Senate meeting. Dean, Academic Affairs stated that no BS-MS student has withdrawn from the programme in the recent past.

6. **To ratify the grades/ results of 2019-20 Odd-Semester examinations held during November 2019**

The Senate resolved to ratify the grades and results of 2019-20 Odd-Semester examinations held during November 2019.

Further, Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta noticed that a few "I" grades were there against some courses of BS-MS students, which have to be either marked "F" or "Absent". Dean, AA ensured to look into this matter and resolve.

7. **To ratify the revised grades of BIO-302 Biochemistry-II and BIO-303 Biochemistry**

The instructor of BIO-303 and BIO-302 has submitted revised grades which were offered in previous semesters. The Senate resolved to ratify the revised grades of the said courses.

8. **To take on record and expression of token of appreciation to faculty who scored $\geq 4.5/5$ in SRS during 2019-20 Odd-Semester**

Dean AA placed the list of faculties, who scored $\geq 4.5/5$ in SRS for 2019-20 Odd-Semester before the Senate. The Chairperson and the members of the Senate expressed their appreciation.

9. **To report the list of visiting faculties invited during 2019-20 Even-Semester**

The Senate noted the course-wise list of visiting faculties invited for taking up teaching responsibilities during 2019-20 Even-Semester. The Chairperson and the members of the Senate expressed their appreciation to all the distinguished visiting faculties for their efforts and contributions to the Institute.

10. **To ratify the Academic Calendar-2020**

The Senate resolved to ratify the Academic calendar-2020. The Chairperson, Senate reported that Academic activities of the semester have been suspended till March 31, 2020 following Govt. of India and Odisha's advisory issued for COVID-19. Further, a proposal was mooted for declaring summer vacation in advance with immediate effect till May 31, 2020 and the current semester may be resumed from June 01, 2020. The Chairperson, Senate stated that this issue would be considered and fresh orders issued later in the day.

11. **To ratify the nomination of two Senate members as members of Board of Governors, IISER Berhampur**

The Senate resolved to ratify the nomination of two Professors of the Senate, **Prof. Yogendra Sharma** and **Prof. Surendra Nath Mishra** as members of the Board of Governors, IISER Berhampur. The Chairperson and members of the Senate congratulated them.

12. **To ratify the introduction of new 1.5 credit course "Health and Fitness" to 4th year BS-MS students from this semester**

The Dean AA placed this agenda before the Senate and requested Dr. Jose Sebastian, Sports In-Charge to explain the course content and its importance. Dr. Sebastian and Prof. Yogendra Sharma explained

the importance of the course and informed that this course has been offered only to 2016 batch BS-MS students, as of now. Though it is not a mandatory course, all the students are encouraged to pursue with the spirit of Fit India Movement, a Government of India initiative.

Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta and Dr. Rakesh K Pathak suggested that decimal value of the credits (1.5 credits) accorded to the course may cause confusion in the final grade card of the student with total credits in decimal points. The issue was debated and after discussion, the introduction of Health and Fitness course was ratified with a credit of "1".

Dr. Jose Sebastian also reported that a full-fledged course on Health and Fitness is under construction and will be placed before the Senate in the next meeting.

13. To discuss the proposal of introduction of the following new courses offered by Dept. of Physical Sciences:

- a) Magnetic Materials fundamentals and Applications (PHY-5XX)
- b) Semiconductor Physics & Devices (PHY-XXX)
- c) Open quantum systems and quantum Thermodynamics (PHY-XXX)

The Dean AA placed the agenda of introduction of above mentioned three new courses in the Department of Physical Sciences. Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee briefed the course contents and their importance to the Senate. The issue was debated with respect to the requirement of external expert's review on each course content, however, the review was not considered essential since the courses are general in nature. After discussion at length, the Senate resolved to ratify the introduction of the above-mentioned new courses.

14. To discuss the proposal of introduction of two new courses on Data Science

The Chairperson, Senate placed the agenda item of proposal of introduction of two new courses on Data Science (Introduction to Data Science-1 and Introduction to Data Science-2) as Inter Disciplinary Courses, each 4 credits with 20 hours of theory classes and 20 hours of computer laboratory work.

Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee explained the course content and its importance. The Chairperson, Senate brought out that the Institute is looking for a suitable subject expert to teach this course. Prof. Radhakrishnan J pointed that the faculty should be well versed in Statistics too and students be well trained with the basic concepts first before going to the main content. He also enquired if any course on Statistics is being offered to the students and Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta replied that there is a course, which partially covers Statistics but with main focus on Mathematics.

Dean AA intimated that a course on 'python' programme has been offered to the student who are interested on a test basis and the response was very good.

Prof. Radhakrishna J felt that prerequisite courses as basics for better understanding of the Data Science should be offered in 1st and 2nd years. He also enquired whether the proposed course content would be suitable for Biology background students.

After in length discussion, the Senate resolved to ratify the introduction of the above courses upon joining of the suitable faculty. (either regular/visiting)

15. To discuss the proposal of choosing Project/Elective courses by 5th year Chemistry major students

The Dean AA placed the agenda item and Dr. Rakesh K Pathak elaborated the proposed criteria for choosing project/ elective courses by 5th year Chemistry major students. The Chairperson Senate added that in the Dept. of Chemical Sciences, the 4th year BS-MS students were asked to submit their preference of faculty for choosing as PI for 5th year project. Based on CPI and order of preference submitted by the students, students were allotted the PI which was appreciated by all members. Dean AA proposed to adopt the same method by other departments. The Senate resolved to ratify the same.

16. To discuss the proposal of renaming MTH 102 to MTH-210 and MTH-201 to MTH-202 w.e.f AY 2020-21

Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta and Dr. Senthil Raani K S explained the need for renaming the said Mathematics courses in line with the introduction of new MTH courses earlier to avoid any confusion. The Senate resolved to ratify the same.

17. To discuss the introduction of MTH-599 reading course to 5th year Mathematics major students

The Dean AA placed the agenda and after discussion, it was decided that rather than offering the course as a remedy/ compensation for earning credits, the said reading course should be offered for the benefit of the students. The Senate resolved to ratify the same.

18. To discuss the proposal of increasing research/project credits from 8 to 16 in each semester for Mathematics major students

The Dean AA placed the agenda and Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta explained the proposal and need for increasing the credits for the benefit of students. The Chairperson, Senate asked if any of the 16 batch Mathematics major students are opting for carrying out project outside the Institute and Dr. Ritabrata replied that none of them are willing to go out for 5th year project work.

The Chairperson, Senate felt that too many reading courses puts huge burden on the students and students should be limited to only one such course in the entire programme. The Senate further resolved to revisit the same after observing the results of one batch.

19. To discuss the department specific semester-wise timeline for PhD programme submitted by Dept. of Biological Sciences

The Dean AA placed the agenda of department specific semester-wise timeline for PhD programme submitted by Dept. of Biological Sciences. Dr. Jose Sebastian reported the difference between the Institute's PhD manual and the proposed timeline. The Chairperson, Senate suggested that instead of restricting the students to only two lab rotations, they may be allowed to attend as many labs to gain greater exposure. The Senate resolved to ratify the same.

20. To discuss the proposal of adoption of new grading system in BS-MS programme from 2020 batch onwards

The Dean placed the agenda and elaborated the current grading system (O, A, B, C, D, F...) for BS-MS programme. It has been proposed to adopt the double letter grading system as being followed in PhD programme (AA, AB, BB, BC etc.). The Dean AA explained that the proposed new grading system allows to award grades more accurately to the students based on the performance with wider options of grades and informed that it was accepted by all the faculty.

The Dean pointed out that the basic concept of awarding grades is to reduce perceived wide differentiation in students' performance, with an aim to increase focus on learning without too much performance consciousness. This helps to bring in respectability in overtly visible performance in order to enhance self-respect and confidence of majority of students. Widening the spectrum of grading system goes against the basic philosophy of grouping a range of percentages and categorizing them as grades.

Dr. Ritabrata Sengupta suggested that grade awarded to auditing a course "AU" may be put separately in the grade description column in the proposed agenda and also the top most grade "O" may be included.

After wide discussion, the Senate resolved to ratify the same with the above suggestions and the new grading system will be applicable from BS-MS 2020 batch.

21. To discuss the proposal of revision of user charges in the fee structure of BS-MS and PhD programmes

The Dean placed the agenda of proposal of revision of user charges for BS-MS and PhD students in their semester fee structure. The Chairperson, Senate informed that the user charges have not been revised since inception of the Institute and there are instructions to revise these appropriately to meet the rising expenditure. It has been proposed to hike 10% on user charges mentioned in the fee structure.

The student Senate representatives brought out that the fee hike would burden the student community and the proposed charges are not justifiable.

Registrar, Deputy Director and the Chairperson Senate ensured that the fee hike is not going to become a burden as only Rs. 1000/- will be the difference amount.

After convincing the student representatives in response to their numerous queries, the Senate resolved to ratify the proposal of fee hike @ 10% on user charges w.e.f the next semester applicable to all batches of BS-MS and PhD programmes.

22. To discuss the guidelines on payment of Honorarium to adjunct faculty and visiting faculty for teaching and conducting exams

The Dean AA placed the agenda item of payment of honorarium guidelines to visiting and adjunct faculty. The Deputy Director stated that the office of faculty affairs has already given necessary instructions on the same. The Chairperson, Senate further clarified that for those who visit institute for taking class and leave, will be paid Rs. 3000/- per class without any capping on per day honorarium. But those who stay for an entire semester in the institute shall be paid Rs. 5000/- per day. However, the Heads of departments and Dean Faculty Affairs will consider the issue on case-to-case basis.

23. To discuss the proposal of introduction of course improvement option to BS-MS and PhD students

The student Senate representative (BS-MS) requested for liberalizing the rules of "improvement" option in the existing rules as the same are too stringent as mentioned below:

Over and above the minimum compulsory credit requirement, a maximum of two courses will be permitted per semester under the category of repeat/substitute/improvement/overload courses.

After discussion at length, Dr. Rakesh K Pathak intimated that the above guidelines are to regulate the number of courses to avoid unnecessary burden on students and to help only genuine requests.

Further on request by the student representatives, and after discussion at length, the Senate resolved to ratify the proposal with the following criteria:

"A maximum of two courses by relaxing the mandatory CPI criteria may be allowed for appearing in improvement exams per student per semester".

Necessary changes may be incorporated in the BS-MS manual.

24. To discuss the request submitted by student Senate representative for offering minor degree in EES and CS courses

The Chairperson, Senate complimented the student representative for their approach and placing the agenda before the Senate and stated that the Institute is looking for suitable regular faculty to start department of EES and CS soon. The proposal will be implemented definitely with the joining of the respective faculty for the courses.

25. To discuss the proposal to introduce Open cafeteria choice of courses for the Biology minor students

The Dean AA placed the agenda of proposal to open cafeteria choice for Biology minor students. Dr. Jose Sebastian explained the concept to all the members and the said students will be having wide options of electing courses of their choice. After clarifying the queries raised by a few members, Prof. Yogendra Sharma suggested that if feasible, this concept may be adopted by other departments too. The Senate resolved to ratify the same.

26 Any other item with the permission of the Chair

(a) Agenda items placed by PhD student representative:

- (i) **Tuition fee waiver.** The student representative requested that the PhD students after completing course may be exempted from payment of tuition fees. The Chairperson, Senate replied that tuition fees is not limited to classroom teaching only, but it also covers the guidance and evaluation by the PhD supervisor till the students get the PhD degree.

- (ii) **Payment of HRA.** The student representative requested for payment of HRA to Institute fellowship PhD students. The Chairperson, Senate informed that the Institute is bound to provide hostel facility to PhD students and even CSIR and UGC are not paying HRA to those who are availing hostel facility.
- (iii) **Hike in Contingency.** After in length discussion on this issue, the Chairperson, Senate amended the contingency validity of one year and said that contingency can be carried forward for 3 years upto Rs. 30,000/- @ Rs. 10,000/- per year only.
- (iv) **Support to International travel.** The Chairperson, Senate after hearing to the request raised by the student representative and after further discussion, assured that the Institute can provide partial assistantship to the students meeting the following criteria:
- The student's foreign travel expenses should be sponsored by CSIR/UGC or any other external funding agencies.
 - Assistantship will be provided from 3rd year of programme onwards.
 - Only one such assistantship for foreign travel will be given per student in the entire tenure.
 - For International conferences/seminar conducted in India, travel assistance will be provided as per prevailing contingency rules.

(b) **Mandatory HSS course in 5th year.** As per BS-MS manual, all the students in 5th year are required to pursue HSS-503 and HSS-504 and it would be problematic for those who go out for project work. After discussion at length, the Chairperson, Senate ruled that the students can pursue these courses during their mandatory one month stay at the Institute in their 5th year. Also, the option of pursuing the course through online/skype mode may be explored.

(c) **Ratification of PhD courses offered by Dept. of Chemical Sciences.** The FIC, Dept. of Chemical Sciences placed the agenda with the permission of the Chairperson and the Senate resolved to ratify the proposal for introduction of four new PhD courses.

(d) **Placement Cell.** The BS-MS student representative requested for constitution of placement cell and the Chairperson, Senate replied that the proposal is already under progress and will be implemented soon.

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

Sd/-

(Brig PC Vyas)

Registrar & Secretary, Senate

Approved



(Prof. KVR Chary)

Director & Chairperson, Senate