Minutes of the Academic Council meeting No. XI held on 05/12/2020 held Online from 11.00 am onwards

The Eleventh meeting of the Academic Council was held on December 05, 2020 as an online Meeting, due to the restrictions in place on account of the covid pandemic. The Meeting was to be held on March 21, 2020. In fact, the Agenda and the Invitation for the Meeting had been sent to all the members. However, the National lockdown and the subsequent restrictions on the physical reopening of educational institutions did not permit the holding of such meetings. Dr V.K. Jain could not attend the meeting due to health reasons. **A few members like Ms Aditi Vyas did not attend.** Fr. Principal conducted the meeting.

1.0 The Chair welcomed all the members. He specially welcomed Prof. Nandita Christie of the Statistics Department, in place of the late Prof. Bhaduria. He personally thanked each one of the members for being present online despite the difficulties due to the pandemic. Dr Momin was greeted on his birthday.

1.1 A minute of silence was kept as a mark of respect to some of the departed members of the Xavier Parivar: Fr. Carlos Valles S.J, Dr. Tushar Pandya (Physics-Electroniccs), Prof. Bhaduria (Statistics), Mr Chimanbhai (Librarian) and Mr Ram Pyarelal Jadhav.

2.0. Agenda of the Meeting: Part 1: Agenda of the March 21 meeting (postponed due to the pandemic):

2.1. A soft copy of the Minutes of the X Academic Council Meeting had been sent to all the members prior to the meeting. The Minutes were considered as read and approved without any modification.

2.2 New Academic programs which were scheduled to start from June 2020 could not be started on account of the pandemic. The College had proposed to begin BSc Computer Sciences (with SF Mathematics and Statistics) as also a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) program. The syllabi for these programs was ready for approval at the March 21, 2020 Academic Council Meeting. They were being placed for approval before the Academic Council now for its approval.

The College planned to offer BA with Music as Allied Required and as Allied Option up to Semester 4. This was also in line with the suggestions of the New Education Policy (NEP). A BA program with Journalism & Mass Communication (Print Media) was also being readied and the syllabii for semester I and II were ready. A Master's Program in Economics

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was also being planned. The College was also in the process of setting up a PhD Program for which approval from the Governing Council had already been granted.

2.3 The proposed changes to be made in syllabi of the BA programs of each the following Departments were presented for approval: Gujarati- Hindi (all Semesters), Economics and English. An draft outline of the MA Economics program was also presented. In response to a clarification, it was informed that the fees for the same would be in the range of Rs 25 to 30 thousand per Semester. This is being reworked and will be presented to the Academic Council in the next meeting.

Changes in the MA Psychology program were proposed. A slight increase in the fees for including the Internship were also suggested. Topics like 'Artificial Intelligence' would help make the course more relevant. A caution about introducting internships from this year (due to the pandemic) was expressed. Online internships could be explored as an option. The Principal clarified that the syllabus was before the Academic Council for approval. It would need to be adapted given the restrictions of the pandemic.

For BA Engligh, topics like conversational skills, presentation skills as also changes in the novels were proposed. The changes proposed for MA had all ben elaborately discussed by the BOS and approved.

The Principal informed the Academic Council that changes proposed for the Sanskrit BA would be reviewed by a Committee consisting of the Principal, the Vice-Principal (Arts) and the Head of the Sanskrit Department as some clarifications had been requested by some of the Sanskrit BOS members. A syllabus was also proposed for MA Sanskrit.

In Science, changes were proposed in Botany theory and practicals (UG, Sem 3 and 4). Also the data on the academic performance of the students and the stakeholder's feedback on the curriculum was presented to the BOS. This is done by most Departments before their BOS. Changes were also proposed in Chemistry (PG, Sem 4), Statistics (UG Sem 5 and 6) and Zoology (in practicals). In Physics- Electronics (UG and PG) the inclusion of several topics for the NET was proposed along with better alignment of the theory and practicals. A new Elective on Numerical Analysis was proposed in Sem 5.

The points taken up by the Biochemistry-Biotehnology Department included structured feedback on the syllabus, analysis of previous Semesters results, plans for extension activities, linking up with course outcomes, etc (cf PPT).

Changes proposed in the BCA syllabus (UG Sem 4,5,6), the BCom syllabus (second and third year) and the BDA progam were also proposed. TCS has been a partner for the BDA course and it is a good example of Acaedmic-Industry interaction. The new BCOM program outline was proposed and accepted by the Academic Council. The BSc Computer Science course ouline as well as the detailed syllabus for Semesters 1 and 2 were presented (cf PPT) and approved. BSc Cognitive Approach to Computer Science (with TCS) is also being

explored. Three Departments- BCA, Maths and Statistics are involved. Outline of this course would be mailed to members for their valuable feedback.

The course for Music as an Allied Subject for first and second year BA students had also been worked out. It would include a theory component (on campus) and a practical component for each of the components like Singing, Drum, Guitar, etc This had been done in collaboration with Fr Vincent D'Souza, Director of the Xavier Music Academy which was affiliated to Trinity College, London.This point was clarified in response to a query by Dr Rangarajan who suggested that the 'BA Music' in the ppt, be suitably changed.

It was suggested that the possibility of upgrading this to a BA Music at a later stage could be explored. The concept of 'auditing' a Course whereby a student completes a course without getting the credits was also suggested. The possibility of offering Music to Science students should also be seriously explored (considering the intrinsic linkages of music and maths/ science).

2.4 Information about various programs held at the College were presented. The programs included **CHEM-CHO** by the Chemistry Department; **COGNISANCE** (by the Economics Department) which included a National Seminar in which 29 universities/colleges participated; **VISHWA MATRU Bhasha Diwas** celebrated by the Gujarati-Hindi Department with around 340 participants including a Skype interaction event with a Slovenian researcher; **BIO CALIX 2020** by the Biochemistry-Biotechnoogy Department which included a National Conference on 'Molecular Biology and Cell Biology in which 290 participated. **The Maths Department** organized a State level Workshop on 'Problem Solving and Enrichment in Mathematics' (60 participants from across the State); a State level "Dinesh Sevak Shibir" for 25 High school and Higher Secondary students and a Zonal level "INMO Training Camp" for 25 Participants. **Department of Commerce** organised a Workshop on Hands on Training on 'Digital Marketing'. The College had a 2-day FDP WORKSHOP at KOBA where the Mangement, college leadership and the HODs revisited the Vision-Mision of SXCA and began the preparation of a draft Strategic Action Plan including a draft Financial plan.

Mr Pankaj Mudholkar offered the services of his team to conduct Workshops on Digital Marketing.

Ten students of the **Physics-Electronics Department** cleared the entrance exam for M.Sc @ IIT. The Dept/College has signed an MOU for 'Teacher Internship programs' with Zydus School of Excellence for our aspiring students wanting to make academics as their career. Two webinars were organized and the U-Tube transmission of the Solar eclipse was done. The Department has also started a Value Added Course on 'Digital Design'. Dr Rangarajan asked for the rationale behind the Internship progam which was explained by Dr Rajesh Iyer. The experience and the certificate would be valuable for the students. It could be extended to other Department students. Providing credit for these activities could be explored.

Dr Rangarajan also suggested that selected MSc students could hold problem-solving sessions for junior BSc students.

2.5 SXCA has provided an Online Digital verification service and a online Transcript service for students which helps marksheet verification, online transcripts (which are digitally signed). This will help students including those going overseas for studies.

SXCA is putting its data into CDSL. Data after 2014 students will be put into the National Academic Depository (NAD).

2.6 Requests for Double graduation (12 + 4) do come from students, specially some of those wishing to go abroad for studies. SXCA does not have a policy for the same. It had earlier been allowed on a case-to-case basis. This is easier for BSc students rather than BA students. The College is trying to evolve a policy for the same. It was strongly recommended that the fourth year program should be self-financed.

The proposal was made for higher payment seats within Self-financed programs ie for a fixed number of seats. This was possible and the College was exploring the possibility of the same specially for PG programs. For example in MSc Organic Chemistry, Gujarat University does permit PG centres 35 + 15 more seats. SXCA preferred to start its own self-financed program. It was proposed that we need to work out a more concrete proposal for approval from the Academic Council.

It was suggested that a student be permitted to take 1-year certificiate program of his/her interest (after graduation) in subjects unrelated to the student's graduation subject, but part of the recognized College programs. Dr Rangarajan offered to share more details about such possible programs. It was pointed out that the NEP policy also recommends the students be provided options to leave programs at the end of each year.

It was proposed that BA students would be able to change their Core subject and move laterally (like BSc students) if changes were made in the BA course structure. This would permit BA students to change Core subjects in both second and third year (like science students). A concrete proposal regarding the same could be made to the Academic Council in the next meeting.

It was also proposed that Environmentlal Science could be offered as a 1-year certificate course or a 2-year stand-alone course. This would attract students from diverse subjects. The proposal would be taken up for study.

3 Agenda of the Meeting: Part 2: Agenda of the December 5 meeting:

3.1 Update of the Academic evaluation for EVEN Semesters of 2019-20.

The mode of examination for the last Even Semester was explained.

St. Xavier's College (Autonomous) Ahmedabad-9

Taking into account the current situation of the pandemic, and the concerns expressed by all stakeholders as well as the UGC guidelines which emphasize the Issues of Safety, Honesty, Connectivity, Professionalism and Fairness, St Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmedabad, proposed the following End Semester Examination system for ALL Final year UG/PG students of the College. It is to be noted that this alternative mode of examination was offered specifically on account of the current pandemic.

The mode of examination was Written Assignment followed by Viva-voce for each paper. The assignment comprised of 4 questions, corresponding to the 4 units in the paper. The student was expected to answer any 3 questions in his/her own handwriting, have it scanned and then submit the assignments within the stipulated time. Marks were to be given for originality, content, subject depth, relevance. The content was to be free from plagiarism. Upon receipt of the written assignment of that particular paper, the subject faculty shall conduct viva-voce depending upon the convenience of the student and the subject faculty. The viva-voce would be of 10-15 minutes' duration which was to be recorded by the Professor/s concerned. For the entire process, Moodle or Google classroom or the College's LMS system could be used.The exam format was as follows:

	Written assignment	Viva-voce
To be evaluated for	**Content/ originality/ presentation/depth**	**Understanding / ability to explain & defend the written content**
Question 1	**12**	**11**
Questio n 2	**12**	**11**
Question 3	**12**	**12**
TOTAL	**36**	**34**

Sem 2 and 4 evaluations of UG and Sem 2 exams was done through Merit Based Progression [MRP] (using the formula proposed by the UGC and by our parent University, Gujarat University).

3.2 Steps taken for Online teaching-Learning and evaluation for ODD Semester

The LMS of the College was upgraded for teaching and learning. Professors were trained to use the system effectively. Till date all 3500 students have been enrolled. Teaching-learning sessions as also MCQ exams have been conducted using this platform.

St. Xavier's College (Autonomous) Ahmedabad

Syllabus has been completed. Exams of Odd Semester have been conducted. There is a handicap of doing some practicals.

In regard to a query regarding cheating during exams it was stated that there are difficulties being faced. The College has not yet brought out a policy to deal with online cheating. It is necessary to have a policy to deal with this. Dr Rangarajan suggested WeBWorK of the Mathematical Association of America which is an open-source for thousands of Mathematical problems. The problems will also be corrected. The issue of different students getting different questions would need to be addressed. Other subjects would need to also create/ access large question banks with slightly different questions for different students. There is a need to dialogue with other academic institutions in this regard.

3.3 Academic calendar for 2020-21

In the present scenario there is need for planning and the time-lines need to be clear. We are going in for Continuous Internal Evaluation as per the Department's decision. CIA 1 covers the first half of the Semester and 50% of the syllabus and CIA 2 covers the second half of the Semester. The plan is complete UG Semesters 4 and 6/ PG Sem 4 by the end of April and Sem 2 of UG/PG by May 30, 2021. There will be no separate CIA exams.

It may be possible, if the pandemic permits, to conduct some practical sessions for the final year students in small batches. This is recommended by the UGC but will depend on local restrictions.

3.4 Online admissions and Fees reduction: 15% Covid relief to students

Professors have switched to online teaching and evaluation thanks to the pandemic. They are now improving their skills. Also, the entire admission process has been conducted online. About 8,800 students have registered; about 5,000 submitted forms, and 4,800 have paid fees. Special thanks to Dr Nirmal Desai and his team for efficiently setting up the system for the same.

The data of newly admitted students Board-wise, subject-wise, gender-wise was shared. The College has an equal gender ratio (51%) of first year students. This has been highlighted in some National surveys. In BA, there has been a big rush for the humanities specially in English medium [374 admitted from 1050 applications]. The merit cut off was very high. There is need to start a self-financed course for BA Psychology and English.

In BSc, the number of applications reduced by about 300. In BCA, we have 1,150 applications. We have taken 3 batches.

FEE REDUCTION: The Management of SXCA decided to give a reduction of 15% on the total fee to be paid in view of the pandemic. Arrangements were made for online payment of Fees which could be paid in two installments by December 20, 2020 and by January 20,

St. Xavier's College (Autonomous) Ahmedabad-9

2020. Students who have difficulty with the two above options could make their requests through a dedicated helpline. Current Sem I students of UG and PG would get the benefit of the 15% reduction when they paid their next Semester fees. UGC guidelines were being followed for those cancelling admissions. This was appreciated by the media.

One suggestion made was to not offer the fee reduction across the board, but to ask those who needed it to apply for the reduction. Mr Pankaj Mudholkar offered to compensate 10 to 15 students who had difficulty paying their fees.

The College was also trying to see the possibility of creating a bank in which old mobiles can be collected and shared with some of our staff whose children are unable to attend online classes in urban schools. Mr Pankaj offered to help in this regard.

3.5 New courses likely to be started from June 2021

Already discussed earlier in section 2.2, the proposal to start a PhD program had been approved by the Governing Council where the Honourable Vice-Chancellor was present. We have some more of our Faculty currently approved as PhD guides in the last few months and hence there is need to draft the rules for the PhD program. The program could start in June 2021. Dr Udayan offered to help in drafting the rules. Another suggestion made was that efforts could be made to facilitate some of our College Professors to get PhD guideship by collectively submitting the data through the Vice Chancellor.

There is a strongly felt need to start BA self-financed programs in English and Psychology and a Social science program (UG or PG). The latter is being worked out by SXCA and CCD, Sevasi.

Another suggestion was that BA Journalism should include Digital media and not be restricted to only the Print media.

The 5-years Integrated Mathematics program had been approved at the last Academic council. This needed to be followed up.

3.6 Dr Sanjeev Gupta has been ranked among the top 2% Scientists of the world. Congratulations to Dr Sanjeev Gupta on behalf of the Academic Council.

3.7 Any other points: Fr Vinayak SJ suggested that in honor of Fr Valles SJ a Memorial Lecture on Mathematics and Arts could be held. He proposed the name of Dr Abhijit Sen and also suggested the topic. Dr Udayan informed the group that there were plans to set up a Foundation in the name of Fr Valles through which interdisciplinary activities could be conducted. The Foundation could be connected with the College. It was suggested that activities related to Gujarati literature could also be included.

An extra-department or Extra credit course course could be proposed where students have to take credits from some other Department. The Digital Design course could be one

such course. This could be done if it is line with Syayam. Astronomy could be of interest to both Arts and Science courses. It could be an Elective course. This proposal would be explored.

The meeting ended at 1 p.m. with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Fr Principal.