



## Rules and Procedures Committee, Students' Senate, 2014-15 Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Parliamentarian | Sabyasachi Verma

### END-TERM REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

The Parliamentarian provides the interpretation of the constitution to the Senate and looks after the worthy exercise of rules and constitution. The Rules and Procedures Committee, Students' Senate (2014-15) is entrusted upon with the work of upholding the constitutional integrity and supervising the rules and procedures of the Students' Senate. The Constitution of the Students' Senate is the highest document written and the Senate as well as the whole Students' Gymkhana comes under the purview of it. Any amendments or interpretation to the content in the constitution is provided by the Parliamentarian, who is also the Convener of the Committee. The Rules and Procedures Committee consists of 4 members (2 UG and 2 PG) with the Parliamentarian as the Convener. This Year, the committee carried on its work and provided certain important interpretations and amendments to the Students' Senate.

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- 1) Sabyasachi Verma (Convener)
- 2) Arun Karthik (Senator, PhD)
- 3) Gyanesh Kumar Singh (Senator, MTech Y13)
- 4) Vibhu Mohan Bajpai (Senator, UG Y11)
- 5) Manikanta Reddy (Senator, UG Y13)
- 6) Anurag Sahay (Chairperson, Students' Senate 2014-15)

The committee invited several other relevant individuals for their suggestions and benefitted from their opinions. I would mention the following in this regard-

- Karthik Balasundaram
- Shubham Atreja
- Vedant Goenka

## MEETINGS

The committee met 4 times this year, respectively on-

- 24th September, 2014
- 7th November, 2014
- 9th March, 2015
- 13th March, 2015

The following items were considered by the Rules and Procedures Committee-

### **1) The constitutional amendment regarding including 'Institute Teams' within Students' Gymkhana.**

The General Secretary, Science and Technology Council proposed for the inclusion of a new division 'Institute Teams' under the Science and Technology Council. The opinion of the Rules and Procedures Committee was demanded in this matter, since an amendment to the constitution would be required. The committee deliberated on this issue and came out with certain recommendations and a constitutional amendment in this regard.

The committee supported the inclusion of the new division, but, with certain checks since the formation of such teams could grow in a haphazard manner in the future. The committee also felt that such teams coming under Gymkhana should be called 'Gymkhana Teams', wherein this would not only be made for the Science and Technology Council but also for the rest of the Councils. Such teams shall ordinarily not receive any funding from the Students' Gymkhana, since these teams would not come under the purview of any club and that such teams may require a large sum of money for their purpose.

The most important thing was to keep a check on the number of such teams being formed in the future. The committee strongly suggested that any team working in a nature of having a club associated with it, shall not be considered as a 'Gymkhana Team'. The final power to ratification lies in the hands of Senate which should wisely consider the importance of any such proposed team.

The agenda item was itemized but since then, has not been taken into consideration the Senate. The constitutional amendment has not been passed yet.

### **2) The constitutional amendment regarding the change in the method of elections.**

The Elections sub-committee constituted by the Senate submitted its interim report which contained two methods for the conduction of the election of Senators, in which one was the scaled version of the current system while the other was a new method

proposed by the sub- committee based primarily on distribution of points. The proposal was referred to the Rules and Procedures Committee by the senate for its opinions regarding the constitutional amendments.

The committee opined that the scaling of the current method was applicable without any problem, whereas the new method was also constitutionally acceptable. But since this procedure involved a major change in the procedure followed from a long time, the committee was unsure regarding the logistics and appeal of this method just before the General Elections,2015.

The validation of the methods was reviewed by the Rules and Procedures Committee. The Committee limited itself to the constitutional amendment and urged the Senate to review both the methods and to reach a conclusion wisely.

The Senate discussed the proposals and adopted the scaling policy with the relevant constitutional amendment respectively.

### **3) The issue regarding the manner of selection in the panel for the Festival Core Team in case of a tie.**

The issue was raised in the Senate during the recommendation of the selection panel of the Antaragni Core Team. The Senate enquired regarding the procedure to be followed in case of a tie during the selection of core team members. The Rules and Procedures Committee discussed this issue and decided to interpret the Festival Manual passed in the Senate during this year.

**" All the members of the panel who are members of the panel by virtue of the same position shall share one vote equally among themselves. The Convener of the panel shall have the tie breaking vote."**

I, as the Parliamentarian, presented the interpretation as following-

"All the members of the panel, including the Chairperson, SS who is the Convener of the panel shall have equal voting rights, as stated in the Appendix of the Festivals and none of the votes shall be considered to be hidden in this case. Then, if under any circumstances, a tie occurs, the Chairperson will have the tie-breaking vote and his vote shall be considered as the recommendation of the selection panel."

The committee made its opinion considering the spirit in which the inactive version of the constitution was written, the Chairperson being the Convener of the committee and him being the representative of Senate, which is a higher body in the organization structure. The committee also recommended that the Chairperson should make a wise

decision in such a manner and that the Senate, if finds his/her vote unworthy can take strict measures against him/her.

The Senate took the opinion into consideration and accepted it.

#### **4) The constitutional amendment regarding restructuring of the Standing Committees.**

**a) Regarding dissolution of the Standing Committee-** The proposal was considered by the committee and it considered that the role of the Steering committee could not be undermined. Though, the work related to preparing the agenda and publishing the minutes was not considered to be such, that should be done by a Senator. Therefore this work was given to the Secretary, Senate under the Chairperson and the Steering Committee was not dissolved. The committee reduced the size of this committee from 4 to 2 (1 UG and 1PG Senator). The committee took this decision in lieu of the fact that if the Steering Committee works properly, much can be achieved.

The constitutional amendment was accepted on the floor of the Senate.

**b) Restructuring the Standing Committees-** The committee agreed with the proposal of reducing the size of the Standing Committees and presented the constitutional amendments in this regard for the Nominations Committee and the Rules and Procedures Committee.

The membership of the Nominations Committee was reduced to 1 with a condition that the committee must have at least 1 UG and at least 1 PG student. The committee strongly felt that a balanced UG-PG membership would have a good effect on the spirit of the committee.

The membership of the Rules and Procedures Committee was reduced from 4 to 3(at least 1 UG and 1 PG Senator).The committee felt that the work of the RPC could be handled by 3 members also in an efficient manner.

However the committee did not find reducing the members of finance committee appropriate as of now. The committee feels that the distribution of members in various festivals under COFA can serve a greater purpose in the future. Also having more number of members in the Finance committee regulates the finances in a more efficient manner. The Finance Committee shall have 3 members only.

All the constitutional amendments were accepted by the Senate.

#### **3) Constitutional amendment regarding change in composition of COFA.**

The proposal made was regarding removal of the post of In-Charge. COFA who is also the Convener of the COFA. The committee agreed with the proposal after a lot of deliberation and presented the constitutional amendment in this matter.

The President would, as of now, reside over the joint meetings of COFA and the work of the In-Charge COFA was handed to the General Secretaries, who are ex-officio Chair of the respective COFA.

The Senate accepted the constitutional amendment.

### **Archives of the Last 10 Years**

The archives of the last 10 years of the working of Students' Senate were prepared by me, which have been added to the Senate website's homepage in the tab of Archives. The archives contain the list of the executives and Senate-office bearers, the members of the Standing committees, the agendas and minutes of every meeting (which were available).

This would serve a great purpose for the reference in future and also display the shining legacy of the Students' Senate as well as the Students' Gymkhana.

I am heartily thankful to Mr. Anurag Sahay (Chairperson, SS, 2014-15) for taking this initiative and requesting me to provide a helping hand into this nothing but wonderful endeavour of his.

### **Work to be done**

There is a lot of work which I find could have been done by me in the ending year. This happens when one looks back and finds his mistakes in the past. However since I will be a Senator in the coming year, I would definitely look forward to work with the incoming Chairperson and the Parliamentarian to complete the same.

- The Appendices of the Constitution have not been updated yet. ex. COSHA
- Certain policy decisions and other decisions including Student Governance Report has not been reflected in the Constitution yet.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) The Rules and Procedures Committee should meet more often than only when an opinion is demanded from them. These meetings can be regarding updating and improving the Constitution.
- 2) Certain procedures and constitutional requirements may sometimes be overlooked by the Senate due to human error. It should be the responsibility of the Parliamentarian

to always provide with relevant constitutional clauses and check if some unconstitutional procedure is followed.

3) I believe that the records of certain important decisions and the spirit under which they were taken to recorded somewhere. I proposed the formation of a Red Book for the Senate which shall work for the same issue. However the agenda item could not be discussed in any of the meetings. I would like the incoming Parliamentarian to work with this proposal, if implemented, in an active manner.

In the end, I would like to say that it was really wonderful working with a group of wise, intellectual and concerned senators. This post and its nature of work inculcated a respect for rules and norms in me and I am thankful to my fellow Senators who entrusted me with this responsibility. I would like to thank Mr. Anurag Sahay for his unending and commendable effort in keeping the legacy of the Senate intact and working as a exuberant Chairperson. His role in the committee was the most important for me as well as the Senate. I would also thank all the members of the committee, Shubham Atreja and Vedant Goenka for their valuable suggestions and efforts in the committee.

**Au Revoir,**

**Sabyasachi Verma  
Parliamentarian, Students' Senate, 2014-15**

