

Report: Students' Senate Committee for the Gopal Das Bhandari Memorial Outstanding Teacher Award

Pursuant to the approval of the new SSPC Manual by the Academic Senate in its 2015-16/8th Meeting, the name of the faculty member who shall be given the Gopal Das Bhandari Memorial Outstanding Teacher Award in the Convocation of the Institute shall now be nominated by the Students' Senate instead of decided on the basis of election from the graduating batch of undergraduate students. As decided by the Senate, the new Manual was to be applied from the Convocation held in Summer, 2016. However, at the time at which the Manual was approved, the extant procedure for selecting the faculty member had already been invoked, and the voting for Phase I of the process had finished. Subsequent to this, the Students' Senate decided that for the Convocation to be held in Summer, 2016, an ad-hoc subcommittee of the Students' Senate shall be constituted consisting of one graduating student from each Department with an undergraduate programme, which shall recommend the name for the Award. Furthermore, it was agreed that a proposal for the procedure for nominating the name in subsequent years will be prepared by the committee, and will be submitted to the Academic Senate once approved by the Students' Senate.

The committee was constituted vides an email circulated by the Chairperson, Students' Senate to the Senate mailing list on 10th June, 2016 with the following members:

- Praveen Honhar (AE)
- Shubham Tripathi (BSBE)
- Shrey Agarwal (CE)
- Puru Goyal (CHE)
- Sanjana Gopalakrishnan (CHM)
- Chirag Gupta (CSE)
- Abhishek Gaurav (ECO)
- Shubham Atreja (EE)
- Manish Yadav (IME/MBA)
- Gautam Pratap Singh (ME)
- Kumar Aniket (MSE)
- Anurag Sahay (MTH) [Chairperson]
- Jayameenakshi V. (PHY)

The committee was mandated with interfacing all the undergraduate students graduating in the Convocation to be held in the Summer, 2016, and recommend a name for the Award.

The committee used various forms of electronic communication for deliberation. The committee decided to use the following procedure to arrive at its decision:

1. Each member of the committee was directed to contact the graduating students of their Department and invite nominations for the Award. It was decided that each member would nominate 5 names, of which 3 names were to be faculty members of their Department and 2 names were to be faculty members from outside their Department. It was agreed that each member should base their list of 5 names on the votes of their fellow students, however, it was further agreed that each member should use their discretion to ensure that faculty members who are good teachers, but are not necessarily popular due to their grading policy and other such factors do not get their due.
2. Once the lists of each member were compiled, the Chair of the committee directed to compile a shortlist of faculty members. It was decided that each faculty member who was nominated by at least two members would be part of the shortlist. Furthermore, it was decided that each faculty member from a Department that did not have an undergraduate programme would be part of the shortlist if even one member nominated them.
3. After the shortlist was compiled, the committee went over many rounds of discussion over the final list. After much deliberation, it was decided that the final name would be decided by a single, transferable vote, based on the discussion of the members with the students of their Department. The vote was conducted by Mr. Gautam Pratap Singh.

After following the process outlined above, the committee decided to recommend the name of Prof. Sumit Ganguly for the Award.

The proposal for the procedure to be followed in subsequent years is attached as Appendix I to this report.

(Anurag Sahay)
Chairperson

Appendix I: Proposal for the Gopal Das Bhandari Award

Pursuant to the approval of the new SSPC Manual by the Academic Senate in its 2015-16/??th Meeting, the name of the faculty member who shall be given the Gopal Das Bhandari Memorial Outstanding Teacher Award in the Convocation of the Institute shall now be nominated by the Students' Senate instead of decided on the basis of election from the graduating batch of undergraduate students. This proposal, prepared by the committee that recommended the name for the Convocation held in Summer, 2016 is for the procedure to be followed by the Students' Senate in nominating this name.

The following principles underlie this proposal:

- The Award, as initially instituted by the donor, was meant to represent the opinion of the undergraduate students, and hence some semblance of the earlier voting system should be retained.
- However, unlike the previous system, there should be a check to ensure that the final decision is not inadvertently affected too much by factors such as Department size. The Award is for teaching, and not for popularity among Departments with large strength.
- Since the intent of the original donor was to represent the views of a particular batch, an attempt should be made to ensure that the graduating batch has a larger say than the other batches in the final decision of the Students' Senate.

However, the committee was unable to achieve a consensus on the principle on the basis of which the Award must be given. While it was agreed that the Award should be given for good teaching, members of the committee drafting the proposal presented the following differing viewpoints:

- The Award should be given for sustained long-term teaching, equivalent to a form of Lifetime Excellence Award, decided by students. Thus, the Award, once given to a particular faculty may not be given to that faculty member again. Furthermore, the procedure should take into account multiple factors, including years teaching, variety of courses taught, courses introduced and so on.
- The Award should be given for the teaching that the students who are voting have seen. Hence, factors such as years teaching,

courses introduced and so on should not be considered, and a faculty member may get the Award more than once.

The Students' Senate and the Academic Senate are requested to decide which viewpoint is more appropriate. This viewpoint should be made part of the SSPC Manual, to provide guidance to the Students' Senate in the future.

The proposed procedure shall have three phases: the nominations phase, the shortlisting phase and the recommendations phase.

Prior to the nominations phase, a committee shall be constituted by the Students' Senate at the recommendation of its Nominations Committee consisting of one undergraduate student from each Department with undergraduate programme that must all be from the graduating batch. The committee shall be responsible for the conduct of the three phases on behalf of the Students' Senate.

In the nominations phase, the committee will seek nominations from Members of the General Body of the Gymkhana for candidates for the Award. The nomination form shall be finalized by the Students' Senate once (and may be amended by the Senate in future) and will include all relevant information about the faculty member being nominated, as well as the student who is nominating. The form may be online or offline, as decided by the Senate.

In the shortlisting phase, the committee shall shortlist the candidates for the Award from the nominations received. The primary metric for shortlisting shall be popularity (that is, number of nominations received). However, the committee shall use its discretion to normalize the strength of each Department for this process. At least one faculty member must be shortlisted from each Department; if no faculty member from a particular Department has been nominated, the committee shall utilize its discretion to shortlist one faculty member.

In the recommendations phase, the committee shall prepare a list of two to five faculty members, using their discretion. These faculty members should all be from different departments. The committee shall also prepare a short citation for each of the names, describing the teaching activities of that faculty member, as well as why the committee feels that they may be given the Award. The names shall

then be presented to the Students' Senate, and the Senate will then decide the final name by the single, transferable voting system.

It is further proposed that the citation for the faculty member who finally gets the Award shall be printed on an award scroll, and shall be presented by the President, Students' Gymkhana and the Chairperson, Students' Senate to the awardee.