

Report of sub-committee to formulate ways on how to educate the students better on how the students' senate works and to improve participation of students in the student's senate

Introduction

In the 6th meeting of student's senate (henceforth referred as SS) on 5th October 2012, a concern was raised in the SS that SS and students of IIT Kanpur (henceforth referred as students) are alienated and thus we need to streamline the working of SS so that students shall be informed better about the work of SS, shall improve participation of students into SS, and students shall be able to make use of their democratic rights. An ad-hoc sub-committee (henceforth referred to as committee) was constituted to draft a concrete proposal that could be forwarded by the SS to the Administration. The committee had the following composition:

- Harsh Vardhan [Chair] (Senator Y12 M.Tech.)
- Praveen Honhar (Senator Y12 UG)
- Khushal Chauhan (Senator Y12 M.Tech.)

The committee met on Monday, 28th January, 2012, at 9:30 PM, and deliberated upon the specifics of the proposal. This report documents the recommendations of the committee.

Awareness of students about SS at present

In order to understand what is the present status of awareness about SS among the students, we conducted an online survey which continued for three days. The summary of the survey has been presented below:

Participation

- 69.25% of the survey was taken by students admitted through JEE
- 15.25% of the survey was taken by PhD students
- 14% of the survey was taken by M.Tech. students
- 1.25% of the survey was taken by MBA/MDes students
- 0.25% of the survey was taken by M.Sc (2 year) students
- 0% of the survey was taken by preparatory students

Information about expenditures made by gymkhana

- 40.275% of survey takers do not care about expenditures made by gymkhana
- 29.65% of survey takers tried to acquire expenditure information but did not get it
- 16.875% of survey takers tried to acquire expenditure information and got it with difficulty
- 13.15% of survey takers tried to acquire expenditure information and got it easily

Idea about "Students senate"

- 63.125% of the survey takers believe that it represents the students in decision making related to gymkhana
- 58.225% of the survey takers believe that it takes legislative decisions on behalf of students
- 14.65% of the survey takers believe that it appoints the coordinators for the festivals
- 13.575% of the survey takers believe that it is a committee that makes academic decisions
- 7.4% of the survey takers believe that it is a club or council of gymkhana
- 7.2% of the survey takers believe that it is a committee responsible for the elections
- 6.45% of the survey takers believe that it is a place where people come for GD practice
- 0.75% of the survey takers have never heard of student's senate

Orientation towards reading of senate agenda and minutes of meetings

- 28.9% of the survey takers know that they are available but they do not go through them
- 26.575% of the survey takers have seen them but found it difficult to figure out what is relevant to them
- 18.9% of the survey takers don't know where are they available
- 17.25% of the survey takers read it
- 11.225% of survey takers believe that they are unnecessary and written in very formal language, making it difficult to understand
- 7.1% of the survey takers want to know that who prepares them and what makes him to prepare that
- 6.4% of the survey takers don't know what it is

Interaction of senators with their batch

- 66.05% of the survey takers told that senators never interacted with them
- 13.3% of the survey takers told that senators interacted them just because they are friends like batchmates, roomies and wingies, but they never interacted as senators
- 13.175% of the survey takers told that senators only sometimes interacted with them
- 10.275% of the survey takers told that they don't know who is senator in their batch
- 3.1% of survey takers told that they don't what does "senator" mean
- 2.075% of the survey takers told that senators interact and discuss the campus related issues

Knowledge about becoming a senator

- 51.575% of the survey takers believe that it is done by elections once an year and a particular batch votes
- 20.05% of the survey takers believe that it is done by elections twice an year and a particular batch votes
- 14.35% of the survey takers believe that it is done by elections once an year and whole institute votes
- 4.775% of the survey takers believe that it is done by elections twice an year and whole institute votes
- 4.5% of the survey takers believe that they have to apply through a form and some coordinators interview them
- 4.425% of the survey takers believe told that they don't know and they are not interested
- 0.275% of the survey takers believe that professors select a few guys and make them senators
- 0.275% of the survey takers believe that academically very good students are awarded to be a senator

About composition of the senate

- 63.975% of the survey takers believe that SS consists of president SG, council general secretaries, and batch representative senators, all of them elected
- 15.3% of the survey takers believe that SS consists of president SG, council general secretaries, and batch representative senators, few of whom are elected and remaining through interviews
- 6.575% of the survey takers believe that SS consists of all club coordinators, general secretaries of councils, president SG and convener SS
- 6.35% of the survey takers told that they have no clue about this
- 5.525% of the survey takers believe that SS consists of president SG and council general secretaries
- 4.95% of the survey takers believe that SS consists of president SG and council general secretaries and these people are known as senators
- 3.825% of the survey takers believe that SS consists of Director of IIT Kanpur and professors

Choice of getting informed about senate affairs

- 31.95% of the survey takers demanded an e-newsletter written in convenient way
- 27.775% of the survey takers demanded that there shall be live video streaming of the senate meetings. They want to see what people do after getting elected.
- 27.075% of the survey takers demanded a printed newsletter that must be delivered to their door every month
- 24.25% of the survey takers demanded a mail to be dropped to them
- 20.55% of the survey takers demanded video minutes that consists of interviews of the senate members after each senate meeting
- 17.975% of the survey takers demanded that format of the minutes must be changed and the guy who writes it must understand that simple language is important to be written

- 7.6% of the survey takers demanded either of the above means, but the mail as they are already flooded with mails

Proposals of the committee

Actions required for transparency

- E-newsletter of SS shall be prepared every month that contains the extracts of the minutes of the senate meetings in user friendly format and shall be easy to read
- Gymkhana review newsletter that shall be published thrice a year. This shall be provided on doors.
- Tri annual report shall be presented by president, executives and senate. Hard copy of it shall be circulated. This is required because the incoming senators through by-elections shall be informed about the work done by president SG and executives.
- An **expenditure tracker** is required to be created. This will display all the expenditures made by gymkhana members or gymkhana activity members on every gymkhana activity. The budget for an activity shall be displayed and every expenditure made against that particular activity shall be presented. The source of funding also need to be informed.
- Each of e-newsletter, reports of the executives and students senate, financial committee reports, expenditure tracker for each and every expenditures on events, and SSF details shall be available on website
- Interview of president, executives and senators shall be recorded as video after the meetings and it shall be provided on SS website as video minutes

If a senator leaves in between of a senate meeting for any genuine or non genuine reason, the time and reason shall be put into minutes.

The convener can appoint a dedicated student as the webmaster of the SS whose job will be to assist the convener in discharging the contents on the website.

To monitor the communication with junta and to update the methods of SS, frequent surveys shall be injected among the students and the result of the survey shall be utilized to design the framework of SS outreach. The survey shall be done through login service. The survey shall be unbiased and shall not be influenced by any person or group. President, executives, and senators may not take part in the survey.

Usually it takes a term to a new senator to understand the working of the senate. There is no curriculum in the institute to teach about senate. **Outgoing convener shall therefore inform the incoming senators. The convener may appoint few senators to assist him in informing the incoming senators.** This will thus help the incoming senators to work efficiently from the onset of their term.

It has been found that when students join this institute, they are unaware of SS, SUGC, SPGC, and SECP. They need to be properly informed about these so that they can understand their functioning. **We have to include introduction of SS and these committees to counselling surface for both UG and PG wings.** MTech, MBA, MDes, and MSc2 students have a stay of 2 years on campus so they

have very less time as compared to UG or PhD students. Hence they get very less time to get informed about these committees. We believe that introduction of these during orientation can improve the awareness. Hence we require a 45 minutes session for each UG and PG wing that shall be delivered by president SG and convener SS. The audience shall be only those who are to be informed, i.e., the incoming students, not any senior batch student.