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THE DILEMMA OF MAKING INSTITUTIONS WORK : A Case Study on the Working of Selection Board of A Traditional University

*Dr MM Fauzia Naheed**

Hassan Raza was appointed new Vice-Chancellor of the University last year after the retirement of the previous Vice-Chancellor. When he took over the charge of the office, he found that there were several problems in every office but the major complaints were about the Selection Board. As this body is the main source of manpower to the institution, the persons inside and outside the University were grumbling about its way of functioning. The Vice-Chancellor kept receiving representations from different persons inside the University and several complaints were also being published in the editorials of the dailies outside the campus.

The new Vice-Chancellor, an experienced professor and reputed administrator was very popular with his colleagues. But he was very worried about the prevailing situation. He took personal interest to find out the causes of the mismanagement and to improve it as best as he could. He constituted a Committee to check the documents of the previous five years relating to Selection Board and assess the real situation.

SELECTION BOARD: A BACKGROUND

The University was established about one hundred years back and is an autonomous body. Several bodies as Senate, Syndicate, Academic Council etc., are legally empowered to run the University efficiently. The Selection Board is also one such body. But its importance lies in the fact that it is a manpower supplier to the University. However, its activities do not show any sign of enjoying autonomy as it can only consider cases for appointment if the posts have been advertised by the departments requiring teachers.

Composition

This body consists of the following members:

1. The Vice-Chancellor (Chairman)
2. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor
3. The Dean of the faculty concerned

* Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

4. The Chairman of the Department/Director of the Institute/Principal of the Constituent College
5. One member of the Syndicate
6. Two members appointed by the Syndicate provided that none of them is an employee of the University
7. The Chairman or a member of the Public Service Commission to be nominated by the Chairman.

Tenure and Quorum

1. The tenure of this body is for two years.
2. The Quorum, in case of Professor and Associate Professor, is four years and for Assistant Professor and Lecturer, it is three. In case of selection of officers other than teachers, the Selection Board consists of members mentioned at (1), (2), (3) and (4) above under the caption, composition.
3. No member who is a candidate for the post to which appointment is to be made is allowed to take part in the proceedings of the Board.
4. In selecting candidates for the post of Professor and Associate Professor, the Selection Board need to co-opt or consult three experts in the subject concerned and in selecting candidates for other teaching posts, the experts in the subject concerned to be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor from a standing list of experts for each subject, approved by the Syndicate on the recommendation of Selection Board and revised from time to time.

Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Selection Board

The rules prescribe that Selection Board shall meet as and when occasion demands. Date and time for a meeting shall be fixed with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor. Matters under consideration in a meeting shall be decided by majority of votes. In case of a tie, the Vice-Chancellor (Chairman) shall have a casting vote in addition to the vote he may exercise as a member of the Board. Proceedings of a meeting of Selection Board held with proper quorum shall not be invalidated on the ground that any member(s) did not receive within the scheduled time, or at all, the notice/papers for the meeting.

Functions of the Selection Board

The Selection Board for teaching and other posts shall consider the applications received in response to advertisement and recommend to the Syndicate the names of suitable candidates for appointment to teaching or other posts. This body can also grant a higher initial pay in suitable cases for reasons to be recorded. It can appoint an eminently qualified person to the professorship in the University on terms and conditions other than those prescribed. In the event of difference of opinion between the Selection Board and the Syndicate, the matter shall be referred to the Chancellor whose decision shall be final.

Syndicate is the executive body of the University. It has representation of many groups, i.e., officials and teachers of the University (Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dean, Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Lecturer), eminent persons, elected persons, University Grants Commission, affiliated colleges and High Court. In all, it consists of eighteen members and it is the most powerful body of the University. With due regards to advice of the concerned bodies it has the power to govern and regulate the finance, accounts, investments, annual reports, annual budgets and many other decisions. Along with that it has the authority to institute Professorship, Associate Professorship, Assistant Professorship, Lectureship and other teaching, administration and research posts or to suspend or to abolish such posts. It has also the authority to appoint university teachers and other officers on the recommendations of Selection Board for teaching and other posts.

The findings of the Committee were as under:

1. Frequency of the Selection Board meeting was not sufficient.
2. Time gap between the date of advertisement and filling up the posts was too much.
3. In some cases, there was a mention of agenda items for interview but there was not mentioned in the proceedings about what happened, i.e., whether they were to be readvertised or they were to meet some other fate.
4. Some applicants marked themselves present for attendance, but only one was interviewed and selected. There was no explanation recorded about the others who were not interviewed or did not show up before the Selection Board.
5. Reasons for deferring the consideration of items were not recorded in the proceedings. Appointment to the post of Professor was deferred for a decade and during this period many teachers retired.
6. In some cases, there was only one applicant and he was selected.
7. No consistent policy of appointing persons during their absence was followed.

One is on the horns of dilemma as to how improvements can be made to enable Selection Board to function efficiently and how effectiveness of the Selection Board can be enhanced.

Annexures 1 to 6 present statistical analysis to arrive at above conclusions.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Should Selection Board remain an internal or an external organ? What may be the grounds?
2. Does this body need to be reorganised?
3. For the improvement of the situation, how can the present state of the organisation be activated? How to eliminate the pressure groups?
4. What impact does this type of practice have on the University's goodwill and on the individuals working in it?

Annexure 1

SELECTION BOARD MEETINGS

Sr No.	Dates	Frequency
1	1984	1
	November 26	
	1985	2
2	March 14	
3	July 8	
	1986	5
4	February 23	
5	February 24	
6	February 25	
7	March 26	
8	March 27	
9	May 17	
10	August 2	
11	September 10	
	1987	4
12	April 2	
13	April 4	
14	August 24	
15	August 25	
16	October 21	
17	October 22	
18	October 28	
19	October 29	
	1988	3
20	June 7	
21	June 8	
22	June 9	
23	September 22	
24	September 24	
25	November 5	
26	November 6	
	1989	4
27	January 8	
28	January 9	
29	January 10	
30	May 27	
31	July 19	
32	September 24	
33	September 25	
	Total	19

Annexure 2
NUMBER OF POSTS ADVERTISED

S No	Particulars	Number
1	Professor	25
2	Associate Professor	28
3	Assistant Professor	90
4	Lecturer	131

Annexure 3
**TIME GAP BETWEEN DATE OF INTERVIEW AND
LAST DATE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS**

S No	Faculty	Days
1	Law	1,269
2	Commerce	953
3	Science	579
4	Chemical Engineering and Technology	530
5	Oriental Languages and Islamic Learning	462
6	Arts	388
7	Pharmacy	345

Annexure 4

RATIO OF CANDIDATES APPEARED TO ELIGIBLE ONES

S No	Faculty	%
1	Law	92
2	Oriental Languages and Islamic Learning	76
3	Arts	76
4	Pharmacy	69
5	Science	66
6	Chemical Engineering and Technology	63
7	Commerce	51

Annexure 5

SELECTION BOARD DECISIONS

S No	Particulars	Number
1	Selected	189
2	Readvertised	60
3	Deferred	25

Annexure 6

TABLES SHOWING THE DEPARTMENT-WISE TIME GAP BETWEEN DATE OF INTERVIEW AND LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS, RATIO OF CANDIDATES APPEARED TO ELIGIBLE ONES, NUMBER OF MEETINGS AND RATIO OF SELECTED TO ADVERTISED SEATS.

(From September 1984 to September 1989)

Department	Time gap between date of interview & last date for receipt of applications	Ratio of candidates appeared to eligible ones	No of meetings	Ratio of selected to advertised seats			
				Prof.	Assoc.	Assc.	Lect.
Administrative Science	452 days	60%	4	1/1	....	....	5/3
Applied Psych.	421 days	61%	7	....	2/2	5/2	4/4
Arabic	490 days	48%	3	....	....	3/2	3/3
Astronomy	564 days	0%	1	....	....	....	1/0
Botany	568 days	42%	4	1/1	2/2	1/1	3/3
Business Administration	368 days	32%	3	....	....	3/3	3/2
Chemical Engg.	750 days	58%	7	6/4	1/1	10/6	11/5
Chemistry	690 days	60%	8	2/1	5/5	4/3	4/1
Chep	654 days	64%	3	....	1/1	2/2	1/1
Economics	616 days	48%	6	....	3/2	1/1	6/3
English	742 days	63%	3	1/1	....	1/1	2/2
Fine Arts	251 days	72%	2	....	....	2/2	4/2
French	411 days	100%	4	....	....	2/1	3/3
Geography	1000 days	75%	3	1/1	1/0	1/0	2/1
Geology	539 days	35%	7	....	1/1	9/9	13/7
Hailey College	1116 days	45%	8	3/0	....	9/5	11/5
History	210 days	74%	4	....	....	6/4	3/2
Islamic St.	535 days	55%	4	1/0	1/1	3/3	1/1
Journalism	458 days	59%	3	....	1/1	1/1	1/1
Kashmiriat	375 days	100%	2	....	....	1/1	1/1

Department	Time gap between date of interview & last date for receipt of applications	Ratio of candidates appeared to eligible ones	No of meetings	Ratio of selected to advertised seats			
				Prof.	Assoc.	Assc.	Lect.
Library Science	263 days	100%	2	....	1/0	3/0	....
Law College	1113 days	87%	3	1/1	1/0	2/2	....
Mathematics	468 days	56%	5	1/1	1/1	5/2	7/5
Persian	570 days	74%	3	....	1/1	1/0	2/2
Pharmacy	345 days	58%	4	1/1	1/1	2/2	8/8
Philosophy	399 days	74%	3	1/1	....	1/1	4/4
Physics	800 days	35%	3	1/1	2/0	....	4/4
Pol. Science	295 days	85%	5	....	1/1	6/4	6/2
Punjabi	385 days	67%	3	....	1/1	1/1	1/1
Social work	298 days	20%	3	...	....	....	3/2
Sociology	166 days	47%	2	....	....	....	4/2
Statistics	174 days	64%	3	2/2	2/2
Urdu	255 days	66%	3	1/1	2/2	1/1
Zoology	640 days	45%	3	3/3	2/1	5/4

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