

Academic Planning for Scaling activities on Quantitative metrics

Mrs. Jayanthi Sivagami¹, Dr. Badrunnisa. S²

¹*Student Counsellor and Placement Officer, Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College for Women, Chennai - 600018*

²*Krupanidhi Group of Institutions, Bangalore- 560035*

I. INTRODUCTION

Planning is the process of logical analysis about the activities required to achieve the objectives or desired goals of the institution. To achieve the desired results planning is an essential annual exercise. Planning process involves two different levels 1. Management level planning in a broad template defining the objectives/goals for future vision, determining the missions to enhance the activity and concerns with resources designed to achieve the targeted goals. 2. Institutional level planning focusing on the stakeholders' expectations and satisfaction to enrich the desired results.

In Higher Education, academic planning is the outline of overall academic goals of the institution and master plan to achieve the goals. The academic planning includes planning and approval for new academic programmes (degrees and certificates), if required significant changes in the programmes like renaming, changing the course papers, adding new courses and inculcating the suggestions given by stakeholders, approval and planning of new courses in the academic departments, centres, new value added and enrichment programmes, alteration/ changes connected with courses, subjects, assessment and academic policy.

Prominent and necessary requirement to chart institutional academic plan

- Academic policy
- University norms and Calendar
- Syllabi template
- Institutional Calendar
- Proposed initiatives plan/ calendar
- Department Calendar
- Faculty Calendar
- Teaching Calendar
- Work plan diary
- Desired results or goals

II. NEED FOR THE ACADEMIC PLANNING

The Institutional Planning Committee, Curriculum Development Committee, Examination Committee and Internal Quality Assurance Cell need to plan and approve the academic planning before commencing every academic year for effective and efficient functioning of academic aspects of the institution to scale up the visible results (quantitative data). The academic planning helps to create and plan the activities meticulously, to enhance the participation of students, teachers and other stakeholders, to merge the university activities and teaching plan especially number of contact hours with the students, to extemporize the administrative process and functionalities and to channelize the functioning of the various clubs and committees (extracurricular activities) in coordination with academic activities and to prioritize the activities of the institution based on the need, importance and outcome.

Importance of the academic planning

The primary and secondary activities of the academic planning are to facilitate and enrich the students' learning experiences and to make the curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities possible within the scheduled stipulated time. The academic planning helps to keep students, faculty and staff reminiscing of the key factors throughout the academic year/ semester to scale the activities. This will be useful for prospective students, alumni and parents. The academic planning should connect with every other plan and activities related to curriculum, teaching, research, examination, extracurricular activities and first and foremost with the desired goals/results.

Methodology to design the academic plan

The main points to cogitate from the **University Calendar** are reopening date, admission date and public holidays. Notable points for the **Institutional Calendar** are Admission date, Student Induction Programme date, Commencement of College/ regular

classes, Internal and External examination dates (Theory and Practical), Result declaration, Fee payment dates, Examination fee payment, Sports fest, NCC and NSS activities, Cultural Activities and other extracurricular activities. Inputs for **Faculty Calendar** are interdepartmental Activities, Add- on courses, Committee Activities, faculty level seminars/invited talks and for **Departmental Calendar** are practical classes, field visits/industrial visits, workshops, seminars, conferences, research activities, Special workshops/ Lectures, extension activities, outreach programme, departmental competitions. Apart from the above calendar, **Individual Level Calendar** incorporating **Teaching plan** highlighting lesson plan, bridge course, Syllabus completion, Remedial classes and internal assessment, **Teacher-Students activities plan** like class seminar , assignment, interclass competition, role play, model displays, exhibitions, research activities for advanced learners and **Teacher Mentoring Plan** with Mentoring Schedule , mentees contact dates and follow up actions, group mentoring plan, outreach plan with mentees need to be designed with desired results. Any planning without human resource development is incomplete. Other than the FDP and training provided by the organisation, the teacher **needs to be encouraged for their self-development plans**. Self-development programmes from other institutions like Orientation Course, Refresher Courses, Faculty Development Programme, Specialized training, Faculty exchange programme and Research activities, Paper presentation, Publications and Book/Chapter writing should be kept for approval well in advance so that alternative measure/plans would be formulated. After deriving the inputs and points from the necessary template the academic plan needs to be inked.

A well designed and developed academic plan should include: a) commencement and end dates of academic year or semester b) Number of working days/instructional days. In an academic year or each semester include at least 180 days or 90 days or as per the norms of University. The scheduled classroom instruction hours excluding government holidays and other holidays need to be met the minimum credit hours and instructional hours. c) Instructional classes for an academic year which needs to be conducted over a period of time and should be sufficient to assure the requisite instructional credit hours. It should have adequate time for self-centric learning (out of class study/preparation) too and it should not be less than five weeks in any of the courses. d) Student Induction Programme dates. e) Methodize or standardize scheduling for course periods to assure maximum course access for students and it should avoid conflicts with final examination schedules. f) Alternative Provisions to schedule regular instructional days for the loss incurred by College/ National holidays or due to other emergency activities or issues. g) The important dates and times which affect the learning process during each semester like semester fees and exam fee dates etc. h) Institutional activities like sports and cultural activities. With respect to curriculum plan, the syllabi, lesson plan, time table and methodology of teaching need to be structured with components like specified number of contact hours for each course, specified number of hours for internships, required number of theory and practical classes for each course, seminars and workshops, time allocation for extracurricular activities and compensation classes.

Apart from the basic curriculum template, the academic plan should include details about bridge course classes for the first year students or new comers, remedial classes for slow performers, value added and enrichment courses, scope for bringing awareness on recent trends, life skills, hands on experiences, extension activities, outreach programmes, capability enhancement schemes and enrichment programmes for advanced learners which will lead to desired results. To get the maximum desired results, scaling the activities now and then or in regular structured manner/procedure becomes mandatory.

Methodology to implement the academic plan

The envisioned 360 degree level focus needs to be depicted in every calendar and in the timetable for the successful implementation of an academic plan. Time table needs to be prepared matching the course paper and importance for course credits which will facilitate the implementation of curriculum plan in calculated hours. Allocation of library hours is essential to improve the reading and learning skill which will indirectly help in student progression. The following procedure describes the steps that need to be taken to keep the academic plan updated and available to all the stakeholders.

- The proposed tentative Academic plan should be made available as early as possible for the upcoming academic year (before the reopening of the University/College)
- After the reviewing the academic plan by the Principal or head of the institution, the proposed academic plan needs to be obtainable to Academic council/ Executive council/ Governing body / Management for approval. The working of the plan has to be connected with human and financial resources for approval well in advance.
- Upon the approval by the Executive Council/ Management the updated plan should be posted in University website or College Catalogue.

At every level, the governance has to develop a well-designed **Reporting, Feedback and Monitoring system** for each process to scale up the activities. The well-structured monitoring helps i) to understand the direction of determined mission towards achieving the goals ii) whether the targeted goals/results will be accomplished within the stipulated period (road map of the activities) iii) helps to opt or choose for other available resources and possibilities iv) help to choose alternatives when challenges/problems are faced in progression towards the goals.

III. DISCUSSION

The academic plan links with curriculum, teaching, learning, evaluation, infrastructure, support and progression, governance and Institutional best practices. Let us discuss how it is interlinked with all Criterion, key indicators and its quantitative metrics. The curriculum design and development is implemented by teaching and learning plan, the teaching and learning is enhanced by utilising the infrastructure facilities and resources. The outcome is evaluated by assessment methods which will help to understand the students' progression (results, and also participation in sports, co-curricular and extracurricular activities) and also it reflects about the governance and leadership. The well designed academic plan and implementation will show visible desired results which would become Institutional best practices.

The primary aim of **Curriculum design** is to provide or support students in gaining core competencies like critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and demonstrating skill, which will ensure the enhancement of student learning in a quality manner and will reflect in the key indicators like academic flexibility and curriculum enrichment. So more new courses, value added courses, transferable life skills need to be offered to enhance the results as quantitative.

After the curriculum framework, the **teaching planning** is drafted comprehensively in step by step teaching methods, duration of each class or required teaching hours for a particular course or topic and the resources required for the session/ class, which reflects in the students learning (what, how and when) and the learning need to be measured by a continuous assessment method, it will provide the students' performance and learning outcomes. By scaling these types of activities the major qualitative and quantitative results will increase in the key indicators of teaching learning and evaluation process which is more vital for Higher Education Institutions and it will be explicit in the Student Satisfaction Survey which is a prime factor of peer review visit. The outreach activities, extension activities, internships / hands on training and platform innovations are an essential components to inculcate and imbibe ethics, values, cultures, societal consciousness and these activities help to increase the social intelligence for students which will increase the data in quantitative metrics of extension activities key indicators.

The Students' Learning Satisfaction, participation and progression are linked with infrastructure **and learning resources**, so the infrastructure/learning resources need to be systematically maintained and allotted to the prime stakeholder namely, students for their maximum utility to enrich their learning experiences which will be remarkably noticed in the maintenance and utilization policy and it will be reflected in students' participation. **Collating extracurricular activities and capability enhancement schemes** in academic planning will increase the student's progression. The intensity of students' participation and progression will depend on the support systems provided for the students. The plan of support services needs to be incorporated with academic planning to see visible results in graduate outcome, placements, higher studies, and achievement in competitive exam, sports, entrepreneurial and life skills. The plan will be executed only with vibrant leadership and governance, which is clearly identified in the SWOC of the institution. The **enrichment programmes on new changing trends** in teaching methods for faculty will help the teachers to handle and plan well designed teaching methodology for students. So the management has to plan faculty enrichment programmes in the academic plan which in turn would also fetch the quantitative results of key indicators in faculty empowerment strategies. The institutional values and social responsibility will be stated in the number of activities planned and a variety of programmes for students and organised by involving students will be a credit. To make it best practice the academic plan should be made available to have the desired results.

Planning on paper will not bring success, implementing it in the right time in a quality manner will fetch the success. To maintain the quality standards in implementation, **monitoring systems need to be established**. For the curriculum aspect, regular feedback from stakeholders will help to monitor. The head of the department should monitor the teaching plan, course completion, contact hours, by collecting course wise weekly reports from the teachers. Alternative methods need to be implemented in case of any difficulty faced. Through a systematized mentoring system tracking the students' progression will become easy. Conduct of regular audits will help all other processes to move forward in the right direction to achieve quality capsules in desired goals of the academic plan.

IV. CONCLUSION REMARKS

The academic plan is a process concerned with outcome to provide well planned learning experience with purposive outcome and also recognizing the importance of possible unintended outcomes. This academic plan and implementation process makes each institution unique and reflects the institutional concern for quality. So the academic plan should encompass required information from different chart planners. The quality and scaling activities of the academic plan could be ascertained by policy, procedures, formal mechanisms for approval and periodic reviews, structured monitoring system, functional feedback and grievance redressal mechanism. The successful implementation of an academic plan will lead to quality results in quantitative metrics.

V. REFERENCES

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