



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION

May 11, 2016

Press Release

The University for Weeks has witnessed a complete insensitivity towards the genuine demands of teachers and students. The situation worsened with students on indefinite hunger strike for more than 13 days. The health conditions of students continue to deteriorate. All clamors for justice and compassion from different stakeholders of JNU including retired and emeritus professors, alumni, JNUTA and students went unheard. Given the deteriorating health of students and the emergency situation, JNUTA requested the members of Academic Council to appeal to the Vice Chancellor to ensure welfare of concerned students. This demand was made as JNU's statutes clause 16 point (xiii) empowers the AC to ensure 'health and welfare of students'. The overwhelming majority of teachers in the Academic Council felt that the primary concern in the given circumstances was to ensure end of 'Hunger Strike', which is going on against draconian, unjust and disproportionate penalties based on HLEC, the credibility of which remains questionable. For the record, all that was said was that the issues related to current crisis be discussed and resolved before routine agenda items are taken up.

The persistent refusal of the Vice Chancellormade everyone feel helpless and scared of the worst eventuality as the "fast" continued even within the Academic Council (one member of AC was on fast for 13 days). Understanding the gravity of the situation, after repeated appeals the Vice Chancellor agreed to discuss and resolve the issue at hand. However, after about two dozen members in the Academic Council raised all the relevant issues with almost everyone pleading the VC to show mercy as the quantum of announced punishment is utterly disproportionate, he abruptly adjourned the AC Meeting leaving everyone astonished.

It was here when a vast majority of members (53) resolved the following:

The overwhelming sense expressed in the Academic Council meeting held on May 10, 2016 was that the whole range of punishments meted out to students is excessive and that the harsher punishments such as rustication, suspension, banishment from campus, and exorbitant fines should be immediately revoked. We are distressed by the fact that no deference was shown by the Chair to the opinions expressed by AC members, and the Chair adjourned the meeting abruptly and unreasonably. We, the members of the Academic Council, resolve that all unreasonable punishments arising from the February 9th incident are revoked. We resolve that the VC immediately implement this resolution.

It is further shocking that after adjournment within minutes the VC issued a statement blaming a "group of teachers and students" for blocking AC discussions. Rather than talking about technicalities, Vice Chancellor as head of the University is expected to be merciful to his own student's life and find a meaningful solution to the grave situation prevailing in the campus for more than two weeks. This adjournment also meant that several critical matters concerning the University have been left unaddressed. This is very worrying. Blaming teachers and students is an easy route. The Vice Chancellor ought to resolve the issue urgently by addressing the concerns of all sections of JNU community in an impartial manner in order to restore normalcy to campus.

Prof. Ajay Patnaik
President, JNUTA

Dr. Bikramaditya Choudhary
Secretary, JNUTA