

Press Note

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

13 February 2019

Jawaharlal Nehru University held the emergency meeting of 149th Academic Council on 12 February 2019, as per JNU Regulations (M1-3(2)) concerning the conduct of the meetings of the Academic Council which says: The Vice-chancellor may authorize the convening of an emergency meeting of the Council at short notice to consider issues of special importance or urgency.

This meeting was called to adopt the new policy of the Govt of India, as per the UGC's directions, to extend 10 per cent reservation of seats in Higher Educational Institutions to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the society. Keeping in mind the interests of the student community across India, the JNU administration decided to implement EWS policy in full in the very first year.

Shockingly, though, JNUTA office bearers betrayed a most reprehensible behaviour on 12 February 2019 by instigating a group of students to blockade the venue of the meeting and disallowing the honourable members of AC to enter the meeting hall. The sloganeering and active goading of students by JNUTA office bearers left no alternative for the JNU administration to hold the 149th AC meeting at an alternative venue.

JNU administration deeply appreciates that a large number of internal and external members of the AC came to the new venue in the Administrative Block in time and actively participated in the proceedings. In fact, a few external members even travelled long distances, from various parts of the country, to come for the meeting. Detailed discussions were held in the meeting on the new EWS policy of the government and unanimously adopted for its implementation in the university from 2019-20 academic session.

However, the JNU Administration expresses deep anguish over the abominable behaviour of JNUTA office bearers. The embarrassing excuses of the JNUTA office bearers obstructing the AC meeting are outrageous, obnoxious and outlandish that served no purpose but to misinform the public and seriously damage the reputation of the university.

One, that not enough notice was given to members of AC to attend the meeting is blatantly wrong. The JNU Statute gives emergency powers to the Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the AC, to convene an emergency Council meeting. Secondly, their complaint that enough time was not given to them to examine the agenda is an outright lie. While the Statutes provide for circulation of the agenda 7 days before the meeting, this time the Agenda of the AC was circulated 8 days before the scheduled meeting.

It is exceedingly ironical that the same JNUTA office bearers, who have been complaining about the so-called "seat cuts" in the past, are now questioning and opposing the policy that will lead to substantive increase in seats in various academic programmes of the university.

JNU administration expresses its deep appreciation to the vast majority of teachers and students who stayed away from an orchestrated obstruction by JNUTA office bearers and a handful of students.

The Administration urges the JNUTA to refrain from spreading lies through erroneous arguments. The allegations that the Administration is against consultative processes in decision making do not stand in the face of JNUTA preventing conduct of AC meetings. When JNUTA makes comments about the size and capacity of the venue to hold AC meetings, it does not appreciate that despite their obstructive activities, the number of honourable members who participated in the 149th AC meeting was more than four times the quorum.

JNUTA has also been spreading misinformation that scheduling of AC meetings are notified 21 days in advance, but this was not done in the case of 149th AC meeting. It needs emphasis that it was an emergency AC meeting convened as per the rules of the university.

The loud complaints about absence of JNUSU representatives are again invalid, since currently there is no legally notified JNUSU because the elected office bearers have failed to submit their bills of expenditures within the legal deadline i.e. 1st October 2018. It needs reiteration that JNUTA and JNUSU office bearers are not full members of the Academic Council and are only special invitees.



Registrar