

Annexure I

Mentor-Mentee Programme

Objectives/Goals: The Mentor/Mentee Programme in the college was introduced with the following aspirations:

- To encourage the mentee (students) in his/her academic and personal growth.
- To retain students by meaningful involvement.
- To encourage increased participation in co-curricular activities.
- To pave the way for better understanding of themselves vis-à-vis their society to enable them to cope with life after graduation.
- To discover new options and opportunities.
- To set goals for the future.

Hence mentorship in the college is aimed at maintaining a balance between academic performance, emotional growth and personality development of the mentees as well as with their future plans and aspirations. In some ways then, we can say it even goes beyond classroom situations and degree considerations.

The Context: Kohima College's admission policy has been conceptualised to aid and promote economically disadvantaged aspirants to achieve their educational dreams and to give academically weaker students a chance to find and develop their potentials. This has meant however, that there is a very wide gap between advanced and slow learners.

Further, the college is a destination for several students who have been shaped by their gender, social class, education, generation, geography and other cultural influences and who therefore often face different kinds of adjustment problems.

It was also ascertained that over and above these problems were those related to anxiety and stress and/or substance abuse which contributed to a decline in class attendance and lack of seriousness towards their course as also general feelings of de-motivation.

Taking into consideration these problems and that of teacher-student ratio in the classrooms, the Mentor/Mentee programme was thus instituted to close the gap between the teacher and the student. The mentorship programme was also inspired by the need to produce right minded citizens of integrity and towards this end it engaged to inculcating correct values

7.3 Best Practices of the institution.

and ensuring that every student has a faculty to fall back upon in times of need.

The Practice:

- Firstly, faculty members discussed what the basic mentoring objectives, strategies and approaches to be adopted would be. A guide list underlining the responsibilities of a mentor as well as the scope and limits of both mentor and mentee was then prepared by the IQAC and distributed to each teacher.
- The faculty was divided into eleven groups to look after the eleven classes/sections of the college. Accordingly, each group was assigned a leader who took the responsibility of assigning an equal number of students for each group member to mentor. Mentors were entrusted to establish contact with the wards assigned to them. Schedule and meeting logistics were next agreed upon. Taking into consideration the demands on the time of mentor and mentee, the programme made allowances for flexibility to choose the method of communication that best fitted their schedules. Usually, Saturdays were set apart for interactions to take place, but free periods on weekdays and after class hours were also utilized. This step also included defining the mentor/mentee roles, discussing confidentiality and clarifying the expectations of both.
- The mentor was then expected to have one-to-one sessions with his/her ward over a period of about five months. Each mentor was expected to maintain a mentor sheet to record all academic, co-curricular and personal details of the candidate. Grievances raised were also recorded in process. This constitutes the longest step in the process and comprises most of the mentoring efforts during which the students are helped to identify their strengths and motivated to work on areas of weakness. At the same time physical, economic and psychological/emotional problems of each student are also ascertained with the objective of enabling the ward to cope adequately through wise and careful counseling. A formal feedback mechanism between mentor and mentee was yet to be devised but each mentor was instructed to provide feedback on a regular and timely basis to acknowledge the mentee's accomplishments and success along with the areas in which he or she needed to improve.

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- Each mentor are expected to provide a mentor report i.e. a mid-programme progress/satisfaction evaluation survey reporting changes observed in the mentees and a learning outcome evaluation measuring progress towards completion of the mentoring objectives to the coordinator of the programme. Follow up measures are adopted accordingly. To compliment this role, the Students Counseling Center communicates periodically with mentors to measure the progress of the mentoring sessions and intervenes in serious cases that were referred to it by making appropriate referrals to professionals as and when it was deemed fit (e.g. for cases of drug or alcohol abuse an understanding for assistance with Kripa Foundation was formed.) Although the college does not have a professional counselor, it is fortunate to have several very senior and experience faculty members in dealing with key areas of concern.
- An outcome of discussing career related options was that students having ambitions of entering into service were encouraged to enroll and attend the college's Coaching Center programme. Others having other aspirations were referred to the Center guidance and Placement Cell for further options and guidance. Although the college does not have efficient or formal placement cell yet in place, many students had been and are being encouraged to work on specific career oriented projects/activities with notable success.

Evidence of Success:

- This programme, based on personal interactions, has been very useful in helping students particularly de-motivated ones, to change their attitude to academic pursuits and to have a greater involvement in college co-curricular activities.
- Class attendance has improved particularly in the case of students having high rate of erstwhile absenteeism and a significant change in the students' self-esteem and confidence level was ascertained. This has contributed greatly to the students' all round personality development and has enabled growth of maturity.
- The dropout rate of the college in the last two years was only 0.04% and the last University Degree results have also been heartening.
- It has helped students to make informed choices in the later stages.
- Feedbacks both from parents and students regarding the system have been highly encouraging.

7.3 Best Practices of the institution.

- Most significantly, it has greatly helped strengthen student-teacher relationship and established better communication. The outcome of this is the re-establishment of the primacy of the bond between teacher taught, and the realization that the complimentary which underlies this relationship should not be lost sight of if Mentoring is to be benchmarked as a 'best practice' in any academic institution.

Although the programme is a relatively new one and is still in the experimental stage, the practice has yielded almost immediate result, and with continued improvement and refinement it can easily qualify as a best practice with high value impact on the lives of both students and teachers and on the teaching/learning process of the institute.