

# Best Practices.

## 1. Mentoring

A unique practice of the college is the admission policy to accommodate the genuine plight of the economically disadvantaged aspirants and provide them opportunities to realize their educational dreams. Owing to the admission policy bulk of the students are passed out from all Govt. Higher Secondary schools of the district irrespective of marks they obtained in their qualifying examination. 80% of the students are from rural areas, economically deprived from illiterate backgrounds and some from dysfunctional homes.

Some noticeable common traits are sense of inhibition, lack of confidence, very poor study habits and unrealistic future goals among the students. Being away from their homes and environment, many of them are frustrated and confused making them vulnerable to risky habits like substance abuse which ultimately contribute to abstinence from class, negligent to studies and a sense of hopelessness.

One of the thrust areas of mentoring was to help students make informed choices for their future, academically as well as vocationally. Working towards the noble vision and mission of the college a systematic one-on-one mentoring program was developed to deal with this very serious issue. A mentoring structure was developed and put into practice in 2012 to which innovative ideas are added to enhance and define this program continuously.

### Key aspects

- To help students strike a balance between academic excellence and personal growth.
- To retain and engage students productively to minimize drop-outs.
- To encourage participation in co-curricular activities.
- To strengthen student-teacher relationship.
- To establish a support system to which the students can rely on at anytime.
- To help them streamline their efforts to realising their goals.
- To identify their potentials and assists them with appropriate encouragement and guidance.
- To help them prepare to live dynamic lives as contributing agents once they graduate.

### The Practice

The entire functioning of the program is handled by the Mentoring Cell of the college. The college annually admits about 600-650 students in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester and these students are divided into units of 12-13 which are assigned to each faculty member to mentor. Formal mentoring begins as soon as students get enrolled to help them get familiar with environment and system of the college.

The Mentoring Cell devices a common mentoring format which is used by the mentors to record details of their respective mentees and keep track of their progression during the period of their stay in the college.

Mentoring program is structured to provide students with emotional, psychological and academic support as well as with information, guidance and encouragement.

Mentors act as counsellors and confidantes. Mentoring is always conducted on one-on-one basis to maintain strict confidentiality. The formal sessions are held on Saturdays and free periods. But should there be need a mentee can always avail the service of the mentor at any free time during working hours. Although officially last for the entire 1<sup>st</sup> semester only, mentors keep track of their mentees through regular interaction throughout their stay in the college. In addition to mentor-mentee sessions, a unique feature of the college regarding its mentoring system is the role played by the Principal to erring students individually.

The Mentoring Cell is tied up with the student counselling Cell. Problematic mentees needing special attention are referred to this Cell. To enhance the functioning of this program two of our faculty members have undergone Mental Health Awareness- cum-Training for teachers at the State Mental Hospital, Govt, of Nagaland. The college also conducts talks on mental health by inviting psychiatrists from the State Mental Hospital, Govt, of Nagaland to address students once a year.

Once the mentees reach the final semester they have to mandatorily fill up an Alumni form furnishing all contact details. This mechanism has been developed to maintain contact with the mentees even after they graduate from the college. Social networking tools like Facebook and WhatsApp chat groups are proving effective for this purpose.

### **Assessment Indicators**

This Program is proving beneficial especially to the demotivated students. Confidential session of sharing, encouragement, and guidance have gone on to improve the behavioral attitudes and study habits of the mentees. Mentoring has helped them shed their reserves and self-consciousness and making them more open and vivacious. It has generated self-esteem and confidence in drop outs. Significant improvement in class attendance has been observed. Mentoring has helped in identifying certain students who are weak academically but exceptionally gifted in other areas. It has also helped tremendously in identifying the different weaknesses of the students and thereby gives them due guidance and encouragement to improve. A few students requiring professional counselling has been referred to a psychiatrist which has benefitted them to cope better with their problems and surroundings. Improved participation in co-curricular activities has been noticed. Mentoring has helped students feel connected and engaged on campus. Marked improvement in self-confidence and self-esteem of the students has been observed. Mentoring has tapped hidden talents and leadership qualities. The mentoring programme can take credit of the many laurels brought to the state in general and the college in particular in the field of sports, music, arts etc. As a part of mentoring programme, orientation programmes are conducted on the first two days at the onset of every new semester. Mentoring has helped mentees to make wise and realistic vocational choices suitable to their inherent ability and financial means. Easy accessibility is maintained with mentees during their stay in college as well as after their graduation through social network facilities like WhatsApp, Facebook, chat groups etc.

Mentoring is an ongoing process in the form of counselling, consultation and discussion even outside formal mentoring sessions. This has helped create a homely ambience in the

college fostering a relaxed relationship between the teacher and the taught, not only during the students stay in the college but even beyond.

## **2. Inter-Departmental Seminar**

Though teachers have been working together in the same institution for considerable length of time, there was no formal opportunity for them to exchange information and ideas. With the genuine intention of creating a platform and a conducive atmosphere where teachers from all departments can interact, share information from each other's field of expertise and collaborate in research works, the Research Cell of the college came up with this brilliant program of Interdepartmental Seminar. It started functioning in 2014 and since then it has become one of the best practice of the college.

This initiative is also to stimulate and motivate members to take up research works. This programme is also aimed to experience and get familiar with the technicalities and modalities of conducting seminars, workshops, conferences etc.

### **Key Aspects:**

- To generate research ability of both students and teachers.
- To provide a right and healthy platform for teachers of all departments to interact and collaborate.
- To enable teachers to venture into subject matters such as local politics, economics, literature, history etc. which are not only interesting but can be referenced not only for academic purposes but also for administrative and developmental information.

### **The Practice:**

The Research Cell which is the parent cell of the Interdepartmental Seminar is responsible for charting out the rooster of the program. An annual cycle consist of all departments presenting papers on topics which have relevance and of common interest to all departments. These seminars are conducted on every third Saturdays of the month. The seminars are conducted following the logistics of a formal seminar so that faculty is trained to perform on a bigger arena with confidence. The topics of the seminars are inter-disciplinary and wide-ranging, going beyond the syllabus, as comprehensive as culture studies, the Naga political scenario, social problems etc. It is hoped that such broad based topics would give rise to more faculty members to take up research in inter-disciplinary areas.

Acknowledging the huge success of this exercise amongst the faculty it was also introduced to the students as part of their internal assessment processes. Seminars are conducted as classroom activities. In honours classes individual paper presentations are held but for general classes group paper presentations are conducted. This practice is proving very beneficial for the students also because they are learning the basics of doing research work. As they go for further studies whatever they are learning now will definitely empower them to tackle their research works with more confidence.

**Assessment Indicators:**

With an aim to inculcate research attitude in the teachers Interdepartmental seminars have been initiated. Since its introduction, it is becoming more dynamic with the faculty taking into it enthusiastically. Every practice is yielding more innovative results with teachers collaborating on topics of mutual interests. Such research activities are helping to foster better relationships among teachers. There is marked change in the attitudes of the faculty. Also a palpable improvement in the coordination between the various departments is noticeable. The ongoing exercise is helping to encourage faculty members to become actively involved in research activities. Few of our members have presented papers in national seminars while few others have spoken as resource persons in district level seminars and other events. Some of our faculty members have also successfully published books. All these remarkable achievements have encouraged more faculty members to register for Ph.D.